

**Don't Stress About College Costs**  
*Texas Society of CPAs Offer Tips on Paying for College*

Whether you're changing diapers, or have teenagers preparing to leave the nest, the issue of college savings looms large for today's families.

According to CollegeData.com, the average cost of tuition and fees for the 2010–2011 school year was \$27,293 at private colleges, \$7,605 for state residents at public colleges, and \$19,595 for out-of-state residents attending public universities.

Also, The College Board®, states that the average 2010-2011 tuition increase was 4.5 percent at private colleges, and 7.9 percent at public universities. The 10-year historical rate of increase is approximately six percent.

Texas Society of CPAs encourages parents to check out several tax-advantaged college savings vehicles like Section 529 plans. This savings program allows your money to grow tax-deferred in an individual investment account. In fact, Texas has a 529 plan touting broader investment options and more competitive fees.

According to TSCPA, now is the time to start saving. Starting as soon as possible is vitally important. However, even if college is next year, don't worry. There are financial steps you can take to ease the sticker shock such as using the American Opportunity Credit and asking about tuition discounts.

No matter how soon the tuition bills will start arriving, Texas CPAs say it's not a good idea to crack your retirement egg to foot college costs.

Scholarships and a wide variety of low-interest loans are available for students, but third parties aren't going to fund your retirement.