2019-20 State Net Price Calculator (NPC) Guidelines

60x30TX

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

2019-20 STATE NET PRICE CALCULATOR

Program Authorization and Purpose

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) is required to provide an accessible tool for estimating the cost of attendance (COA) for full-time entering first-year students attending institutions of higher education in Texas (see Texas Education Code (TEC), Section 61.0777). General rules concerning the uniform standards for the publication of COA information as well as a tool (Net Price Calculator - NPC) to compute an estimated COA can be found in Texas Administrative Code (TAC), Chapter 21, Subchapter PP.

Institutional Participation

Public institutions of higher education are **required** to participate in the NPC tool by providing the required institutional information to estimate the COA. Private/Independent institutions of higher education in Texas approved to participate in the Tuition Equalization Grant (TEG) and Texas College Work-Study (TCWS) Programs are strongly **encouraged** to participate in the NPC tool.

Principles

The State's NPC is intended to be as consumer-friendly and easily understandable as possible. The questions, information, and interface are designed with the end-user in mind. The user is presented with bottom-line estimates of both potential COA and financial aid options based on current year information provided by the financial aid offices at the participating institutions. The NPC was designed to increase institutional transparency and offer families a realistic picture of the comparable COA figures across institutions. It should not be used as a calculator for institutional recruitment or enrollment management. The NPC can be found on the College For All Texans website.
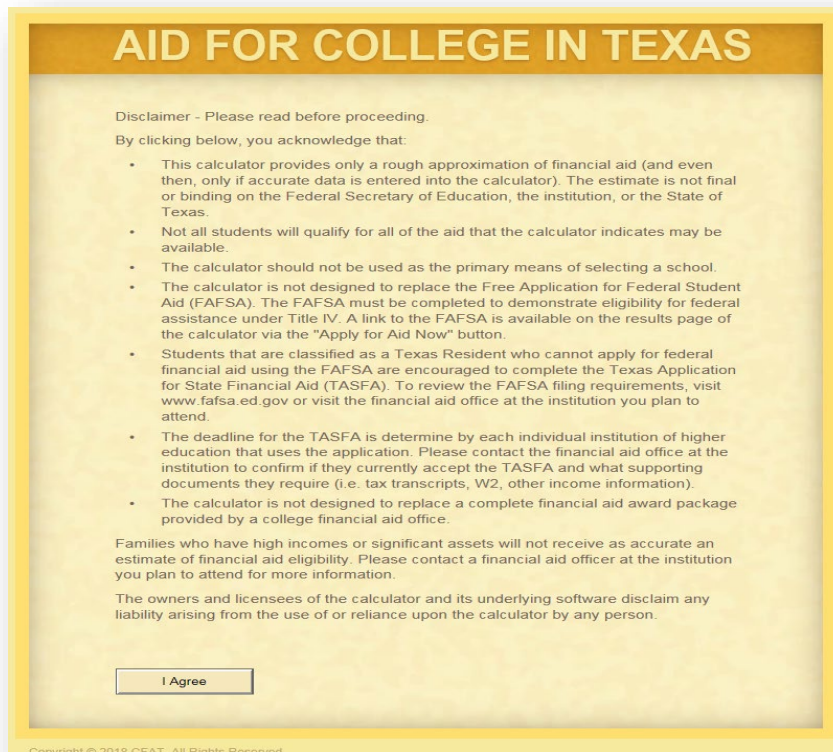
Net Price Calculator Portals

The Administration Application (institutional webpage) is located at: <u>Institution Admin Tool.</u> The THECB assigns participating institutions an administrative username and password to access the necessary modules and tables for configuration on the administration site.

NOTE: If the institution's Director of Financial Aid is unable to access the site, contact Financial Aid Services by phone at (844) 792-2640 or send an email through <u>Useraccess@thecb.state.tx.us</u>.

The Estimator Application (public webpage) is located at: <u>Net Price Calculator tool</u>. This application link is advertised for end-users (students and parents) on the <u>College for All Texans website</u>, and should also be posted on each participating institution's website in a prominent location.

Overview of the Institution's Administrative Site

Administrative Site Log In – All institutions participating in one of the state financial aid programs have been assigned a username and password to access the administrative site. Once logged in, institutions can view and update information using the options listed under **Estimator Setup**.

NOTE: If the institution's Director of Financial Aid is unable to access the site, contact Financial Aid Services by phone at (844) 792-2640 or send an email through Useraccess@thecb.state.tx.us.

- **Basics** – Introductory information concerning how the application can be used to submit and configure NPC data.

- **Budgets** – The budget table contains the institution's estimate of the total cost of education for one academic year (fall and spring semesters) of full-time enrollment (15+ semester credit hours each semester) for undergraduate students at the institution. The estimated costs include allowances for tuition, fees, books & supplies, room & board, and other expenses (e.g. transportation, personal, miscellaneous). These costs are loaded into the NPC from the College Student Budget (CSB) System. Changes or updates to the CSB are loaded into the NPC daily through an automated script.

- **Awards** – There are two tables used by the NPC to configure the award amounts the end-user will see on the results page: one table is for dependent students and the other is for independent students. Each table sets an estimated basic financial aid package for students within Estimated Family Contribution (EFC) ranges, including award amounts for grants/scholarships, loans, and a median grant/scholarship. These amounts are independently configurable based on EFC range, residency status, and living arrangements.

- **Awards Data Import** – The institution's award information for dependent and independent populations should be entered into separate spreadsheet templates. After all data fields are completed, both the dependent and independent spreadsheets must be saved in .CSV format and uploaded into the NPC. A Comma Separated Values (CSV) file, sometimes referred to as "Character Separated Values" or Comma Delimited Files" is a plain text file that contains a list of data where the comma character is mostly used to separate (or delimit) data. Once the data is successfully uploaded into the NPC, the data tables can be viewed in **Awards**.
  - It is recommended that the awards table template(s) be used to initially populate the awards tables. Once populated, the specific data fields can be updated manually under the **Awards** section. Click within the table and use the backspace button to delete the existing data. The new value can then be entered into the table. The field will turn green, indicating the information has been updated. The **Save Changes** button will then activate so the updated information can be saved. Updates can also be made by importing an updated award template.

- **Optional Text** – Participating institutions are encouraged to use **Optional Text** to communicate specific information to the end-user concerning the institution's packaging policies, processes, philosophies, etc. If the end-user selects the institution on the public site, the activated optional text for the institution will be displayed on the results page for the end-user to view. If the end-user chooses more than one institution, the activated optional text for each institution chosen will be displayed under the institution's name at the bottom of the results page.

- **Logo** – Participating institutions are encouraged to upload their institution's logo into the NPC. Logos must be limited to a .JPEG image (typically used for photographs, still images, etc.) or .GIF image (typically used for animations, simple images, transparency, etc.) no larger than 50x50 pixels. Images larger than 50x50 pixels will be distorted on the results page. If the end-user selects the institution on the public site, the institution's logo and name will appear at the top of the results page as a header for the information specific to the institution. The logo and institution name also serve as a hyperlink to the institution's financial aid office landing page of the institution's website.
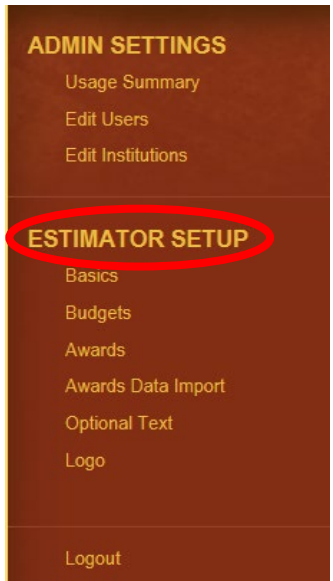
PLEASE NOTE: Only institutions that have successfully uploaded required information are **activated** and can be viewed by the end-user on the public site. Institutions that have not participated previously and decide to begin participating must contact the NPC Administrator in Financial Aid Services at (844) 792-2640 or send a website inquiry through CONTACT US (select "Financial Aid Question" as the **Contact Reason**).

NPC Components

There are three components that are used to create the output/results on the NPC:

1. Estimated Student Budgets or Costs of Attendance (COA)

The College Student Budget (CSB) is a database system separate from the NPC that is used to collect data from the institutions. All institutions in Texas participating in a state financial aid program(s) are required to submit COA figures for the upcoming year to the CSB database.

2. Estimated Expected Family Contribution (EFC)

The simplified formula (no assets) of the Federal Methodology (FM) calculation is used to compute an estimated EFC within the NPC. No EFC information is displayed for the end-user. This data is generated by the THECB.

3. Estimated Award or Packaging Information

Institutions participating in the NPC must upload and maintain estimated annual award table information for the active award year in the NPC. **(See steps below)**

Importing NPC Annual Award Data

1. Log into the Institution Admin Tool and click **Awards Data Import**.

2. Download the **Dependent** and **Independent** Excel templates.

3. Populate your institution's award data information using the **blue** cells. (Detailed instructions are available underneath the templates)

4. Save each award template file in a .CSV (Comma Delimited) format.

5. Use the **Browse** button to select the corresponding .CSV template.

6. Click the **Upload Dependent/Independent Student Awards CSV File** button.

7. The values from the template will populate in a table. Review the data carefully.

8. Once validated, click **Save** and the information will be stored in the THECB database and available for the NPC calculation.

Additional Resources

Contact Financial Aid Services	
By phone: (844)-792-2640	
Contact us by completing an online inquiry form and select "Financial Aid Question" as the Contact Reason.	
Other Resources for Institutions	
General program information for institutions	Student Financial Aid Programs Information Webpage
Texas Program Statutes	Texas Education Code
Texas Program Rules	Texas Administrative Code
Information concerning program processing, procedures, allocations, and other topics will be communicated to institutions through the GovDelivery system. In order to receive these communications, interested individuals must subscribe.	GovDelivery