

THE ADVANTAGE



02 Direct Plan Fees Reduced
Ohio's Transfer Opportunities

03 Many Honors For Ohio's Direct 529 Plan

04 Spring Partnerships
Go Green In 2022
Have New Year Savings Resolutions?



HAVE YOU TRIED THE READYSAVE 529 APP?



Thank you for choosing to save for your children's future higher education with Ohio's 529 Plan, CollegeAdvantage.

As busy as your life is, we want to make saving for college as quick and simple for you as possible. Which is why we are pleased to announce that we have launched the **READYSAVE 529 app**.

Our new savings app, developed in conjunction with our recordkeeping partner, Ascensus, makes it easy for you to access your 529 account information, track account growth, and make both one-time and recurring contributions to your 529 directly from your cell phone!

And with the READYSAVE 529 app, you can send an invitation to your family and friends to contribute to your children's higher education via Ugift. Loved ones want to give gifts with value. So when they ask what to give your children for their birthday, graduation, holidays, or any special event, let them know your children don't need any more toys. Share with them that a contribution towards their 529 will have a lasting impact by enabling them to pursue a college education or vocational training that can bring your children more opportunities in life. And their gift can be used nationwide at any accredited four-year, two-year, trade or vocational schools, as well as apprenticeships and certificate programs.

You can download the READYSAVE 529 app now from the [Apple](#) and [Google Play](#) app stores. The app requires iOS 14 or higher for Apple devices and Android 7.0 or later for Android devices. Once you install the app, select Ohio's 529 Plan from the list and log in with the same username and password you use to access your account online.

Ohio's 529 Plan is pleased to offer this new app to our account owners to save for whatever education comes after high school from the palm of your hand.





DIRECT PLAN FEES REDUCED

The total annual fee for the investment options in Ohio's Direct 529 Plan was reduced by one (1) full basis point as of October 1, 2021.*

Ohio's 529 Plan strives to keep our fees as low as possible to help you save even more. This is why we are pleased to announce that the fee charged by Vanguard, one of Ohio's Direct 529 Plan's partners, has been reduced by half a basis point from 1.5 bps to 1.0 bps (0.015% to 0.01%). Also, Ascensus College Savings, the program record-keeper for Ohio's Direct 529 Plan, has reduced their fee by half a basis point from 10 bps to 9.5 bps (0.10% to 0.095%.) This reflects a full basis point reduction in the overall fees for Ohio's 529 Plan.

This fee reduction was made possible due to growth in Assets Under Management (AUM) for Ohio's Direct 529 Plan reaching a level that triggered contract-specified price reductions. As of September 30, 2021, Ohio's 529 Program oversees over \$15.93 billion in AUM within 670,780 college savings accounts.

As Ohio's Direct 529 Plan assets grow, CollegeAdvantage looks for efficiencies, including fee reductions like these. Making contributions to your 529 account will help you meet your savings goals. At the same time, your contributions also help to grow AUM, which allows for efficiencies and triggers AUM-based fee reductions. And don't forget, family and friends can also give the gift of higher education by contributing to your CollegeAdvantage Direct 529 account as well.

* The fee reduction does not include the banking options offered by Fifth Third Bank, National Association. The banking products are not charged any record-keeping fees.

STRETCH YOUR COLLEGE SAVINGS FURTHER WITH OHIO'S TRANSFER OPPORTUNITIES

In the last issue of this newsletter, we shared some cost savings options found at the Ohio Department of Higher Education's (ODHE) Ohio Articulation and Transfer Network (OATN). OATN is responsible for the college credit transfer pathways for students who wish to attain their highest degree. To see a full list, visit ohiohighered.org/transfer. Here are the remaining programs.

TRANSFER ASSURANCE GUIDES (TAG)

Transfer Assurance Guides (TAG) is the statewide system of credit transfer for pre-major/beginning major courses. There are currently **59 TAG areas/majors**. TAG includes most general areas of studies like business, English, and psychology. Students take approved TAG courses at one of Ohio's two-year or four-year public higher education institutions and then transfer those courses to another public school offering that same major. More information can be found at ohiohighered.org/transfer/tag.

COLLEGE-LEVEL EXAMINATION PROGRAM (CLEP)

The **College-Level Examination Program (CLEP)** exams were created to help individuals with prior knowledge of a college-course subject earn college credits toward a degree. The 34 CLEP exams cover introduction-level college course material. With a passing score on a CLEP exam, students can earn college credits at a public Ohio higher education institution.

MILITARY TRANSFER ASSURANCE GUIDES (MTAG)

Military Transfer Assurance Guides (MTAGs) are a statewide set of standards that guarantees that certain types of military training, experience, and/or coursework will align to existing collegiate courses. MTAGs are aligned to three course equivalency initiatives: Career-Technical Credit Transfer (CT)², which covers career and technical education; Ohio Transfer Module (OTM), which covers general education requirements; and Transfer Assurance Guides (TAGs), which covers beginning and pre-major courses.

Each institution is required to evaluate all military training, experience, and coursework for program alignment. Students should meet with the institution's Military Credit Contact to have their experiences evaluated for credit.

ONE YEAR OPTION (OYO)

The **One Year Option** is a state transfer program that allows adult education students who complete a 900-clock-hour program at an Ohio Technical Center and earn the recognized industry credential to then transfer those credentials to an Ohio community college and earn college credit towards an associate degree. Shorter programs will receive credit on a pro rata basis.

RESOURCES

- **Military Credit Contact** will evaluate military transcripts so that all applicable training and education can be transferred for college credit. This person will also resolve credit disputes for previous military experience. This person is usually located within the registrar's, records, or transfer offices.

Transfer Offices should be contacted first by a student who is thinking of transferring to another institution. This office will share the most up-to-date information on how courses and test scores will be applied to a future transcript.

- **Course Reporting System** is ODHE's interactive website which shows what credit will be granted at each of Ohio's public colleges and universities. This website works for AP, CLEP, CTAG, Military, OGTP, OTM, and TAG courses. More information can be found at: transfercredit.ohio.gov.

- **Transferology** is a nationwide network that helps students explore their college transfer options. This website shows how college courses, test scores, and military transcripts will be interpreted at colleges and universities nationwide. More information can be found at transferology.com/index.htm.

MANY HONORS FOR OHIO'S DIRECT 529 PLAN



If you read financial websites, you will discover how well regarded Ohio's 529 Plan, CollegeAdvantage, is within the college savings industry. Financial industry organizations like Morningstar, Saving For College, CNBC, and Forbes have all rated Ohio's 529 Plan as one of the best college savings programs in the nation. Here's what they have to say.

MORNINGSTAR'S SILVER RANKING

Trusted financial industry investment research company, Morningstar, annually reviews the nation's 529 college savings programs. Morningstar then ranks the 529 plans in a [report](#) released at the end of October.

Ohio's 529 Plan is pleased to announce that the CollegeAdvantage Direct 529 Plan maintained its silver rating for the ninth year in a row. [BlackRock CollegeAdvantage](#), Ohio's Advisor 529 Plan, retained its bronze ranking. This makes Ohio one of only two states that have both their Direct and Advisor 529 Plans ranked as medal-class college savings programs. The high ranking of both CollegeAdvantage 529 Plans highlights the strength of these college savings plans as well as the industry's regard for Ohio's 529 Plan as one of the best in the nation.

According to Bobby Blue, a Morningstar analyst who reviewed Ohio's Direct 529 Plan, "The Ohio CollegeAdvantage 529 Savings Plan benefits from a strong

investment team, low fees, and a state partner willing to go to bat for participants. It retains its Morningstar Analyst Rating of Silver, making it an excellent choice for Buckeyes and out-of-staters alike."

SAVING FOR COLLEGE HONORS

[Saving For College](#) is a trusted and independent college-savings industry resource. In a recent [analysis](#) of 529 plan investment performances, Ohio's 529 Plan is at or near the top for three out of four of the long-term performance charts.

[CollegeAdvantage Direct 529 Plan](#) is ranked first in the nation for the best investment performance in the three-year category. Ohio's Direct 529 also ranks second in 10-year category as well as fifth nationwide for five-year investment performance.

In addition, [Saving For College](#) consistently recognizes Ohio's Direct 529 Plan as one of the [best plans](#) in the nation for both Ohio and non-Ohio residents.

[Saving For College](#) uses a [5-Cap Ranking](#) for the nation's college savings programs. A 5-Cap designation is given to a 529 plan that "offers outstanding flexibility, attractive investment, and additional economic benefits (such as generous state tax incentives) that for some people, at least, will provide a substantial boost to their savings..."

Ohio's Direct 529 Plan is one of only two 529 college savings plans nationwide to earn a 5-Cap rating for both residents and non-

residents.

MILITARY SAVES

[Military Saves](#) named Ohio's 529 Plan as a Savings Champion for our support of this important program. Military Saves is part of the nonprofit Consumer Federation of America. Military Saves works with government agencies, defense credit unions, military banks, and nonprofit organizations to promote savings and debt reduction.

FORBES ADVISOR

[Forbes Advisor](#) ranks Ohio's 529 Plan as one of the six best college savings programs in the nation for 2021, stating: "Ohio's 529 Plan comes with features in line with the other plans on our list, including low fees, a range of investment options and a tax deduction for Ohio taxpayers. ...The plan also comes with a minimum contribution, both to open the account and for each contribution thereafter. But it is small (\$25) and likely manageable for many plan participants."

CNBC

[CNBC](#) selected Ohio's 529 Plan as one of the five best programs nationwide saying, "There isn't much not to like about the CollegeAdvantage 529 plan — there's a good mix of investment options (including FDIC-insured accounts), low fees and plans from top companies like Dimensional Fund Advisors. In fact, overall management fees are some of the lowest we've seen. Combined with low expense ratios, it makes this plan one of our top picks."

SPRING PARTNERSHIPS

Ohio's 529 Plan partners with organizations across the state to raise awareness of the importance of education after high school and help families work toward that goal.

This new year is no different. With our partnerships, we want to help Ohio families prepare for education after high school and sometimes that even includes a college savings award to help reach that goal. Here are a few upcoming opportunities.

Columbus Blue Jackets: 2022 brings the College Savings Assist sweepstakes from the Blue Jackets and Ohio's 529 Plan. The Grand Prize is a \$10,000 College Savings Award to add to or start an Ohio Direct 529 Plan account. Visit CollegeAdvantage.com/BlueJackets to enter.

Other Partnerships: Ohio's 529 Plan continues to support the following competitions with Invention League, Ohio Academy of Science and Ohio History Connection, respectively: Invention Convention Regional & State competitions, Ohio Academy of Science District & State competitions, and Ohio History Day.

GO GREEN IN 2022

Would you like to start 2022 with less paperwork coming to your home? You can elect to go paperless with your CollegeAdvantage Direct 529 Plan quarterly statements, offering statement updates, transactions and profile confirmations, tax forms and other communications.

To switch to e-delivery, first [log in](#) to your account. Go to your **Profile and Documents** section, then to **Delivery Preference**. Once there, select **Edit Delivery Preferences** and choose **Email**. Be sure to update your delivery options for each of your accounts.

TALK TO US



CustomerService@CollegeAdvantage.com



1-800-AFFORD-IT (233-6734)



Like us at
Facebook.com/CollegeAdvantage



Follow us at
Twitter.com/Ohio529Plan



Ohio Tuition Trust Authority
35 E. Chestnut Street, 8th Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215-2541

HAVE NEW YEAR SAVINGS RESOLUTIONS?

Is one of your New Year's Resolutions to step up your higher education savings goals? Here are some ideas to try.

- **Review your 529 account.** Are you saving enough to cover what you'd like of your child's future college costs? If you want to check the numbers, use our [College Savings Planner](#) to receive personalized saving information. You can adjust your college savings goals to determine an estimated monthly amount to meet your savings objective. Please note that these examples are for illustrative purposes only.
- **Update account security.** As with all financial information, it's crucial to make sure your 529 college savings account is protected. So while you're logged into your account, take the time to change your password. Make sure the password is unique to this account only.
- **See if you need to change your savings strategy.** As your child reaches a new life stage, you may need to adjust your plan to stay on target with your college savings goals.
- **Check your account balance and track the investment performances.** If you would like to make a change to your 529 savings portfolio, you can make an [exchange](#) of an asset from one investment option to another investment option, twice in a calendar year for the same beneficiary.
- **Simplify your savings by setting up automatic deposits into your Ohio 529 account.** You can set up contributions from your bank account to match your paycheck deposits or create your own monthly contribution schedule. Some employers offer [payroll deduction](#), where a portion of your pay is directly deposited into your 529.
- **Convert your disappearing expenses into regular 529 contributions.** Disappearing expenses are those costs that are in your family's budget for a limited time span. For example, preschool and daycare are disappearing expenses once a child starts kindergarten. You can deposit those funds into your 529 plan and continue to support your child's educational goals.
- **Add your federal tax returns, pay raises, or bonuses to your 529 account.** The average federal tax return nationally for 2020 was \$2,827. Based on the calculations from our [College Savings Planner](#), saving this amount each year to a 529 plan could cover around 42% of total estimated education cost, based on 18 years to save.
- **Invite other family members and friends to contribute to your child's 529 plan with Ugift** rather than giving toys or clothes. You can assure them that giving the gift of a higher education is much more meaningful and beneficial for your child's long-term success.
- **Shop with Upromise**, a free loyalty program that offers its members cash back for their purchases from a wide variety of businesses. Start earning rewards with your everyday shopping when you connect your debit and/or credit card to your Upromise account. Then link your Upromise account to your CollegeAdvantage Direct 529 Plan account to roll over these rebates.

To receive important email updates from us, go to CollegeAdvantage.com, log in to your account, and update your account information to include your email address.

CollegeAdvantage is a 529 college savings plan offered and administered by the Ohio Tuition Trust Authority, an office within the Ohio Department of Higher Education. Before investing, please read the Offering Statement and all Supplements carefully and consider the risks, fees, your investment objectives, time horizon, and other relevant factors. If you are not a taxpayer in the state of Ohio, you should consider whether your home state offers state tax or other benefits for investing in its 529 plan. Other than the Fifth Third Investment Options in the Direct Plan (Banking Options), money contributed to an account is not a bank deposit and is not insured by the FDIC or guaranteed in any way, and participants assume all investment risk related to the CollegeAdvantage Direct Plan and Advisor Plan, including the potential loss of principal. Contributions invested in Banking Options are an obligation of Fifth Third Bank and are insured by the FDIC, subject to certain limitations. For current investment option performance of CollegeAdvantage Direct 529 Plan, visit CollegeAdvantage.com and select "Investment Performance" from the top rail. The content of this newsletter is for informational purposes only and nothing herein should be construed as financial, legal, or tax advice.

OHQ4-2021 Stmt Nwsltr