Tuition sticker price increase at 4-year college (for high school students and graduates)

Higher Education

Literature review updated August 2017.

As part of WSIPP's research approach to identifying evidence-based programs and policies, WSIPP determines "what works" (and what does not work) to improve outcomes using an approach called meta-analysis. For detail on our methods, see our Technical Documentation. At this time, WSIPP has not yet calculated benefits and costs for this topic.

Program Description: Studies included in this meta-analysis estimate the effects of a change in the price of tuition at 4-year colleges on students' college outcomes, including the likelihood that a student will enroll in college. Results are presented as "elasticities" and are interpreted as the percent change in an outcome we expect from a 1% increase in tuition price.

This meta-analysis includes only studies that examine tuition price without subtracting federal Pell grants from full price values. In addition, this meta-analysis includes only studies that use individual-level data in their analyses. Results of group-level analyses can differ from the results of analyses of the individuals within the same groups. The studies in this meta-analysis evaluate the effects of a tuition price increase for students who are still attending high school or have recently graduated high school and have not yet enrolled in college.

Meta-Analysis of Program Effects

Outcomes measured	No. of effect sizes	Treatment N	Adjusted effect size and standard error			Unadjusted effect size (random effects model)	
			ES	SE	Age	ES	p-value
Apply to 4-year college**	1	1424316	-0.037	0.001	18	-0.037	0.001
Enroll in 2-year college**	1	10254	0.106	0.046	18	0.106	0.022
Enroll in 4-year college**	4	38227	-0.280	0.086	18	-0.280	0.001
Enroll in any college**	23	3264722	-0.117	0.024	18	-0.117	0.001
Graduate with any degree**	2	9774	-0.895	0.300	23	-0.895	0.003

**The effect size for this outcome represents an elasticity, not a standardized mean difference effect size.

Meta-analysis is a statistical method to combine the results from separate studies on a program, policy, or topic in order to estimate its effect on an outcome. WSIPP systematically evaluates all credible evaluations we can locate on each topic. The outcomes measured are the types of program impacts that were measured in the research literature (for example, crime or educational attainment). Treatment N represents the total number of individuals or units in the treatment group across the included studies.

An effect size (ES) is a standard metric that summarizes the degree to which a program or policy affects a measured outcome. If the effect size is positive, the outcome increases. If the effect size is negative, the outcome decreases.

Adjusted effect sizes are used to calculate the benefits from our benefit cost model. WSIPP may adjust effect sizes based on methodological characteristics of the study. For example, we may adjust effect sizes when a study has a weak research design or when the program developer is involved in the research. The magnitude of these adjustments varies depending on the topic area.

WSIPP may also adjust the second ES measurement. Research shows the magnitude of some effect sizes decrease over time. For those effect sizes, we estimate outcome-based adjustments which we apply between the first time ES is estimated and the second time ES is estimated. We also report the unadjusted effect size to show the effect sizes before any adjustments have been made. More details about these adjustments can be found in our Technical Documentation.

Citations Used in the Meta-Analysis

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Printed on 01-22-2022

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