

## Higher Education

### Facts

Georgia ranks 31st in terms of postsecondary participation<sup>1</sup>, but has the eighth largest net full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment in the United States (excluding medical students)<sup>2</sup>. In 2018, 52.6% of Georgia's young adults were enrolled in postsecondary education or had earned a degree, compared to 56.5% nationally.<sup>3</sup>

The average amount of annual in-state tuition and fees at Georgia's public four-year universities increased by 1.95% over the past five years. The national average during this time was 9.61%. Georgia's average amount of tuition and fees, \$8,719, also ranks below the national average at 38th.<sup>4</sup>

Net tuition revenue per FTE (tuition after scholarships and other grants) is \$4,716, which is 68% of the national average.<sup>5</sup>

		<u>Rank</u>
Average Annual In-State Tuition & Fees at Public Two-Year Institutions, 2019-20	\$4,042	32
Average Annual In-State Tuition & Fees at Public Four-Year Institutions, 2019-20	\$8,719	38
% Change in In-State Tuition & Fees at Public Four-Year Institutions, 2014-15 to 2019-20	1.95%	45
Higher Education Appropriations per FTE Student, 2019	\$8,979	13
State Grant Aid per Undergraduate Student, 2019-20	\$1,985	3
Total Educational Revenue Per FTE	\$13,692	30

Source: Trends in College Pricing 2019<sup>6</sup>

**Table 1.1**

College affordability remains a central challenge for higher education, and there has been a growing national push for college loan forgiveness and "free" college in recent years. Georgia has been a national leader in college tuition assistance ever since Gov. Zell Miller implemented the lottery-funded HOPE Program (Helping Outstanding Pupils Educationally) in 1993 to provide merit-based college scholarships. Today, several financial aid programs are available to Georgia students:

The **HOPE Scholarship** is a merit-based award available to Georgia residents who have demonstrated academic achievement. A recipient must graduate from high school with a minimum 3.0 grade point average (GPA) and maintain a minimum 3.0 cumulative postsecondary GPA to remain eligible.

The **HOPE Grant** is available to Georgia residents who are pursuing a certificate or diploma. A recipient must maintain a minimum 2.0 cumulative postsecondary GPA to remain eligible.

The **Zell Miller Scholarship** is a merit-based award available to Georgia residents, similar to the HOPE Scholarship, but with more stringent academic requirements and a higher level of tuition assistance. A recipient must graduate from high school with a minimum 3.7 GPA combined with a minimum SAT score of 1,200 on the math and reading portions or a minimum composite ACT score of 26 in a single national test administration and maintain a minimum 3.3 cumulative postsecondary GPA to remain eligible.

<sup>1</sup> EdWeek.org, "Education Counts," <http://www.edcounts.org/createtable/viewtable.php?sortCol=1&sortAsc=0>

<sup>2</sup> State Profile: Georgia, 2019 State Higher Education Finance report, <https://shef.sheeo.org/state-profile/georgia/>

<sup>3</sup> Education Week Research Center analysis of data from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey, 2018.

<sup>4</sup> Trends in College Pricing 2019, College Board, <https://research.collegeboard.org/trends/college-pricing>

<sup>5</sup> State Profile: Georgia, 2019 State Higher Education Finance report, <https://shef.sheeo.org/state-profile/georgia/>

<sup>6</sup> Trends in College Pricing, College Board, <https://research.collegeboard.org/trends/college-pricing>

Eligible students are provided full-tuition assistance while pursuing an undergraduate degree to attend a Zell Miller Scholarship eligible college or university in Georgia.

The **Zell Miller Grant** is a merit-based program available to Georgia residents pursuing a certificate or diploma. A recipient must maintain a minimum 3.5 cumulative postsecondary GPA to remain eligible. Recipients are provided full-standard tuition assistance while enrolled at an eligible college or university in Georgia

**Examples of HOPE's impact on tuition and fees:**

At the University of Georgia, a student enrolled in 15 hours (per semester) for 2020-21 is assessed \$4,895 in tuition. Students eligible for HOPE receive \$3,840; Zell Miller Scholarship eligible students receive \$4,895. That leaves HOPE students with \$1,055 to pay out of pocket. (This does not include room, board, books/supplies, mandatory fees or other living expenses.)

At Chattahoochee Technical College, the per semester tuition and fees (15 hours) for 2020-21 is \$1,500. Students eligible for the HOPE Grant receive \$1,140 and Zell Miller Grant eligible students receive \$1,500. That leaves HOPE Grant students with \$360 out of pocket. (This does not include room, board, books/supplies, mandatory fees or other living expenses.)

High school students and eligible home study students can take advantage of college courses through the **Move On When Ready** dual enrollment program, which provides funds for tuition, mandatory fees and books up to a per-term maximum of 15 semester hours. Another option for high school students is one of Georgia's College and Career Academies, which are collaborative education and career-building partnerships between local school systems, technical colleges, and local businesses and industries. In the 2019-2020 academic year, there were 48 operating or proposed College and Career Academies in Georgia.

Students eligible for the HOPE or Zell Miller Grant are also eligible for the **HOPE Career Grant, formerly known as the Strategic Industries Workforce Development Grant**. This grant pays for tuition, books and fees towards education for industries in which there are more jobs than workers to fill them and include the following areas of study: Commercial Truck Driving, Diesel Mechanic, Early Childhood Care/Education, Healthcare Technologies, Information Technology, Practical Nursing, Welding, and Industrial Maintenance.<sup>7</sup>

Low-income students at any higher education institution are eligible for a federal **Pell Grant**. The maximum annual amount of funding for FY 2020-21 was \$6,345, enough to cover the out-of-pocket tuition and fee expenses, for example, at UGA or Chattahoochee Tech.

Georgia's **REACH** program<sup>8</sup> provides eligible low-income students in participating school districts with financial scholarships of up to \$10,000 to be used for "the educational costs at an in-state, HOPE-eligible public or private post-secondary institution."

Georgia higher education institutions also have their own need-based programs available, such as the **Tech Promise**<sup>9</sup> program at Georgia Tech, which provides low-income, full-time resident students with funding to cover tuition, mandatory fees, an allowance for books, standard housing, personal expenses and a meal plan.

Georgia State University has gained national recognition for increasing graduation rates dramatically with a program of targeted grants and innovative use of data and technology. From 2014-2018, African-

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.gafutures.org/hope-state-aid-programs/hope-zell-miller-grants/hope-career-grant/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.gafutures.org/hope-state-aid-programs/scholarships-grants/reach-georgia/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://finaid.gatech.edu/tech-promise>

American, Hispanic, first-generation and Pell-eligible students all graduated from Georgia State at or above the rates of the student body overall – making Georgia State the only national public university to attain this goal.

Over this same period, graduation rates for bachelor-degree seeking students improved 23%, including a 35% increase among Latino students and 29% among African Americans. Pell-eligible students comprise 58% of Georgia State University's overall undergraduate student population and graduated at a slightly higher rate than non-Pell students.<sup>10</sup> This proves that students from all backgrounds can succeed if the right programs are in place.

All of these aid programs are available *before* students are forced to borrow money through student loans.

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<sup>10</sup> 2018 Status Report, Georgia State University, Complete College Georgia, <https://success.gsu.edu/download/2018-status-report-georgia-state-university-complete-college-georgia/>