



Using 529 College Saving Plans for The Bridge

We are excited to offer families the ability to use 529 College Savings Plans for The Bridge experience through our partnership with [Western Colorado University \(WCU\)](#).

Your 529 funds will be processed through WCU, which:

- Provides college credit for The Bridge
- Receives your 529 funds
- Pays both tuition (credits) and The Bridge program cost

Here are step-by-step instructions for using your 529 College Savings Plan for The Bridge:

1. Apply and enroll at The Bridge

- Complete our [admissions process](#) and secure your spot at The Bridge.
- Let our admissions team know you plan to use your 529 College Savings Plan.

2. Pay your deposit

- Any required deposit is paid directly to The Bridge
- Note: Deposits paid directly may not appear on your tax forms (1098-T)

3. Register for college credit through WCU

- You will be guided to register for Western Colorado University credit
- This step is required to make your program 529-eligible
 - Apply at: <https://western.edu/admissions/apply/>
 - From the Drop Down menu choose: I am...Center for Learning & Innovation Student
 - Select: First Time User
 - Create a New Account
 - Complete the application.
 - There is a field that will ask you to choose your "Outdoor Program." You will want to select The Bridge Costa Rica. **You will need to select at least one of the college courses offered during the academic term enrollment in order for tuition to be 529 eligible.**



4. Receive your official invoice

- WCU will generate a detailed invoice that includes:
 - The Bridge program cost
 - Western tuition (credit cost)
 - Any scholarships or payments already made
 - 2% Program Fee/Processing Fee up to a maximum of \$400 from WCU.

5. Request your 529 distribution

- Submit the WCU invoice to your 529 College Savings Plan provider
- Request funds be sent to Western Colorado University
- Make funding request at least 30 days before your program start date

6. Western processes payment

- Once funds are received:
 - WCU applies payment to tuition (credits)
 - The remaining funds are sent to The Bridge for your program

7. Handle any remaining balance (if needed)

- If 529 funds do not cover the full cost:
 - You'll pay the remaining balance to WCU
- If there is an overpayment:
 - It will be adjusted and reconciled by WCU

There are a few important things to keep in mind when using 529 funds for The Bridge:

Funds must be sent through Western Colorado University rather than directly to The Bridge, and students must be enrolled in credit-bearing WCU courses to qualify.

Because 529 providers can take time to process requests, families are encouraged to start early, stay in close communication with our admissions team, and confirm that payments are sent correctly to WCU. Once funds are disbursed, standard cancellation policies apply.

Our team is happy to support families throughout the process, including explaining timelines, reviewing invoices, and coordinating with Western Colorado University when needed.