



COLLEGIATE FUNDING SOLUTIONS

EZ College Planning

PREPARED FOR

EZ College Planning Client - Sample Report



Actionable information to help save ON, not just FOR the cost of college!

Saving for college costs is important, but there is more to college planning than just savings strategies. This report provides actionable information that may help a family significantly reduce its out-of-pocket college costs. Every dollar saved on college costs can be reallocated for other important purposes, such as retirement savings. This report contains actionable information that can help a family save ON and FOR the cost of a college education and result in a better retirement savings outlook.



I. How to use this report

- 1. Review the School Information that directly impacts costs**
including cost of attendance, graduation rates and room and board costs. The four-year estimated "sticker price" for Niagara University is \$212,410 - but this is NOT necessarily the price you have to pay.
- 2. Do you qualify for financial aid?** Need-based financial aid can substantially reduce family out-of-pocket college costs.
- 3. See how the school determines your financial aid eligibility**
and determines how much you'll have to contribute to the annual costs (there are ways to reduce the amount you'll be required to pay).
- 4. What do you need to do to qualify for merit-based scholarships?**
School based merit scholarships can significantly reduce college costs.
- 5. What is the most efficient way for you to save for college?**
Analyze the options for use as college savings/retirement savings vehicles.
- 6. How does your state-sponsored 529-plan measure up?**
Review important tax benefits of the state-sponsored 529-plan (if available) for clients interested in 529 savings plans.
- 7. Which education tax credits should you use?**
Determine which education tax credit/savings options may yield the most tax savings.



This sample report includes callouts, like this one to help you understand the benefits to your clients and your business of adding this capability to your service offerings.

Here are the facts of the case for the family represented by this sample report:

- AGI = \$176,000
- Liquid Assets = \$147,000
- Student grade = junior in high school
- Two children will be in college when this student goes to college
- School of interest – Niagara University in NY

Review all the data items included to see how relevant and valuable each item can be to your client in helping them save ON and not just for the cost of college.

Three of the most valuable components of the table are the EFC calculation, the projected aid package and the analysis that determines if the client may be able to further increase financial aid eligibility with the help of college planning strategies

*The **Expected Family Contribution**, or EFC as it is known, is the starting point for offering value-added college planning services to a family. The EFC is a calculated assessment - based on a family's financial and household information – and is the amount they will be expected to pay toward the cost of college at a particular school before qualifying for any need-based financial aid from the school. Many families making in excess of \$150,000 per year qualify for need-based financial aid.*

Because need-based financial aid can significantly reduce the out-of-pocket college costs for middle and upper-middle-income families, at a minimum you should be able to estimate your clients' EFC and help ensure that they can at least cover that amount. The report provides the EFC estimate for the client.

***All schools don't offer the same financial aid packages.** Therefore it can actually end up costing your client more to send their child to a school with a lower cost of attendance than another option with a higher cost if the lower-cost school offers an inferior financial aid package.*

*Your clients should know each school's history of giving money before they ever apply, so they're not disappointed when they get a bad financial aid package from their child's top school choice. **The report provides this actionable information.***

In this example, although the school's sticker price is \$45,000/year, the family out-of-pocket estimate is only \$27,000!



II. What You Need to Know About Paying for College

Facts Presented by the University

Expected Financial Support

Expected Out of Pocket

SCHOOL INFORMATION - NIAGARA UNIVERSITY

6-YEAR GRADUATION RATE

A poor 6-year graduation rate can significantly increase college costs due to extended time in school.

64%

CURRENT ONE-YEAR COST OF ATTENDANCE (COA)

Determined for each college by totaling the costs for tuition and fees, room and board, books and supplies, personal expenses and travel. College admissions strategies can help find comparable schools at significantly reduced costs.

\$44,700

CURRENT ROOM AND BOARD COST

A high room and board cost can make purchase/resale of rental property during the college years an attractive alternative.

\$12,300

FINANCIAL AID INFO AND STATS - NIAGARA UNIVERSITY

FINANCIAL AID FORMS REQUIRED

Indicates whether the school in question requires the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) or the CSS Profile to determine financial aid eligibility at the school.

FAFSA

AVERAGE AMOUNT OF FINANCIAL NEED MET

The percentage of a family's financial need that the school is most likely to meet. The higher the percentage of need met the better. Any unmet need will have to be covered by the family.

85%

GIFT AID %

The percentage of the financial need that the school will meet in the form of scholarships, grants etc. This is money that will not have to be paid back to the school. The higher this value, the better.

71%

SELF HELP %

The amount of need that the school will meet in the form of student loans and work-study.

29%

FAMILY AND FINANCIAL AID ESTIMATES

EXPECTED FAMILY CONTRIBUTION AMOUNT (EFC)

This is what the family will be expected to pay toward the cost of college at the school selected before qualifying for any need-based financial aid at that school. By starting with the EFC and not the COA, the family will have a much better idea which schools are REALLY affordable.

\$23,946

DOES THE FAMILY QUALIFY FOR FINANCIAL AID AT NIAGARA UNIVERSITY?

Yes

COULD THE FAMILY QUALIFY FOR ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL AID BY IMPLEMENTING COLLEGE PLANNING STRATEGIES?

An analysis of the financial information provided indicates that the total amount of liquid assets (cash instruments, securities, mutual funds, etc.) is beyond the asset protection allowance value permitted by the financial aid formula for this client. Therefore, redeployment of these assets into nonassessable assets would remove them from assessment and may increase financial aid eligibility.

Yes

FINANCIAL AID ELIGIBILITY AMOUNT

An estimate of the amount of financial aid the family is eligible for based on the school cost, the financial aid formula used to determine their financial need and the average amount of financial need met by the school.

\$17,640

ESTIMATED FINANCIAL AID AWARD FOR STUDENT

GRANTS/SCHOLARSHIPS

Determined by applying the gift aid % to the financial aid eligibility total. This is a forecast of the amount that you may receive in the form of Gift Aid (grants and scholarships).

\$12,525

LOANS/WORK-STUDY

Determined by applying the self-help % to the financial aid eligibility total. This is a forecast of the amount that you may receive in the form of Self-Help (loans and work-study).

\$5,116

TOTAL FAMILY CONTRIBUTION TO COST OF COLLEGE AFTER ACCOUNT FOR NEED-BASED FINANCIAL AID

Is equal to the EFC plus any unmet need. This can be thought of as the net amount due "out-of-pocket" after accounting for financial aid from the school. This is the real one-year cost of the college to the family as opposed to the COA.

\$27,059

MERIT-BASED SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION - NIAGARA UNIVERSITY

QUALIFY FOR MERIT-BASED SCHOLARSHIPS AT NIAGARA UNIVERSITY BASED ON REPORTED GPA/SAT SCORES?

A yes indicates that the student is already eligible for merit-based scholarships at the school in question based on GPA and standardized test scores.

Yes

NUMBER OF MERIT-BASED SCHOLARSHIPS STUDENT MAY QUALIFY FOR AT NIAGARA UNIVERSITY* (DETAILS BELOW)

School-based merit scholarships are by far the leading source of potential "free money" for a family and one of the best ways a family can reduce the cost of a college education and reduce student loan debt.

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Students who are in the top 20% of the incoming freshman class are likely to receive a superior financial aid package. This is known as **"preferential packaging."** These students are likely to have a greater percentage of their financial need met by the school. In addition, they are more likely to receive a better aid package (a higher percentage of Gift Aid relative to Self Help) than the averages shown.

Even in cases where the family is affluent and not a candidate for need-based financial aid, there is another little-known form of financial aid often given to affluent families. It is the tuition discount. High-performing students from affluent families are in great demand by colleges - especially expensive private ones. In order to entice these families to send their student to their particular institution, the colleges will often offer a Tuition Discount which comes in the form of a grant or scholarship.

Schools where a student is a candidate for preferential packaging or tuition discounting are **great candidates for applying** - either because of high interest in the school or possibly as a leveraging candidate which may cause the first choice school to sweeten the pot to match a better offer.

CFS compares the student's test scores to last year's incoming freshman class and if the student's scores would put them in the top percentile, the report includes a notification below, alerting the advisor/family to the likelihood that they are candidates for preferential packaging or tuition discounting at the school in question!

This actionable information can be used by the client to make informed college application/selection decisions which can further reduce their out-of-pocket college costs!

* The financial aid information and percentages used in the table are reported by the school and are average amounts. A high performing student (GPA/standardized test scores) will often result in a "preferential aid package" for the student, whereby a higher percentage of financial need will be met and the gift aid % (grants and scholarships) will increase relative to the stated averages.



TIP: The financial aid estimates provided above are based on averages reported by the school selected. Students who are in the top 20% of the incoming freshman class are likely to outperform the averages provided. This is known as **preferential packaging**. These students are likely to have a greater percentage of their financial need met by the school and are likely to receive a higher percentage of Gift Aid relative to Self Help than the averages shown above.

For families that won't qualify for need-based financial aid, they may receive a tuition discount. High performing students from affluent families are in demand by colleges, especially expensive private ones. In order to entice these families to send their student to their particular institution, the colleges will often offer a **tuition discount** which comes in the form of a grant or scholarship.

The GPA and SAT score provided on the dataform would put this student in the top 20% of last year's incoming freshman class and therefore make the student a good candidate for preferential packaging or tuition discounting.



Knowing how much a client needs to save to meet projected college costs is one question.

Equally and maybe even more important is the question of which option of the myriad of those available to the client – is the BEST option in light of their circumstances.

The report will help to answer that question.



III. How Should You Save For College?

Use the table below to help determine which savings vehicles may be best for the client in light of their goals and circumstances. For example, parents who may be eligible for need-based financial aid should consider options that have little or no negative impact on financial aid eligibility while early starters may favor very saving strategies that provide tax favored access for college funding and retirement.

Investment	Does the Value of the Asset Impact Financial Aid Eligibility?	Tax Favored Access for College?	Tax Favored Access for Retirement?
Cash	Yes	No	No
529 College Savings Plans	Yes	Yes	n/a
Coverdell Education Savings Account	Yes	Yes	n/a
Roth IRA	No	Yes (DEPENDS ON USE)	Yes
Traditional IRA	No	No	No
Retirement Accounts	No	No	No
Series EE Savings Bonds	Yes	No	No
Cash-value Life Insurance	No	Yes (VIA POLICY LOANS)	Yes (VIA POLICY LOANS)
Pre-paid 529 Plans	Yes	Yes	No



A tax deduction on contributions to the state 529 plan (if available) may provide a compelling reason for selecting the state plan versus other alternatives. The CFS report helps justify the benefits of the state plan:

- First - In addition to providing the limit on the annual deductible amount, it indicates if excess contributions above the annual deductible amount can be carry forward into subsequent years to obtain additional tax savings and for how years carry forward can occur. For example if the annual limit on deductible contributions is \$10,000 and the state allows for a carry forward of 5 years on excess contributions, then a \$50,000 contribution during the year will yield tax savings for 4 additional years.
- The report also shows what the **maximum potential tax savings** could be to the client by taking **full advantage** of the annual deductible limit on contributions.



IV. What Benefits Does a State 529 Plan Offer?

The table below provides valuable advisor and client information concerning the state-offered 529 plan. A tax deduction on contributions to the state plan may provide a compelling rationale for selecting the state plan versus other alternatives. In addition to the limit on the deductible amount, it indicates if excess contributions beyond the annual deductible amount can be carry forward into subsequent years and how many years carry forward can occur. For example if the annual limit on deductible contributions is \$10,000 and the state allows for a carry forward of 5 years on excess contributions, then a 50,000 contribution during the year will yield tax savings for 4 additional years. Finally, the table shows what the potential tax savings could be to the client by taking advantage of the annual deductible limit on 529 contributions - subject to the annual gift limit amount of \$15,000. Tax savings are calculated based on years until college only. Carry forward provisions based on contributions above the annual limit are not factored into the tax savings calculations.

529 College Savings Information

State of Residence	MI
Does state offer state deduction on 529 plan contributions?	YES
Annual Limit of Deductible Amount	\$10,000
Allow for carry forward of contribution amount?	NO
How many years?	0
Maximum Potential State Tax Savings on Contributions	\$425 (STATE TAX RATE) * (CONTRIBUTION MAX) * (YEARS)



The **education tax** table in the report will help you and your clients assess which of the available education tax benefits is best for them.

It is valuable information to know which of the complex and ever-changing education tax benefits yields the greatest benefit for your client so they can make well-informed decisions and leverage their financial situation and circumstances for maximum benefit.



V. What Education Tax Credit is Best For You?

This table provides an overview of education tax benefits from IRS Publication 970 Tax Benefits for Education. It also shows the estimated tax savings for the family based on their AGI and tax filing status. Therefore it can help the family determine which option will yield the most benefits.

Comparison of Tax Benefits Based on Tuition and Fees at Niagara University

	AMERICAN OPPORTUNITY CREDIT	LIFETIME LEARNING CREDIT
Max Amount and Calculations	\$2,500 tax credit per student	\$2,000 tax credit per student
Qualified Expenses	Tuition, fees and course materials	Tuition and fees
2019 Income Phaseout Ranges	Single: \$80,000-\$90,000 Joint: \$160,000-\$180,000	Single: \$57,000-\$67,000 Joint: \$114,000-\$134,000
Do You Qualify?	Yes	No
Estimated Tax Savings	\$500	\$0



Knowing what scholarships are available at a particular school based on the student's merit and how to obtain the scholarship is vitally important information for the family.

Scholarships do not have to be repaid, are usually renewable and can dramatically reduce the family's out-of-pocket college costs. Most "free money" comes directly from the school so a family needs to know what's available and how to qualify!

Facts about CFS' exclusive scholarship database:

- Over 1600 schools represented
- 8,000+ scholarship programs
- \$9,000 per year AVERAGE scholarship value
- Almost ALL are renewable for four years.

Over 800 hours/year are required to update and maintain this exclusive database.

Much of the actionable information that families need to know in order to qualify for the scholarships is NOT readily available (deadlines, ancillary requirements, additional qualification criteria, etc.).

Many families miss out on scholarships because they didn't have all the vitally important information they needed to apply for and obtain the scholarship. **This exclusive scholarship section helps solve that problem!**



IV. Are Merit Scholarships Available?

School-based merit scholarships are by far the leading source of potential "free money" for a family and one of the best ways a family can reduce the cost of a college education and reduce student loan debt. Are Merit Scholarships available for RL at Niagara University?

The scholarship information below reveals:

1. Exactly what school-based scholarships RL is eligible for at Niagara University.
2. The requirements associated with each scholarship in order to obtain them.
3. Additional scholarships that may be available to RL, including some that may only require a modest increase in test scores to meet the requirements..

Many families miss out on thousands of dollars of scholarship money because they don't know what's available to them and what's required to obtain them. The actionable information below can help ensure that RL does not miss out on any scholarship opportunities at Niagara University.



RECOMMENDATION: Use the information below to review the requirements to obtain the scholarships below and to determine if a test prep program may be a prudent investment in order to raise test scores to meet qualification criteria for additional scholarships.

NIAGARA UNIVERSITY - TRUSTEES SCHOLARSHIPS

**ELIGIBLE BASED ON
SUPPLIED INFORMATION**
Yes

Amount: **\$16,000.00**
Min GPA: **3.6**
Min SAT: **1220**
Min ACT: **27**
Min Class Rank: **not available**
Number Available: **Limited**

Essay Required: **No**
Interview Required: **No**
Audition Required: **No**
Specified Majors: **all**
Scholarship Deadline: **2016-02-15**
For Minority: **No**
Renewable: **Yes**
State of Residence: **all**

Notes To Renew:
Notes: **Criteria varies (4.0 GPA =and 1150 SAT / 26 ACT)**
Scholarship Link:
<http://www.niagara.edu/scholarships-and-grants/>

NIAGARA UNIVERSITY - PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLARSHIPS

**ELIGIBLE BASED ON
SUPPLIED INFORMATION**
Yes

Amount: **\$14,000.00**
Min GPA: **3.00**
Min SAT: **1120**
Min ACT: **24**
Min Class Rank: **not available**
Number Available: **Limited**

Essay Required: **No**
Interview Required: **No**
Audition Required: **No**
Specified Majors: **all**
Scholarship Deadline: **2016-02-15**
For Minority: **No**
Renewable: **Yes**
State of Residence: **all**

Notes To Renew:
Notes: **Criteria varies (3.5 GPA and 1050 SAT / 23 ACT). Award ranges \$13,500 - \$14,500**
Scholarship Link:
<http://www.niagara.edu/scholarships-and-grants/>

NIAGARA UNIVERSITY - ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

**ELIGIBLE BASED ON
SUPPLIED INFORMATION**
Yes

Amount: **\$12,000.00**
Min GPA: **3.00**
Min SAT: **950**
Min ACT: **22**
Min Class Rank: **not available**
Number Available: **Limited**

Essay Required: **No**
Interview Required: **No**
Audition Required: **No**
Specified Majors: **all**
Scholarship Deadline: **2016-02-15**
For Minority: **No**
Renewable: **Yes**
State of Residence: **all**

Notes To Renew:
Notes:
Scholarship Link:
<http://www.niagara.edu/scholarships-and-grants/>

NIAGARA UNIVERSITY - GRANTS

**ELIGIBLE BASED ON
SUPPLIED INFORMATION**
Yes

Amount: **\$8,000.00**
Min GPA: **3.00**
Min SAT: **950**
Min ACT: **20**
Min Class Rank: **not available**
Number Available: **Limited**

Essay Required: **No**
Interview Required: **No**
Audition Required: **No**
Specified Majors: **all**
Scholarship Deadline: **2016-02-15**
For Minority: **No**
Renewable: **Yes**
State of Residence: **all**

Notes To Renew:
Notes:
Scholarship Link:
<http://www.niagara.edu/scholarships-and-grants/>

NIAGARA UNIVERSITY - VINCENTIAN SCHOLARS PROGRAM

ELIGIBLE BASED ON SUPPLIED INFORMATION

Yes

Amount: **\$5,000.00**

Min GPA: **3.00**

Min SAT: **1050**

Min ACT: **23**

Min Class Rank: **not available**

Number Available: **Limited**

Essay Required: **No**

Interview Required: **No**

Audition Required: **No**

Specified Majors: **all**

Scholarship Deadline: **2016-02-15**

For Minority: **No**

Renewable: **Yes**

State of Residence: **all**

Notes To Renew:

Notes: **For students who have demonstrated interest in community service and wish to continue while at NU.**

Scholarship Link:
http://apps.niagara.edu/admissions/vincentian_scholarship.php

NIAGARA UNIVERSITY - TRANSFER SCHOLARSHIP I

ELIGIBLE BASED ON SUPPLIED INFORMATION

Yes

Amount: **\$12,000.00**

Min GPA: **3.34**

Min SAT: **0**

Min ACT: **0**

Min Class Rank: **not available**

Number Available: **Limited**

Essay Required: **No**

Interview Required: **No**

Audition Required: **No**

Specified Majors: **all**

Scholarship Deadline: **2016-05-01**

For Minority: **No**

Renewable: **Yes**

State of Residence: **all**

Notes To Renew:

Notes:

Scholarship Link:
<http://www.niagara.edu/transfer-scholarships-financialaid/>

NIAGARA UNIVERSITY - TRANSFER SCHOLARSHIP II

ELIGIBLE BASED ON SUPPLIED INFORMATION

Yes

Amount: **\$11,000.00**

Min GPA: **3.00**

Min SAT: **0**

Min ACT: **0**

Min Class Rank: **not available**

Number Available: **Limited**

Essay Required: **No**

Interview Required: **No**

Audition Required: **No**

Specified Majors: **all**

Scholarship Deadline: **2016-05-01**

For Minority: **No**

Renewable: **Yes**

State of Residence: **all**

Notes To Renew:

Notes:

Scholarship Link:
<http://www.niagara.edu/transfer-scholarships-financialaid/>