



The Montana Family Education Savings Program -- Investment Plan was renamed Achieve Montana with a new suite of investments added in October 2015. Ascensus College Savings continues to serve as program manager for this direct-sold plan. The plan features a year-of-enrollment option, five asset allocation portfolios and three individual fund portfolios including the Capital Preservation Portfolio invested in the New York Life Guaranteed Investment Account. Underlying funds are from Vanguard, DFA, iShares and Schwab. Accounts can be linked to the Upromise rewards service.

5-Cap Rating

Resident:  Savingforcollege.com's 5-Cap Ratings provides an evaluation and comparison of 529 plans, utilizing a formula that examines dozens of factors grouped into the following categories. (Scale 0 to 5; 5 is highest)

Non-Resident: 

Performance	Costs	Features	Reliability	Resident Upgrade
4.88	2.91	4.17	3.91	0.00

Investment Options

Age-based/Enrollment Year investment options:

The Year of Enrollment Option contains 7 portfolios of underlying funds. Contributions are placed into the portfolio corresponding to the beneficiary's anticipated year of enrollment. Target allocations for the Year of Enrollment Portfolios evolve to more conservative investments as the beneficiary approaches college age.

Static investment options:

Select among five asset allocation portfolios: Aggressive, Growth, Moderate, Conservative, Income, and three individual portfolios: Equity Index, Bond Index, and the Capital Preservation Portfolio which invests in the New York Life Guaranteed Investment Account.

Underlying investments:

Vanguard, DFA, iShares and Schwab funds, New York Life

Taxes and other Benefits

Program match on contributions:

None.

State tax deduction or credit for contributions:

Contributions to Montana AND non-Montana 529 plans of up to \$3,000 per year by an individual, and up to \$6,000 per year by a married couple filing jointly, are deductible in computing Montana taxable income. Only contributions made by the account owner, the account owner's spouse, or the account owner's custodian/parent are deductible. Contribution deadline is December 31.

State tax recapture provisions:

The principal portion of rollovers, qualified withdrawals within one year of establishing the account, and nonqualified withdrawals from this plan are subject to Montana tax at the highest Montana marginal rate to the extent of prior Montana tax deductions, but only after removal of non-deducted contributions.

State definition of qualified expenses

The state's definition of qualified education expenses currently includes expenses for attendance at an institution of higher education or an apprenticeship program, as defined by the Internal Revenue Code and its regulations addressing qualified state tuition programs. This does not include tuition for elementary or secondary education, or education loan payments. Distributions from a 529 account directly to a Roth IRA are not considered a qualified expense for state income tax purposes.

State tax treatment of qualified distributions:

Qualified distributions from Montana and non-Montana 529 plans are exempt.

State tax treatment of rollovers:

Montana follows tax-free treatment for rollovers into a Montana 529 plan. Montana tax treatment of rollovers out of a Montana 529 plan is unclear, as Montana law may require that the rollover be treated as a nonqualified withdrawal.

Does the sponsoring state exclude the value of an account for state financial aid purposes?

No

Does participation in the program provide beneficiaries with any advantages in qualifying for resident tuition status at state institutions?

No

Is there a rewards program or outside scholarship program that works with this program?

Yes, the Upromise Rewards program can be linked to any 529 college savings plan. Upromise Rewards is free to join and offers members cash back for college.

Plan Portfolios

There is no investment data available for this plan. Please visit <https://achievemontana.com/> for additional information.

General

Program type:

Savings

How to enroll:

Enroll directly with the program.

Initial year of operation:

2002, but substantially changed in December 2010 and October 2015.

State agency(ies):

Montana Board of Regents of Higher Education

Program manager:

Ascensus College Savings

Program distributor:

Ascensus College Savings

Contributions

Maximum contributions:

Accepts contributions until all account balances in Montana's 529 plans for the same beneficiary reach \$396,000.

Minimum contributions:

\$25 or \$15 through payroll deduction.

Does the program offer an e-gifting platform for receiving gift contributions?

This plan offers a robust gifting platform that allows gift-givers to save their own profile for recurring or future contributions.

Fees & Expenses

Enrollment or application fee:

None.

Account maintenance fee:

None,

Program management fees:

0.445%; 0.395% for the Capital Preservation option, plus 0.095% administrative fee (none for the Capital Preservation option)

Expenses of the underlying investments:

Ranges from 0.022% to 0.47% in the year-of enrollment and asset allocation portfolios; 0.30% in the individual portfolios; none for the Capital Preservation Portfolio.

Total asset-based expense ratio:

0.32% - 0.46%

Contact

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<https://achievemontana.com/>

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