

# Merit vs Need Aid Strategy Worksheet

A quick worksheet to choose a strategy and build an affordable school list.

**Goal:** Build a list that stays affordable under both merit and need rules. Use net price calculators early so you don't guess.

## Quick signals

Strategy	Common signals
<b>Merit-leaning signals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Top-of-pool academics/test scores</li> <li>• Honors/departmental scholarships available</li> <li>• Willing to apply early for priority deadlines</li> </ul>
<b>Need-based-leaning signals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrable financial need</li> <li>• Schools with strong need-based policies</li> <li>• Ability to document special circumstances</li> </ul>

## My next steps

- ☐ Run net price calculators for my top schools (record results).
- ☐ Identify 2–3 likely merit schools + 2–3 strong need-based schools.
- ☐ List scholarship/priority deadlines (often earlier than RD).
- ☐ Prepare documentation for appeals (income change, medical, sibling in college).
- ☐ Decide an appeal stop rule (what gap must be closed to enroll).

### My target net price per year

Target:

Must-have conditions (renewal rules, GPA, major):