



Paying the Price of Parenting: More than Half of Oregonians Willing to Go into Debt to Put Their Child Through College

Oregonians willing to take on an average of \$31k in debt for their child's higher education

Portland, Ore. (June 4, 2019) – The recent college admissions scandal sent shockwaves through America and revealed the extreme lengths that parents will go to get their children into the best schools. However, a new survey from [COUNTRY Financial®](#) shows that most Oregonians, while not breaking any laws, are willing to go to financial extremes when it comes to their child's college education.

The survey found that 53 percent of Oregonians would voluntarily go into debt to pay for their child's college education, with the average person willing to take on \$31K in debt. The survey also found that men are willing to take on a higher debt amount than women to pay for their child's education (\$38K vs. \$27K).

The majority of Oregonians (78 percent) believe it's important to have a college degree when looking for a job, and 64 percent believe a college degree is worth the investment.

"It's no surprise what parents are willing to do to support their child's chances for success," said Scott Jensen, financial advisor for COUNTRY Financial. "Taking on significant debt for your child's education can hamper your own retirement plans. Parents and students should take the time to research and consider the many opportunities that can help chip away at college costs."

Parents are saving for college, but it's not enough

According to the College Board's 2018 [report](#) on trends in college pricing, in-state tuition and fees at public four-year institutions have increased at an average rate of 3.1 percent per year beyond inflation for the past 10 years. Just recently, Oregon State University, Portland State University and University of Oregon approved tuition increases of more than 4 percent for the 2019-20 academic year.

Given the rising costs of college, parents are wise to start saving up as early as possible. The survey found that 25 percent of Oregonians are saving for their child's college education when the child is the age of five years or younger. However, 38 percent of parents have not been able to save anything for their child's education, with nearly four in 10 parents (36 percent) admitting that having a child is more expensive than they anticipated.

Despite all the effort parents put into furthering their child's education, their contributions are often not enough to cover the full cost of tuition—only 12 percent of parents predict/report that their contribution will cover 81 to 100 percent of their child's education. In fact, 65 percent of those surveyed said they predict they'll be able to cover, or were able to cover, 60 percent or less of their child's college education costs.

The survey also found that Oregonian students are making a conscious effort to offset college costs. In fact, they are more likely than the average American college student to work while attending (72 percent vs 61 percent) apply for financial aid (55 percent vs 42 percent) and apply for scholarships (49 percent vs 43 percent). They are also more likely to take out student loans (44 percent vs. 39 percent).

“Kudos to the many students who are taking simple steps early to keep their college costs down,” said Jensen. “For example, the survey found that Oregonians are more likely than Americans overall to do take AP tests to earn college credit, apply for programs to get in-state tuition rates and pre-pay tuition to offset costs. Being creative and pro-active when it comes to planning for college will ease the financial burden for students and parents down the road.”

Making sacrifices to prepare their kids for success with extracurriculars and prep classes

Thirty four percent of those who attended or are planning for college said they have enrolled in at least one financially-taxing extracurricular to help improve either their own or their child’s chances of getting into college. For Oregonians, most popular extracurricular activities included music, language or art lessons (20 percent), competitive sports (10 percent), SAT or ACT prep classes (9 percent), and hiring an academic tutor (3 percent). Some Oregonians also paid to move to a home in a better school district (10 percent) or enrolled in a private school (8 percent) to improve their or their children’s chances of getting into college. Only one percent of Oregonians hired a private college counselor.

In order to afford these extracurricular activities, Oregonians are willing to make financial sacrifices such as cutting back on vacations (39 percent), pulling from their savings accounts (27 percent), taking on part-time jobs (24 percent) and cutting back on retirement savings (20 percent.)

Parents still paying off own student loans

On top of the stress of paying for their child’s college education, parents also still worry about paying off their own student loan debt. Nearly two thirds of those surveyed who have taken out student loans said it would take or has taken five years or longer to pay off their loans, and 13 percent of those who took out student loans of their own predict they won’t be able to pay off their student loans in their lifetime. One in three (37 percent) of parents say they would not be willing to take on debt for their kids.



About the COUNTRY Financial Security Index®

Since 2007, the COUNTRY Financial Security Index has measured Americans' sentiments of their personal financial security. The Index also delves deeper into individual personal finance topics to better inform Americans about the issues impacting their finances. Survey data, videos and analysis are available at www.countryfinancial.com/newsroom and on Twitter at @helloCOUNTRY.

The COUNTRY Financial Security Index was created by COUNTRY Financial and is compiled by Ipsos an independent research firm. Surveys were conducted using Ipsos' KnowledgePanel®, a national, probability-based panel designed to be representative of the general population and includes responses from approximately 1,025 U.S. adults for national surveys. The margin of sampling error for a survey based on this many interviews is approximately +/- 3 percentage points with a 95 percent level of confidence.

About COUNTRY Financial®

The COUNTRY Financial® group (www.countryfinancial.com) serves about one million households and businesses throughout the United States. It offers a wide range of financial products and services from auto, home, business and life insurance to retirement planning services, investment management and annuities.

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