

What is “FREE” money and What does it COST?

A quick overview of options to finance post-secondary education

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What is your favourite “MONEY” themed song of all time?

Mine is the Flying Lizards 1979 rendition of “[Money](#)” (...that’s what I want!). The simple lyrics clearly outline that “*Money don’t get everything it’s true...what it doesn’t get I can’t use! I want money!*” I recommend listening to the song as you read this article - it might give you a quick energy boost when we are about to talk about money...a sensitive and serious subject for many of us!

Since my early university days, I have managed for the most part to stay within a relatively modest budget while working in a field that I absolutely love. One of the BEST parts of my job as a Career Practitioner is the opportunity to help students find and apply for scholarships, grants and bursaries (what we call “FREE” money!) to support them in their studies beyond high school!

Many students tell us they have limited knowledge of the exact costs of completing post-secondary education as well as how to access scholarships and apply for student loans. We created the following chart for students and parents to explore how costs vary depending upon the institution, length of program, tuition fees, textbooks and living costs.

	University of Lethbridge	Lethbridge College	SAIT
Program	Bachelor of Arts Degree	Agricultural Science Diploma	Automotive Service Technician Apprenticeship
Years	4	2	4 (8 week sessions)
Tuition/fees per year	\$6,470	\$3,849	\$1,846
Books	\$2,500	\$1,545	\$1,200
On Campus Housing (lowest and highest)	\$3,288 - \$9,448	\$5,280 - \$7,690	\$3,630
Meal plan (if applicable)	\$4,245		
Living off campus (shared accommodations)	\$11,600	\$11,600	\$5,800
Food (if no meal plan)	\$2,400	\$2,400	\$600
1 Year total	\$17,037 - \$22,970	\$13, 074 - \$19,394	\$7276 - \$ 9446
Completion total	\$68,148 - \$92,880	\$26,148 - \$38,788	\$29,104 - \$37,784

The fact is, education can be costly and students benefit greatly by understanding what their investment will be and how to find the most opportunities to effectively reduce or eliminate their reliance upon student loans.

For one Willow Creek Composite 2019 graduate, Megan Mullen, university classes became so much more affordable with the additional \$8,600 she secured in scholarships and grants to start her degree at the University of Lethbridge. Megan was delighted to receive the Canadian [Horatio Alger scholarship](#) (\$5000 value), a grant of \$1440 from [Alberta Student Aid](#), the [Alexander Rutherford Scholarship](#) (up to \$2500 for Alberta students based on average marks in grades 10, 11 and 12) and a \$500 scholarship from her part time job at A & W.

Many students (myself included, back in the day!) incorrectly assume that most grant applications are out of reach and require too much effort to apply. One of our key roles as Career Practitioners is to research and compile scholarship information to ease students into the process while encouraging them to apply for just about every scholarship going! In many cases, one well-written essay can be used to fulfill the requirements to apply for multiple scholarships, and writing/editing assistance is always available from school Career Practitioners, Teachers and Administrators. These individuals are also likely to help write letters of recommendation or serve as references for you!

While good grades are always an asset, many scholarship sponsors want to provide money to “well-rounded” students or those who have achieved a consistent average in spite of financial and personal challenges. Community volunteerism is a big determinant for many scholarships, particularly those from local service groups.

Full details on LRSD/school based awards and many other scholarships are available on the Career Services pages under [“Scholarships and Loan Information”](#) tab featured on our school website, or by contacting Lettie Croskery, your Career Practitioner directly. In summary, our advice is: “When in doubt, APPLY, APPLY, APPLY!” because it really doesn’t get better than accumulating “free” money.