

Muskegon Chronicle



NEXT STEP

AC GRAND RAPIDS NAMED ERIK BUSHEY, RIGHT, THE HEAD COACH OF THE MLS NEXT PRO SOCCER FRANCHISE AHEAD OF ITS INAUGURAL SEASON IN WEST MICHIGAN. **G1**

EDUCATION

As more colleges join the \$100K club, here’s the true cost.



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Fifteen schools now charge six figures per year for the total cost of attendance; others are on the verge.

Danielle Douglas-Gabriel
Washington Post

With remarkable speed, more colleges and universities are crossing a new threshold: charging undergraduates more than \$100,000 for tuition, housing, books and fees. Fifteen schools cost six figures now, whereas a year ago there was only one, according to the Princeton Review.

At least nine other colleges are on the cusp of joining the \$100K club, and higher education experts say the trend will only continue. But how much does that matter? And what does it say about the state of college affordability?

The prevalence of six-figure institutions seems to give credence to the sentiment that higher education has become unaffordable, but college pricing is far more nuanced than the numbers suggest. In fact, research shows that while the cost of attendance is going up, the actual amount students pay has stagnated or even ticked down a bit for most families.

Sticker prices — the total cost of atten-

dance — are published and widely circulated but they are not the best indicator of what many families will pay because colleges offer scholarships and grants based on financial need or academic merit that reduce the cost.

One of the best ways for families to figure out whether they can afford a college is to check out the net price — what students pay after grant aid is applied. Net price calculators create estimates based on family income and other financial details.

Some of the most expensive schools provide some of the most generous financial aid to students from low- and middle-income households.

Take the University of Chicago, where the sticker price is \$103,821 for the 2026-27 academic year, but the average need-based scholarship for undergrads is \$78,651. The university covers tuition for families earning less than \$250,000 a year — a growing trend among prestigious (and expensive) schools. A Washington Post analysis found nearly 1,000 colleges and universities that offer free tuition.

“Without question, when schools start to charge over \$100,000, it starts to raise a lot of eyebrows ... but there’s a great deal of available (financial) aid,” said Rob Franek, editor in chief at the Princeton Review.

Hefty sticker prices, he said, feed into families’ fears about taking on debt at a time when more people are questioning the value and utility of a college degree.

SEE EDUCATION, A3

WHAT THEY’RE CHARGING

Institution	Total cost*
Harvey Mudd College	\$104,512
Duke University	\$103,975
University of Chicago	\$103,821
University of Southern California	\$103,162
Barnard College	\$103,000
Washington University	\$102,260
Smith College	\$102,226
Fordham University	\$102,188
Claremont McKenna	\$101,990
Vassar College	\$101,051
Wesleyan University	\$101,030
New York University	\$100,998
Georgetown University	\$100,864
Colgate University	\$100,224
Haverford College	\$100,026
Tufts University	\$99,998
Brown University	\$99,994
Vanderbilt University	\$99,994
Columbia University	\$99,774
Cornell University	\$99,734
Northwestern University	\$99,375
Loyola Marymount University	\$99,289
Pepperdine University	\$99,258
Trinity College (Conn.)	\$99,080

* 2026-27 Sticker cost. Source: Washington Post

MICHIGAN UTILITIES

DTE gets green light to power giant Google data center

State energy regulators approve second set of utility contracts for a “hyperscale” data center in Michigan, a project in Van Buren Township.

Lucas Smolcic Larson
lsmolciclarrison@mlive.com

LANSING — Google’s proposed large-scale data center in Michigan has power. State regulators conditionally approved a deal between the tech giant and utility DTE Energy on Thursday, paving the way for the nearly 1.5 million-square-foot project on the edge of metro Detroit to connect to the grid.

It’s only the second time Michigan has authorized power contracts for a “hyperscale” data center and leaves the project with few remaining obstacles to its construction.

Google’s data center — essentially a warehouse filled with computer servers — is planned for Van Buren Township, near the Detroit Metro Airport. It will require 1 gigawatt of electricity — roughly as much power as 750,000 homes.

That’s a major jump in demand for DTE, and regulators on the Michigan Public Service Commission sought to soothe anxieties that the big costs involved could inflate Michiganders’ utility bills.

“Google is one of the biggest, best capitalized and most profitable companies on the planet,” Commission Chair Dan Scripps said at the body’s meeting in Lansing.

“Google can pay its own energy bills, and the contracts and conditions in the order before us ensure that it does just that.”

Under the power deal with DTE, Google will foot the bill for major additions to the grid. Those include up to 1,600 megawatts of renewable energy like solar farms and up to 480 megawatts of batteries, projects that will help serve all power customers.

SEE MICHIGAN UTILITIES, A3



Under a power deal with DTE Energy that was conditionally approved Thursday, Google will foot the bill for major additions to the grid. *MLive.com files*



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