

A. Social Media Content

Twitter:

- As #financialaid offices address growing concerns about affording college, they can use a tool already in their back pocket: the financial aid offer. Check out a new American Talent Initiative brief for 10 key principles to make the most of it: <https://bit.ly/atifinaidoffer> @AspenHigherEd
- Affording #highered is challenging for a growing number of students nationwide. 1 way to take on the challenge: clear #financialaid offers showing how much college will cost. Start with the American Talent Initiative's new brief: <https://bit.ly/atifinaidoffer> [Include Shareable 2]
- How can financial aid offers more clearly communicate students' costs and options to cover their expenses? @gelmehl and @tania_laviolet at @AspenHigherEd & the American Talent Initiative offer 10 key principles to consider in a brand-new brief: <https://bit.ly/atifinaidoffer> [Include Shareable 1]
- When colleges include the net price in #financialaid offers, what does it mean & how do they calculate it? The American Talent Initiative walks us through the answer, part of a new brief on how colleges can create clearer offers. More here: <https://bit.ly/atifinaidoffer> [Include Shareable 4]
- Considering a redesign of your #financialaid offer? The American Talent Initiative & @AspenHigherEd has you covered w/ an implementation checklist to make it clear for students. Step 1: access this resource and their brief on financial aid offers here: <https://bit.ly/atifinaidchecklist>
- What does a clear #financialaid offer look like in practice? You can click below for a sample that the American Talent Initiative and @AspenHigherEd have created for colleges nationwide, reflecting 10 key design principles. <https://bit.ly/atisamplefinaidoffer>

LinkedIn:

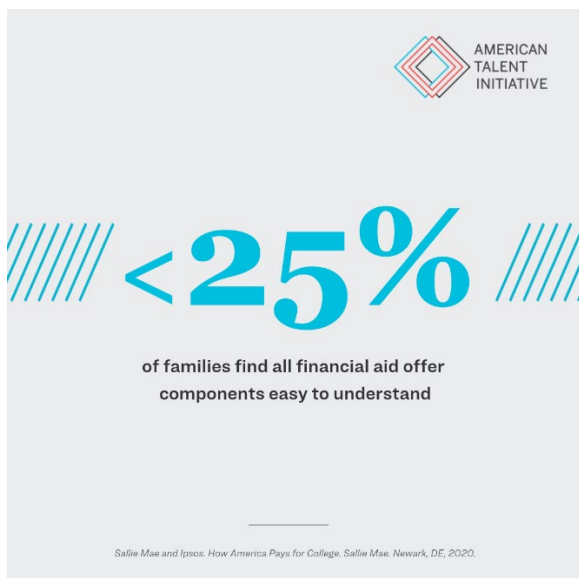
- At a time when the cost of higher education continues to increase, a growing number of low and middle-income students ask: "how much is college going to cost me?" As the American Talent Initiative highlights in its new brief, clear financial aid offers that detail the costs, and the aid options available to students, can go a long way toward answering that key question. Check out the full brief below, with 10 key principles, an implementation checklist, and even a sample offer to refer to: <https://bit.ly/atifinaidoffer>
- While students and families await financial aid offers each year to know the cost of attendance and how they're going to cover expenses, 60% do not calculate how much students are expected to pay--and less than 25% are easy to understand. The American Talent Initiative aims to bridge those gaps with its new brief, sharing 10 key components of a clear financial aid offer that all colleges can refer to and showing what it looks like in practice with a sample. Eager to learn more? Click below: <https://bit.ly/atifinaidoffer>
- "When colleges put the student experience at the center of their financial aid communications, students benefit." What does that look like in practice? @Gelsey Mehl and @Tania LaViolet at the @Aspen Institute College Excellence Program highlight how

institutions can do just that through clear, transparent financial aid offers in the American Talent Initiative's newest brief. Click here for a sample: <https://bit.ly/atiasamplefinaidoffer>

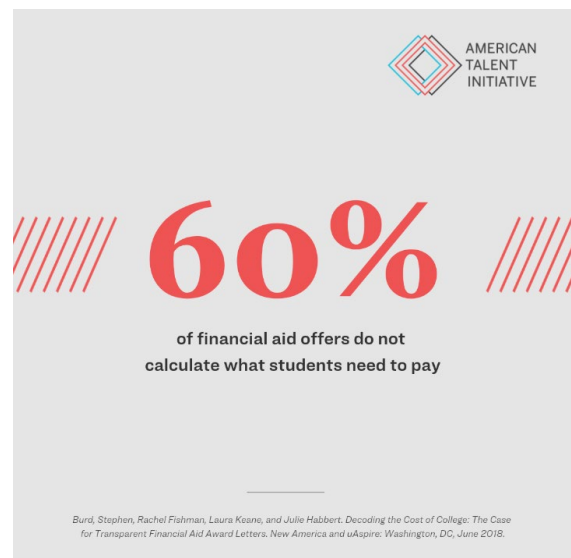
- Principle #1 in the American Talent Initiative's new brief on financial aid offers: emphasize and elevate how much students will owe (their net price). The brief not only shares how to demystify the net price for students and families, but includes nine other principles for how to create a financial aid offer that's easy to understand and prioritizes affordability and transparency. Curious what the other nine are? Click here to see now: <https://bit.ly/atifinaidoffer>
- As affordability is top of mind for a growing number of students, colleges are rethinking their financial aid offers to ensure the cost—and assistance they can provide—is as clear as possible. The American Talent Initiative provides a helpful starting point with a checklist on how to redesign your offer from start to finish. Get started by accessing the checklist below and taking a look at the full brief. <https://bit.ly/atifinaidchecklist>

B. Social Media Shareables

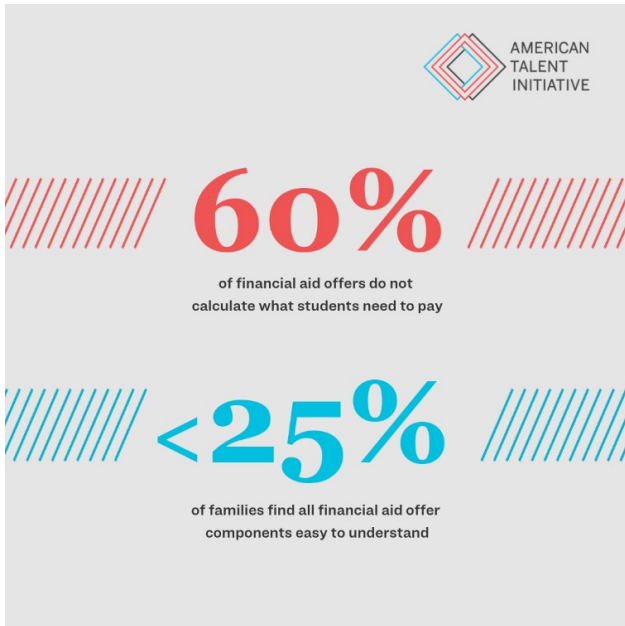
Shareable 1



Shareable 2



Shareable 3

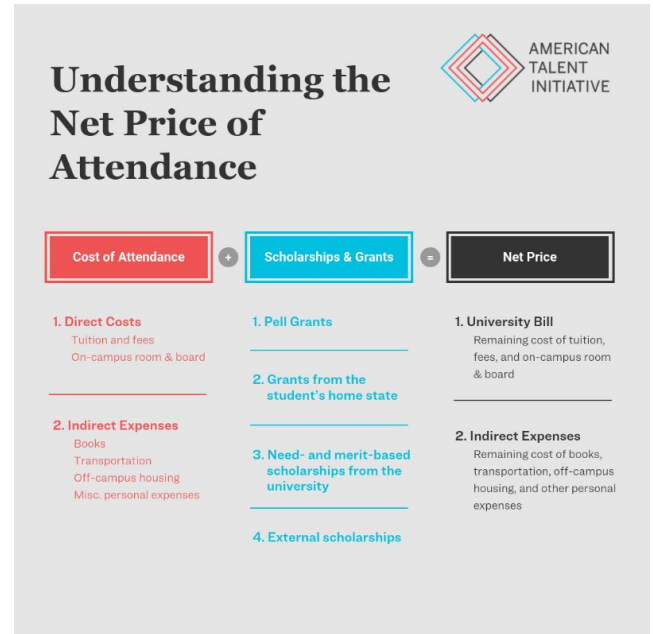


AMERICAN TALENT INITIATIVE

60%
of financial aid offers do not calculate what students need to pay

<25%
of families find all financial aid offer components easy to understand

Shareable 4



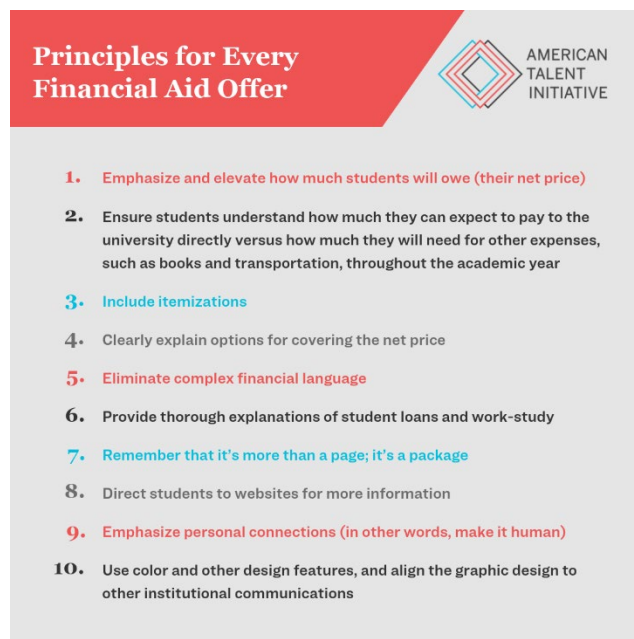
AMERICAN TALENT INITIATIVE

Understanding the Net Price of Attendance

Cost of Attendance + **Scholarships & Grants** = **Net Price**

<p>1. Direct Costs Tuition and fees On-campus room & board</p> <hr/> <p>2. Indirect Expenses Books Transportation Off-campus housing Misc. personal expenses</p>	<p>1. Pell Grants</p> <hr/> <p>2. Grants from the student's home state</p> <hr/> <p>3. Need- and merit-based scholarships from the university</p> <hr/> <p>4. External scholarships</p>	<p>1. University Bill Remaining cost of tuition, fees, and on-campus room & board</p> <hr/> <p>2. Indirect Expenses Remaining cost of books, transportation, off-campus housing, and other personal expenses</p>
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Shareable 5



AMERICAN TALENT INITIATIVE

Principles for Every Financial Aid Offer

- 1. Emphasize and elevate how much students will owe (their net price)**
- 2. Ensure students understand how much they can expect to pay to the university directly versus how much they will need for other expenses, such as books and transportation, throughout the academic year**
- 3. Include itemizations**
- 4. Clearly explain options for covering the net price**
- 5. Eliminate complex financial language**
- 6. Provide thorough explanations of student loans and work-study**
- 7. Remember that it's more than a page; it's a package**
- 8. Direct students to websites for more information**
- 9. Emphasize personal connections (in other words, make it human)**
- 10. Use color and other design features, and align the graphic design to other institutional communications**

C. E-Blast/Newsletter Copy

For higher education organizations

In the wake of a pandemic that has had drastic economic impacts on students from lower-income communities and communities of color, higher education leaders are focused on solutions to bridge a growing affordability gap and expand access. As a starting point, **you can read the American Talent Initiative's new issue brief [here](#)**, which elevates the financial aid offer as a tool that can help students and their families understand the true cost of college and the affordability of the higher education options available to them. In the brief, ATI shares 10 design principles to make the most of this tool and equips colleges and universities with an **[implementation checklist](#) and [sample financial aid offer](#)** to put these principles into practice. Click [here](#) to access the full suite of resources to help make financial aid communications as clear as possible and share the link with financial aid staff in your network.

For colleges and universities

As an increasing number of students search for ways to afford higher education, especially in the wake of the pandemic, a single question continues to emerge: *how much will college cost?* We encourage you to review **the American Talent Initiative's new brief [here](#)**, which highlights how to make the most of the financial aid offer to address this question. Drawing on best practices from the field and federal recommendations, the publication includes 10 principles to consider when designing an offer that is clear and transparent for students and their families. To make the resource as actionable as possible, ATI has also included an **[implementation checklist](#) and a [sample financial aid offer](#)** to consult that reflects these principles. Click [here](#) for the full suite of resources to explore how we can make the financial aid offer a clear, transparent resource that helps students understand the true cost of college—and the options available to cover their expenses.

D. Messages

We encourage you to use the below messages when framing the report to other higher education stakeholders, institutional leaders, and even policymakers invested in higher education issues. Taken together, they help underscore the impact of clear, transparent financial aid offers on perceptions of affordability of higher education—and the options available to address the costs of college. Feel free to adjust these to fit your local, institutional and organizational contexts—and the needs of those that you serve.

The Implications of a Growing Affordability Gap

- The average total cost of attendance has continued to [rise over three decades](#), placing higher education out of reach for students from lower-income backgrounds.
 - The average net price for a student from the lowest income quartile is [nearly 100%](#) of their family's income.
 - [Less than a quarter](#) of public four-year institutions are now affordable to students receiving an average-size Pell grant.

- The pandemic has only widened the affordability gap among students from lower-income backgrounds and communities of color.
 - Families from the lowest-income quartiles and communities of color suffered [the greatest job losses](#), forcing them to consider higher education as a luxury
 - [Nearly two in five students](#) expressed concern that they did not have enough money to make it through a semester of study.
- Students from lower-income backgrounds and communities of color are set back by higher debt burdens.
 - FAFSA completion rates at schools with a majority-minority student body were down by over eight percent, [four times](#) the rate at schools with few Black and Hispanic students.
 - Black students borrow at higher rates and are [five times](#) more likely to struggle to afford their loan payments after graduation.
 - Students with higher loan balances are less likely to be able to start their own businesses, afford stable housing, and support their communities.

The Need for Clarity in Financial Aid Communications

- The majority of financial aid offers do not make clear what students need to pay.
 - In an analysis of financial aid offers among 515 four-year institutions nationwide, [60 percent](#) do not calculate what students would ultimately owe.
 - [Less than a quarter of families](#) in a national survey express that the financial aid offer components are easy to understand.
- The majority of financial aid offers do not clearly outline the financial aid options available to students.
 - [Seventy percent](#) of offers grouped all aid together, failing to differentiate between work study, student loans, grants, and scholarships
- Increased transparency about the cost of college and the different options available to cover those expenses can ensure students and families choose the right college.

The Impact of a Clear, Straightforward Financial Aid Offer

- Emphasizing what students owe, how much of it they will need to pay, and to whom in a financial aid offer ensures they can select the best-fit college.
 - Financial aid offers that are clear and concise—and offer definitions for the various costs and types of aid—can save students and families invaluable time needed to decode expenses.
- Students benefit from financial aid communications that communicate the true cost of higher education.
 - Low- and moderate-income students are more likely to enroll at colleges and universities from which they are highly likely to graduate.
 - Students are less likely to encounter costs they can't pay down and drop out of the colleges they enroll in, incurring burdensome debts.