

# College planning is NOT just saving for college.



You should be able to expect more than just simplistic, one-size-fits-all savings strategies from your financial advisor.

We are going to help you save ON, not just FOR the cost of college. **How?** By helping you make well-informed college planning and funding decisions at every step along the way.



If your student is in high school and you **are likely a candidate for need-based financial aid** at the school you are evaluating, the contents and corresponding benefits of your custom plan are:

## 1 Estimate of your Expected Family Contribution (EFC).

**BENEFIT:** This is what you will be expected to pay toward the cost of college at the school selected before qualifying for any financial aid assistance at that school. This is the all-important starting point for becoming an informed buyer of a college education. By starting with your EFC, you'll have a much better idea which schools are REALLY affordable for you!

## 2 The EFC formula used by the school

**BENEFIT:** There are two different formulas for determining your EFC. The method used by the school you are evaluating can make a big difference in how much you will be expected to pay at the school as well as strategies for increasing your financial aid eligibility at that school.

## 3 Strategies for maximizing education tax credits

**BENEFIT:** Tax credits can help you significantly reduce the cost of college. Every tax dollar saved is like a "scholarship dollar" so you need to know the strategies for maximizing them.

## 4 Savings strategies

**BENEFIT:** From the myriad of options, we'll help you decide which savings option is best suited for you. We'll evaluate savings options on critically important categories such as whether the option is good or disastrous for a financial aid candidate, whether it's a good option if you don't use it for college but for retirement instead, etc.

## 5 School-specific merit scholarships

**BENEFIT:** School-specific scholarships that your student qualifies for based on academic performance and how to obtain them are included in your plan. This actionable information, which cannot be easily obtained otherwise, may result in scholarships that will help you reduce your out-of-pocket costs. It's one more way that we can help families save on and not just save for the cost of college.

## 6 Strategies for increasing financial aid at the school selected

**BENEFIT:** This is a one of the most valuable aspects of your customized college funding plan. We'll identify strategies that you can implement - based on your particular circumstances - to help maximize your financial aid and minimize your out-of-pocket college costs. These strategies are based on an in-depth understanding of how financial aid works and may save you thousands of dollars on your college costs.

## 7 Comprehensive financial aid analysis at the school selected

**BENEFIT:** This is a realistic projection of the amount and type of financial aid you can expect at the school in question as well as how much you'll likely have to pay out-of-pocket, after accounting for financial aid. You'll be amazed to learn that at many of the higher-priced schools - particularly private colleges - your actual out-of-pocket costs will be less than many public schools with a lower sticker price. Many schools that you think are not affordable may be very affordable to you when you factor in financial aid! This information can be very helpful in determining what school to apply to in the first place! Don't give up on the school of your student's dreams just because you don't think you can afford it. You may be very pleasantly surprised to learn that you can!

## 8 Loan strategies for meeting shortfalls

**BENEFIT:** Most families will need loans to help cover the total cost of college. Knowing which options to choose can be very confusing. Choosing the wrong option can significantly increase your out-of-pocket college costs. We can help you choose loan strategies - based on your particular circumstances - for covering any shortfalls not covered by your resources or financial aid.

For more information, contact:  
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If you are **NOT a candidate for financial aid OR your student is not yet in high school**, your custom plan will include the following:

## 1 Estimate of your Expected Family Contribution (EFC).

**BENEFIT:** This is what you will be expected to pay toward the cost of college at the school selected before qualifying for any financial aid assistance at that school. By starting with your EFC, you'll have a much better idea which schools are REALLY affordable for you! For a parent with younger students, knowing your EFC is important in developing an effective long-term game plan.

## 2 The EFC formula used by the school

**BENEFIT:** There are two different formulas for determining your EFC. The method used by the school you are evaluating can make a big difference in how much you will be expected to pay at the school. This is particularly helpful for families with younger children that may end up being candidates for financial aid because it can help them to plan for maximizing financial aid opportunities.

## 3 Analysis

**BENEFIT:** Based on your EFC, the cost of the college selected and the amount of lead time until your student begins college, we'll provide practical recommendations for an overall strategy for planning for and paying college costs.

## 4 Planning and Funding Strategies

**BENEFIT:** Many of these college planning strategies can help increase cash flow which can help pay education expenses (or be reallocated) or reduce taxes. Every dollar saved on taxes through a college planning strategy is like a "scholarship" that you give to yourself! Areas covered include:

- Strategies for high income earners
- Strategies for business owners
- Strategies for grandparents
- Trust planning strategies
- Estate planning strategies
- Education tax credit strategies
- Gifting strategies - for parents and grandparents
- And much more!

## 5 Savings strategies

**BENEFIT:** What is the best savings option for you, based on your circumstances? We'll help you evaluate the options and assess critically important categories such as whether the option is tax favored for college use, rate of return versus college inflation, and use of the option for college and/or retirement. Choosing the wrong option can cost you dearly! We'll help you decide wisely.

## 6 Strategic use of 529 savings plan for college savings and funding.

**BENEFIT:** We'll help you assess the merits of using a 529 savings plan as the cornerstone of your college savings and funding plan. We'll look at:

- Practical strategies for maximizing 529 resources for college AND tax savings for the family.
- Complementary strategies that will multiply the benefits of using the 529 plan and maximize tax savings for the family.
- Projected college funding surpluses or shortages using this approach.
- The amount of tax benefit to you - if any - of using your state's 529 plan. This can help you decide if your state's 529 plan is the best option for you.
- Coordinating 529 withdrawals with education tax credits (this can be tricky).
- Estimated tax savings by using the 529 plan as well as the other suggested strategies.
- And much more!

## 7 School-specific merit scholarships

**BENEFIT:** School-specific scholarships that your student qualifies for based on academic performance and how to obtain them are included in your plan. This actionable information, which cannot be easily obtained otherwise, may result in scholarships that will help you reduce your out-of-pocket costs. It's one more way that we can help families save on and not just save for the cost of college.

## 8 Loan strategies for meeting shortfalls

**BENEFIT:** Most families will need loans to help cover the total cost of college. We can help you choose loan strategies - based on your particular circumstances - for covering any shortfalls not covered by your resources.