Affording
Amherst College
Only a few colleges in the country can say what we can say about financial aid.

Our admission process is need-blind for all students, domestic and international. We admit extraordinary students from around the world, and then we make every effort to ensure that Amherst is affordable for each one of them.

We meet 100% of our students’ demonstrated need—for domestic and international students.

We were one of the first colleges in the country to adopt a no-loan policy. Our financial aid packages don’t include loans—we’ve eliminated loans and replaced them with scholarships—so our students can graduate with no debt.

About 60% of our students received financial aid last year and the average financial aid award was nearly $60,000. So the majority of our students pay less—often far less—than the cost of attendance.

We award more than $60 million in Amherst scholarships every year. That’s money dedicated solely to meeting the financial need of our students.

We’ve been providing need-based financial aid since our founding in 1821. In other words, welcoming—and supporting—students from all walks of life has always been at the core of who we are.

Our approach to financial aid is simple: We accept students from across the country and around the world based not on family income, but rather on achievement and promise. If their families have financial need, we meet it, one hundred percent.

Students leave Amherst with an extraordinary education, a long list of exceptional accomplishments—and the freedom to build their future without the burden of student loan debt.

This approach makes us distinctive. We’re proud to say it also makes us a leader.
“We can do this, together.”

A conversation with Gail Holt, Dean of Financial Aid

THERE’S A NATIONAL CONVERSATION ABOUT THE COST OF COLLEGE. HOW DO YOU TALK WITH FAMILIES ABOUT THE COST OF AMHERST?

“It’s interesting: Families understand the value of Amherst. They see the faculty, the history, the facilities, the alumni, the programs, the students—and they understand that these things have tremendous value, tangible value, in the short term and in the long term. But many families see cost as a mountain they can’t get over. And we’re here to say: ‘Don’t hold back from applying. Don’t count yourself out before you’ve started. We can do this, together.’”

WHAT CAN AMHERST DO? HOW CAN YOU HELP?

“There are the fundamentals of our admission process and our financial aid program. We admit students without regard to their financial situation. We meet one hundred percent of an admitted student’s demonstrated need—and we do so without loans, using only grants and work-study, so it’s possible to graduate from Amherst debt-free. But that’s just part of the story.”

WHAT’S THE REST OF THE STORY?

“The rest of the story is the story that each family shares with us. Our approach to financial aid is highly individualized. We take in as much information as possible, and we put together aid packages that speak directly to each family. Plus, we determine need on an annual basis. So if your financial situation changes from one year to the next, we can respond with an appropriate aid package. The numbers start the story; the family finishes it.”

WHAT’S THE BEST ADVICE YOU CAN GIVE TO A FAMILY LOOKING AT AMHERST?

“Let us show you what we can do. When you line up the award letters from the colleges you’ve applied to, you’ll see that we’re exceptionally generous. That doesn’t mean that we won’t ask you to make sacrifices. We extend ourselves for our families—and we ask them to extend themselves in return. Amherst is a shared investment—a world-class, lifelong investment. It’s an extraordinary opportunity. It’s real; it’s possible; you only have to have the courage to begin.”
The numbers

Every number tells a story. The story these numbers tell is: Money need not come between you and an Amherst education. We’re here to help students do their best work—and graduate with a liberating (and debt-free) sense of possibility.

Cost of attendance (2021–22 Academic Year)

Direct costs

- Tuition, room, board: $76,800
- Student fees: $460
- Health insurance: $2,616

Indirect costs

- Books and supplies (estimate): $1,000
- Personal expenses (estimate): $1,800
- Travel to and from Amherst (estimate): $50–$2,500

TOTAL COST: $82,726–$85,176

> Student fees cover student activities.
> Health insurance may be waived, if a student has other coverage that satisfies Massachusetts insurance requirements.
> Books and supplies, personal expenses and travel allowances are estimated out-of-pocket expenses that can vary by student; we take them into account when determining a student’s financial need.
> Optional tuition insurance is billed to all students at $120 per semester and can be waived; it is not covered by financial aid.
How financial need is calculated

Demonstrated financial need = cost of attendance – family contribution

> We use your FAFSA and CSS Profile applications to help determine your expected family contribution. We consider your income and assets, your parents’ income and assets, and things like how much tuition your parents already pay for any siblings in college or secondary school and whether there are any extraordinary medical expenses.

> Students reapply annually for aid. Financial aid is evaluated based on the family’s current financial circumstances.

> We meet 100% of your demonstrated financial need.

How we meet your financial need

Our financial aid packages consist of the following:

> Scholarships and grants: aid that doesn’t have to be repaid

> Student employment: paid jobs on or off campus, 6–8 hours per week, to cover personal expenses

Net price (median) of a year at Amherst

Net price = cost of attendance – scholarships and grants

For families with annual income below $30,000: median: $3,215
For families with annual income $30,000–$60,000: median: $5,050
For families with annual income $60,000–$100,000: median: $12,888

You can estimate your share of Amherst cost using these helpful tools:

> MyInTuition Cost Estimator for an early cost estimate using six basic financial questions.

> Net Price Calculator for an estimate of family contribution using more in-depth financial information.

Both tools can be found at amherst.edu/go/calculator.
Four sample financial aid packages

1
This student is the only child of a Texas family. The family has an income of $30,000, no assets and no home equity.

**Costs**
- Tuition, room, board, student fees: $77,260
- Personal expenses: $2,200
- Books: $1,000
- Travel: $950
- TOTAL COST: $81,410

**Family contribution**
- Parental contribution: $0
- Student summer savings: $1,000
- TOTAL CONTRIBUTION: $1,000

Cost of attendance ($81,410) – family contribution ($1,000) = demonstrated financial need ($80,410)

**Amherst financial aid award**
- Scholarship/grant: $78,010
- Campus job: $2,400
- Financial need: $80,410
- TOTAL AID AWARD: $80,410

Amount paid by student and family directly to Amherst: $750
(Credit on student account provided to student for use toward indirect costs.)

2
The oldest of three children, this student is from New York City. The mother is widowed and has an income of $68,500, no assets and no home equity.

**Costs**
- Tuition, room, board, student fees: $77,260
- Personal expenses: $2,200
- Books: $1,000
- Travel: $300
- TOTAL COST: $80,760

**Family contribution**
- Parental contribution: $5,000
- Student summer savings: $1,000
- TOTAL CONTRIBUTION: $6,000

Cost of attendance ($80,760) – family contribution ($6,000) = demonstrated financial need ($74,760)

**Amherst financial aid award**
- Scholarship/grant: $73,360
- Campus job: $2,400
- Financial need: $74,760
- TOTAL AID AWARD: $74,760

Amount paid by student and family directly to Amherst: $4,900
This student is from a Massachusetts family of five. The parents pay tuition for an older sister at college. The family has an income of $120,000 and $145,000 in home equity.

**Costs**

| Tuition, room, board, student fees: | $77,260 |
| Personal expenses: | $1,800 |
| Books: | $1,000 |
| Travel: | $50 |
| TOTAL COST: | $80,110 |

**Family contribution**

| Parental contribution: | $8,340 |
| Student summer savings: | $2,000 |
| TOTAL CONTRIBUTION: | $10,340 |

Cost of attendance ($80,110) – family contribution ($10,340) = demonstrated financial need ($69,770)

**Amherst financial aid award**

| Scholarship/grant: | $67,370 |
| Campus job: | $2,400 |
| Financial need: | $69,770 |
| TOTAL AID AWARD: | $69,770 |

**Amount paid by student and family directly to Amherst:** $9,890

This California student is the oldest of five. The parents pay $12,500 tuition yearly for a younger brother at a private high school. The family has an income of $193,000 and $465,000 in home equity.

**Costs**

| Tuition, room, board, student fees: | $77,260 |
| Personal expenses: | $1,800 |
| Books: | $1,000 |
| Travel: | $1,250 |
| TOTAL COST: | $81,310 |

**Family contribution**

| Parental contribution: | $41,760 |
| Student summer savings: | $2,000 |
| TOTAL CONTRIBUTION: | $43,760 |

Cost of attendance ($81,310) – family contribution ($43,760) = demonstrated financial need ($37,550)

**Amherst financial aid award**

| Scholarship/grant: | $35,150 |
| Campus job: | $2,400 |
| Financial need: | $37,550 |
| TOTAL AID AWARD: | $37,550 |

**Amount paid by student and family directly to Amherst:** $42,110
How to apply for financial aid at Amherst

Important Dates
For priority consideration, all required forms and supporting documentation must be submitted by the following deadlines:

- Early Decision: November 16
- Regular Decision: January 10
- Fall Transfer: March 1
- Spring Transfer: November 2

1. Complete the CSS Profile
   > Online at cssprofile.org
   > Amherst College code: 3003

2. Submit parents’ and student’s federal tax return(s) and wage statement(s)
   > U.S. citizens and U.S. permanent residents submit signed copies of these documents through the College Board’s Institutional Documentation Service: idoc.collegeboard.com
   > International students submit signed copies of national income tax return(s), wage statement(s) or other documentation directly to our Office of Financial Aid via upload on the Financial Aid Portal.
   > If your parents own an interest in a business corporation, submit a copy of the corporate tax return. If your parents have income from a partnership, submit a copy of the partnership tax return.

3. Submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)
   > Only for U.S. citizens and permanent residents
   > Online at fafsa.gov
   > Amherst College code: 002115
   > The FAFSA is the only required form to be considered for federal funds, but don’t stop there. We want you to be considered for Amherst funds, too, by completing all the above items.

Special circumstances

- Applicants whose parents are separated or divorced: Both of the student’s biological/adoptive parent(s) will complete their own CSS Profile. Each parent will access the CSS Profile with different log-in credentials. The custodial parent will complete the FAFSA.
Frequently asked questions

Does Amherst offer merit-based scholarships?
No. Amherst has been committed to a need-based financial aid program since the College’s founding in 1821. Need is the only criterion for receiving financial aid from Amherst. You should also apply for federal and state scholarships and grants for use at Amherst.

When will I receive my financial aid package?
If you’re a Regular Decision applicant and you’ve submitted your financial aid materials by the priority filing due date, we’ll send your financial aid notification within a few days of your admission notification in early April. If you’re an Early Decision applicant and you’ve submitted your financial aid materials by the due date, we’ll send a preliminary financial aid award notification soon after you receive a letter of admission. We’ll finalize your award later, after the cost of attendance for the coming year is set.

May I study abroad with financial aid?
Yes. If you enroll in a study abroad program, the Twelve College Exchange or another domestic off-campus study program, your financial aid is awarded the same way as when you are on campus, adjusted for differing program costs and local currencies.

Can my family take out a loan?
Some families elect to take out loans as part of their overall financial plan; student loans may be interest-free while you’re in school and low-interest after graduation. There are also parent loans available to U.S. citizens and permanent residents. Our Office of Financial Aid will process any approved educational loan for students or parents.

What if I receive outside scholarships or employer tuition benefits?
To help you maximize the benefit of any outside scholarships or employer tuition benefits, we will first use those scholarships or benefits to replace the work component of your financial aid package. If your outside scholarships or tuition benefits amount to more than the work component, we then deduct the excess amount from your Amherst scholarship. An outside scholarship or employer benefit cannot be used to replace the expected family contribution.

Where can I learn more?
Go to our financial aid website at amherst.edu/go/financialaid, where you’ll find detailed information about the financial aid process, including tips for international students and transfer students. You’ll also find two handy tools that can give you a rough estimate of your scholarship eligibility: the MyInTuition Cost Estimator (for an early cost estimate using six basic financial questions) and the Net Price Calculator (for an estimate of family contribution using more in-depth financial information). Both tools can be found at amherst.edu/go/calculator.