**What is the Dollars for College program?**Dollars for College is a savings program designed to help North Texas students achieve their dreams of attending college. The program provides a safe, easy, and affordable way to open a 529 children’s savings account for college. The goal is to help all students build long-term savings for college. Dollars for College partners with local schools and community organizations to promote the program and provide enrollment events, and with local funders to provide the initial and incentive deposits for each account.

**What is a 529 plan?**
A [529 plan](https://my529.org/what-is-a-529-plan/) is an online investing tool that makes it easier for your family to pay for college. While you can save money for college in any type of account, **a 529 plan provides certain perks if you are saving for college**. The 529 plan that DFC uses is called [*my529*](https://my529.org/)*. (https://my529.org/)*

**Why is Dollars for College using my529?**[my529](https://my529.org/) is a nonprofit, low-cost leader in helping students save for college. It is a state-run plan designed to send more kids to college. The plan does not **charge any enrollment fees,** is easy to access anytime online, and **does not require a minimum deposit amount**.

**How does the Dollars for College program work?**Parents go to [www.Dollars4College.org](http://www.Dollars4College.org) and open a Dollars for College Account for their participating student. No initial deposit is required for you to open the account. Dollars for College will provide an **initial deposit of $50** into the account. In addition, students can receive up to **$50 in deposit incentives** during the first school year their Dollars for College Account is opened. Students receive $50 for making a deposit of any amount into their Dollars for College account by May 31, 2024. Deposits can be made online or by mail.

**How do I open a Dollars for College Account for my child?**

To open a Dollars for College Account for your child:

1. Go to [www.Dollars4College.org](http://www.Dollars4College.org), and click on the “Sign Up” button.
2. Complete and submit the online application. Make note of your child’s account number.
3. Print, complete and sign an account signature card, and then return the signed card to your child’s school, or mail directly to: **my529, PO Box 145100, Salt Lake City, UT 84114-5100**.

**Who is the Account Owner?**

The Account Owner is typically the **parent or guardian** of the student who will benefit from the college savings funds. An Account Owner can be anyone at least 18 years old, who has a valid U.S. Social Security or Taxpayer Identification Number, and a physical address that is not a PO Box.

**Who is the Beneficiary?**

The Beneficiary is typically the **student** who will benefit from the college savings funds. Anyone with a valid U.S. Social Security or Taxpayer Identification Number can be a beneficiary. The account owner and beneficiary do not need to be related.

**Once a Dollars for College Account is open for my child, how can I make deposits?**

There are several different ways to make a deposit and no minimum contribution is required.

Check or Money Order

* Mail a check to my529, PO Box 145100, Salt Lake City, UT 84114-5100.
* The check should be payable to my529.
* Include the my529 account number and beneficiary’s name on the check.

Online

* Log in to your account at www.my529.org to set up electronic contributions from your bank or credit union.
* Alternatively, submit a One-Time or Recurring Electronic Contributions Authorization/Change form (Form 200) by mail.

Payroll

* Log in to your account at www.my529.org to set up payroll contributions.
* Alternatively, submit a Payroll Contribution form (Form 205).

Bill Pay

* Arrange online bill payments via your bank or credit union’s online bill-pay service.

Wire transfer

* Submit a Wire Transfer Notification form (Form 225), then you can initiate the transfer.

Special occasions

* Log in to your account at www.my529.org to set up annual contributions to your account for special occasions, such as birthdays or holidays.

Gift Program

* Invite contributions from friends and family.
* Log in to your account at www.my529.org to set up a gift page and code.

**Can friends and relatives contribute to an account?**

Yes! Anyone can contribute to a Dollars for College account. Account owners can invite friends and relatives to write a check or make contributions via the my529 Gift Program, which uses a unique code, so you don’t have to disclose your account information.

**Is there a risk to opening a Dollars for College Account?**The default savings option is similar to a normal bank savings account, with a similar interest rate. This means it will not increase/decrease based on the stock market. At your choice, you can move the funds into more market-based investments (such as mutual funds, stocks, bonds). These investments produce more financial returns, but also come with risk of losing value. More information on all the options is offered at <https://my529.org/performance-returns/>

**What can the Dollars for College savings be used for?**When your child completes High School, the funds can be used for college/university/trade-school tuition, housing, books, supplies, and equipment required for enrollment or attendance. Tax-free withdrawals may only be used for qualifying post-secondary education expenses. The funds can be sent straight from the college savings account to the educational institution on behalf of your child. Or, you can be paid back for paying your child’s tuition expenses by providing a receipt.

**What if your child chooses not to go to university/ community college /trade-school?**If your child chooses to not pursue any school after high school, the plan can be transferred without a fee to a family member (parent/sibling/first cousin/aunt). The money can be withdrawn for purposes other than college, but this is highly discouraged due to fees and additional taxes you will owe.

**Will a Dollars for College Account disqualify my child for financial aid?**It is not likely. When the government and colleges determine eligibility for financial assistance, the funds you set aside in a 529 plan will have a minor impact on your financial aid award each year. Saving money for college is always cheaper than taking out a student loan.

**Do 529 accounts affect public assistance benefits?**Money saved in 529 plans are excused from certain public assistance asset limits (including TANF, SNAP, and Medicaid). This means money saved won’t count against these benefits that your family receives.

**What’s the catch?**There isn’t one! Your school wants to invest in its students, and one of the most helpful ways to do so is saving for college.

**If you have additional questions about setting up or managing a Dollars for College Account, please email the Dollars for College Program Administrator at:** **DollarsForCollege@unitedwaydallas.org****.**