

Paying for College During COVID-19

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As a result of the COVID-19 crisis, any college or university nationwide has closed its campus and moved classes online. This began in March with the hope that students would be able to return to campus before the end of the academic year. Unfortunately, that did not happen, and New Jersey Governor Murphy closed all public and private schools through June, resulting in the cancellation of graduations and other campus events scheduled during that time period.

COVID-19 College Tuition Costs

In response to the cancellation of in-person instruction and campus activities, individuals who paid tuition and costs of attendance for the 2020 academic year have filed [class-action lawsuits against colleges](#) and universities in New Jersey and across the country. More than 100 lawsuits seeking refunds of tuition costs have been filed nationwide.

The lawsuits generally claim that online learning is inferior to an in-person experience. In the meantime, while many institutions have provided pro-rata refunds of fees paid for unused room and board, schools have taken measures to pivot to remote and virtual forms of education with the necessary technology and coordination with faculty and staff, while continuing to provide support services for students and maintain college and university campuses.

Tuition Payment Refunds

In May, legislation (S2411) was introduced in New Jersey which would require institutions of higher education to refund 25% of tuition and fees to students who enrolled in and paid for in-person classes that were instead provided remotely. The bill would also require refunds of room and board for the spring 2020 semester to students forced to vacate on-campus student housing due to the health crisis. At this time, while colleges and universities look towards the shape of education to come for the 2020-21 academic year, there has been no further action taken in connection with the proposed legislation.

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