

It's Time to Start Thinking about the Costs of Postsecondary Education

By Glenda Healy on Sep 07, 2016 04:51 pm

Hi everyone! It's the beginning of the school year! Students in Grade 12 will be thinking about their plans after graduation, and many of those plans will include postsecondary education. So *parents*, it's imperative to start thinking about the costs involved in higher education if you haven't already been planning for it (no RESPs?), or haven't been *able* to plan for it! Planning starts NOW!

Step #1: Be aware of the costs of higher education.

A **recent CIBC survey** shows that **most parents are not aware of the high costs of tuition.**

Summary:

- 25% of parents **underestimated** tuition costs
- 22% of parents **overestimated** tuition costs
- 27% of parents **had no idea** of tuition costs

In case you're wondering, **the average cost of tuition for Canadian full-time students in undergraduate programs is \$6373, according to a 2016 report by Statistics Canada.** Tuition fees are highest in Ontario (\$8,114) followed by Saskatchewan (\$7,177) and Nova Scotia (\$7,218), while the cheapest tuition in the country can be found in Newfoundland and Labrador (\$2,759), and Quebec (\$2,851). Canadian undergraduate students in dentistry (\$21,012) continued to pay the highest average tuition fees in 2016/2017. The next highest were fees for medicine (\$13,858), law (\$11,385) and pharmacy (\$9,738).

And what about the cost of college tuition? Here is the average cost of tuition for one academic year in an **Ontario college** program: Diploma Programs are \$2,400 with Bachelor's Degree Programs costing approximately \$6,100. As with university, tuition for specialized programs e.g., heavy equipment operator, aviation, photography or fine arts, may be higher.

As well as tuition, there are other expenses that include food & accommodation (if your child will be living in residence or other accommodation away from home), textbooks, supplies, entertainment, etc. **40% of parents who took the survey have no idea of these non-tuition costs.**

So parents, you have just reached the first step in planning for your child's postsecondary education: awareness of the cost of higher education.

Step #2: Take action to deal with those costs.

IDEAS: (Note: the first two points are for those who still have young children.):

- Save early.
- Use an RESP.
- Check out government grants and bursaries.
- Have your child **look for scholarships**. This is time-consuming work—you may want to help them with this.
- Encourage your child to get a part-time job to help with some of the expenses.
- When your child is in Grade 12, or starting out in postsecondary education, have them create a budget around living expenses.
- Talk to a financial planner.

Involve your child in financial planning for their education. They need to be aware of the costs involved, and the sacrifices made, in helping them attain a postsecondary education. And they need to take some responsibility for paying for it too — that will be for *their* benefit as much as yours!

Courtesy of Seeking Scholarships Canada