FY 2024-25

Tuition Waiver Analysis

Purpose, definitions, institutional uses, and impact

Prepared for	**Budget Section Education and Environment Committee**
Presentation date	September 30, 2026

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Executive Summary

Tuition waivers are a strategic public-policy and enrollment-management tool, not simply forgone tuition revenue.

Improve access

Reduce financial barriers and expand opportunity.

Advance priorities

Support workforce, economic, state, and institutional goals.

Strengthen outcomes

Promote student success, research, teaching, and sustainability.

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FY 2024-25 Waiver Impact at a Glance

Waivers supported student access while contributing to institutional revenue.

NEARLY 27%

of students received some type of tuition waiver

$38.9 MILLION

in total tuition waivers awarded

$110.9+ MILLION

in tuition, fees, and room and board revenue generated by waiver recipients

Revenue generated by waiver recipients was approximately 2.9 times the value of the waivers received.

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Why Tuition Waivers Matter

A deliberate investment in students and North Dakota's long-term economic and civic health.

Affordability & access

Expand educational opportunity.

Workforce & economy

Align programs and students with state needs.

Public service

Support veterans, public servants, and priority populations.

Student success

Promote diversity and improve outcomes.

Research & graduate education

Recruit assistants who support research and teaching.

Enrollment & sustainability

Advance recruitment, retention, program viability, and financial strategy.

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Policy Context and Waiver Framework

NDUS Policy 820 supports waiver use for access, enrollment strategy, workforce development, research growth, and institutional mission fulfillment.

1

Statutorily Required

Established in state law for qualifying populations.

2

SBHE-Required

Required through State Board of Higher Education policy.

3

Institutionally Determined

Designed by institutions to support mission, goals, and educational experience.

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Required Waivers

Statutory and SBHE policy requirements support designated populations and employees.

Qualifying veterans' dependents	Full tuition, subject to statute
North Dakota National Guard	35% tuition waiver
Survivors of fallen public safety personnel	100% tuition waiver for eligible spouses and children
Eligible law enforcement officers	25% waiver of tuition and fees

Employees	100% tuition waiver for up to three courses per academic year
SBHE Student Member	100% tuition waiver while serving
Senior Citizens	Audit tuition rate for eligible on-campus courses
Spouses and eligible dependents	50% tuition waiver

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Institutionally Determined Waivers

Institutions may target waivers to support mission, enrollment, and academic goals.

Cultural Diversity

Diverse student body

Athletics

Recruit and retain student-athletes

Merit-Based

Recognize high achievement

Dual Credit Matching

Support transition to postsecondary

Nonresident

Recruitment and retention

Farm Management

Agricultural producer instruction

Teacher Support

Advanced education for educators

Graduate Assistant

Research and classroom teaching

Other

Programs not separately reported

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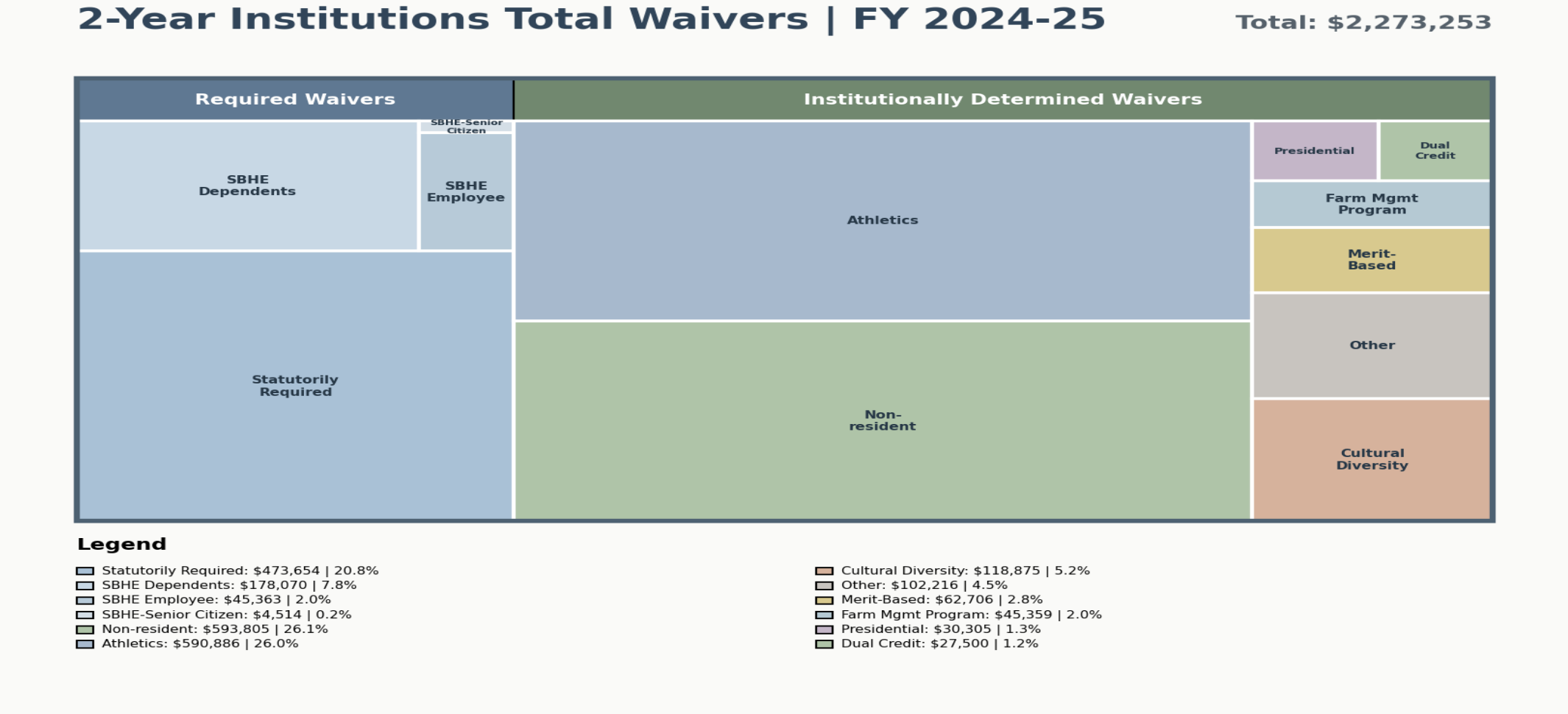
Two-Year Institutions Summary

FY 2024-25 total waivers: $2,273,253



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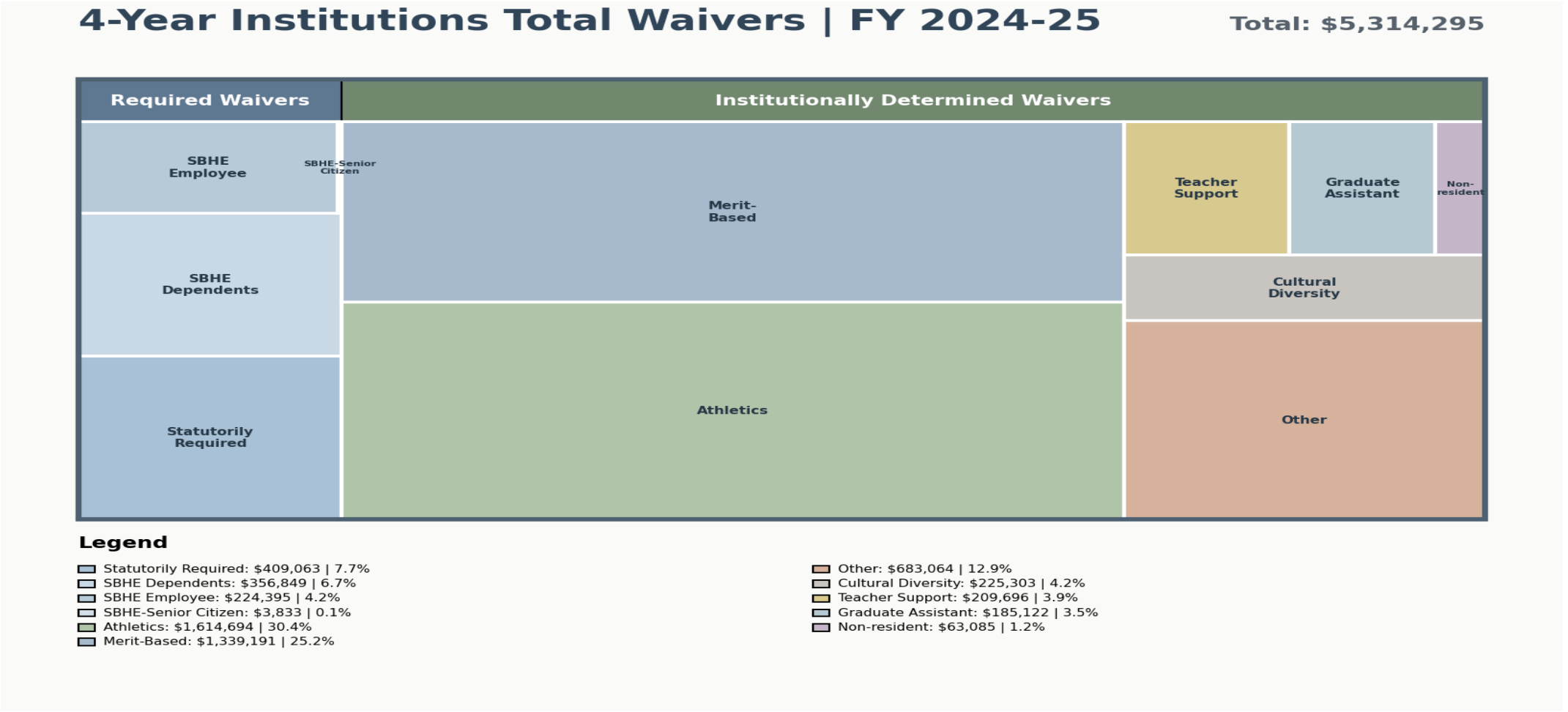
Four-Year Institutions Summary

FY 2024-25 total waivers: $5,314,295



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Key Takeaways and Reporting Notes

Key Takeaways

- Waivers are strategic tools for access, workforce priorities, student success, research, and enrollment sustainability.
- In FY 2024-25, waiver recipients generated substantially more institutional revenue than the value of waivers awarded.
- The waiver framework balances legal requirements, SBHE policy, and institution-specific discretion.
- Institutional waiver strategies vary according to mission, student populations, and program priorities.

Reporting Notes

- The breakdown of institutionally determined waivers was self-reported by individual campuses.
- Detailed waiver information for UND and NDSU is not included because each institution will present separately.

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FY 2024-25

Tuition Waiver Analysis

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Purpose, Definitions, and Institutional Uses

PREPARED FOR	**Budget Section Education and Environment Committee**
PRESENTATION DATE	**September 30, 2026**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Tuition waivers are not simply forgone tuition revenue. They are a strategic public-policy and enrollment-management tool used to improve access, advance workforce and economic priorities, support student success, strengthen research and graduate education, and further state and institutional goals.

FY 2024-25 Waiver Impact at a Glance

Tuition waivers supported student access while also contributing to substantial institutional revenue during the 2024-25 academic year.

NEARLY 27%	$38.9 MILLION	$110.9+ MILLION
of students received some type of tuition waiver	in total tuition waivers awarded	in tuition, fees, and room and board revenue generated by waiver recipients

Revenue generated by waiver recipients was approximately 2.9 times the value of the waivers they received.

Purpose of Tuition Waivers in Higher Education

For a public system such as the North Dakota University System (NDUS), tuition waivers represent a deliberate investment in students, workforce development, and the long-term economic and civic health of North Dakota.

Strategic purpose	Institutional value
Affordability and access	Reduce financial barriers and expand educational opportunity.

Workforce and economic development	Support programs and student populations aligned with state needs.
Public service and priority populations	Support veterans, public servants, and underserved populations.
Diversity and student success	Promote a diverse learning environment and improve student outcomes.
Research and graduate education	Recruit graduate assistants who contribute to research and teaching.
Employee recruitment and retention	Provide education benefits that strengthen the higher education workforce.
Enrollment and sustainability	Support recruitment, retention, program viability, and institutional financial strategy.
State and institutional priorities	Direct resources toward legally required and mission-aligned objectives.

Policy context

NDUS Policy 820 indicates that tuition waivers are intended to support access, enrollment strategy, workforce development, research growth, and institutional mission fulfillment. The policy encourages institutions to use waiver authority to promote enrollment of economically disadvantaged students, members of tribal nations, graduate students, and other populations aligned with institutional priorities.

Tuition Waiver Definitions

Tuition waivers generally fall into three categories: statutorily required waivers, waivers required by State Board of Higher Education policy, and waivers offered at institutional discretion.

1. Statutorily Required Waivers

Waiver population	Description
Dependents of qualifying veterans	Full tuition waivers are provided for dependents of qualifying veterans, subject to statutory requirements.
North Dakota National Guard	Members receive a 35 percent tuition waiver.

Survivors of fallen public safety personnel	A 100 percent tuition waiver is available to eligible surviving spouses and children.
Law enforcement officers	A 25 percent waiver of tuition and fees is provided for eligible law enforcement officers.

2. SBHE-Required Waivers

Waiver type	Primary purpose
Employee	Eligible employees receive a 100% tuition waiver for up to three courses per academic year.
SBHE Student Member	The student member receives a 100% tuition waiver while serving.
Senior Citizen	A waiver for the audit tuition rate for on-campus courses for North Dakota citizens age sixty-five or older.
Spouse and Eligible Dependent	Spouses and eligible dependents of an employee are eligible for a 50% tuition waiver.

3. Institutionally Determined Waivers

Institutions may offer waivers that support the mission and goals of the enrolling institution and enhance the educational experience of students and the academic community.

Waiver type	Primary purpose
Cultural Diversity	Promotes enrollment of a diverse student body.
Athletics	Supports recruitment and retention of student-athletes.
Merit-Based	Recognizes high-achieving students.
Dual Credit Matching	Supports students transitioning from dual credit to postsecondary enrollment.
Nonresident	Reduces tuition for recruitment and retention purposes.

Farm Management	Supports instruction tailored to agricultural producers.
Teacher Support	Supports eligible educators pursuing advanced education.
Graduate Assistant Waiver	Supports research and classroom teaching.
Other Institutional	Includes waiver programs not separately reported.

Institution-Level Visual Analysis

The pages that follow provide a visual representation of tuition waivers by institution for the 2024-25 academic year.

> **Presentation note**
> Detailed waiver information for the University of North Dakota and North Dakota State University is not included in this report because each institution will present its information separately.

Data Note: The breakdown of Institutionally Determined Waivers was self-reported by the individual campuses.

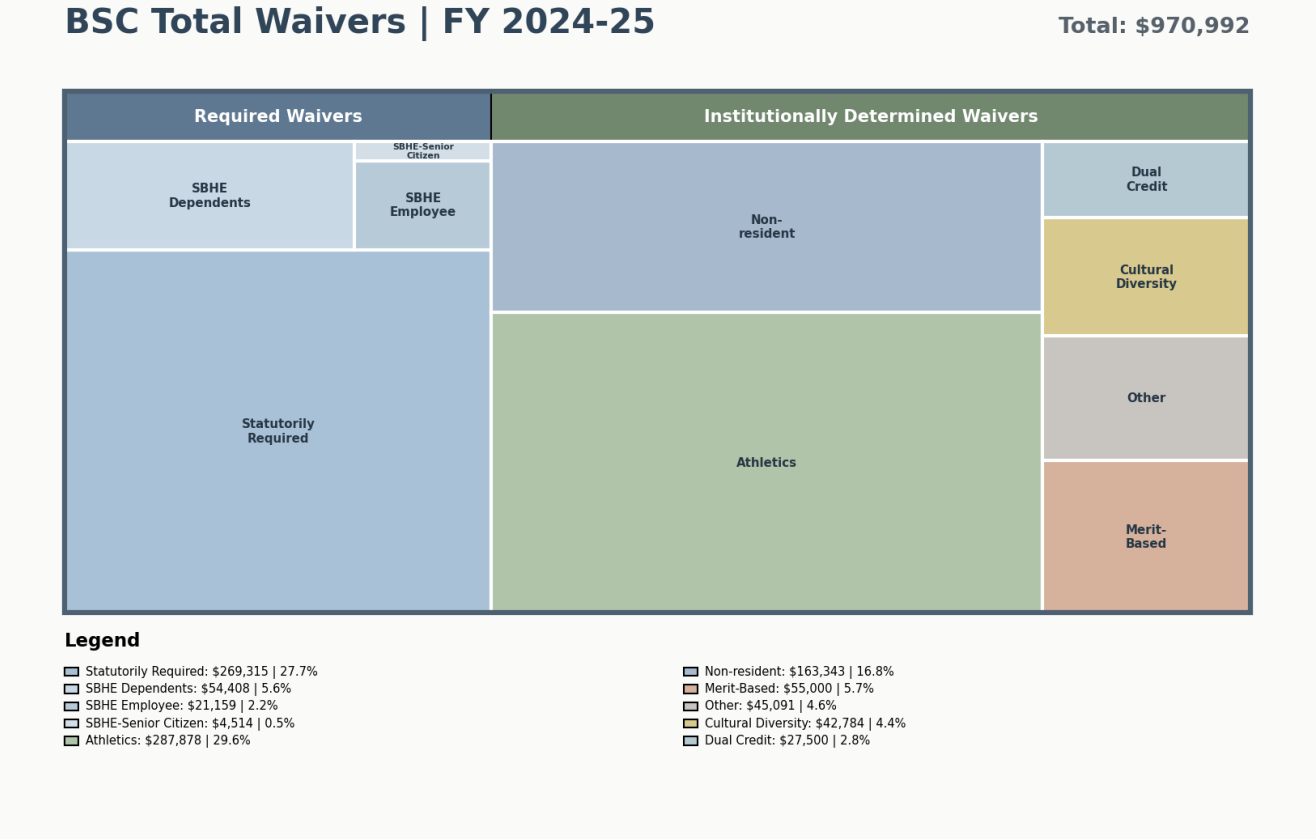
APPENDIX A

Institution-Level Tuition Waiver Visuals

Two-Year Institutions

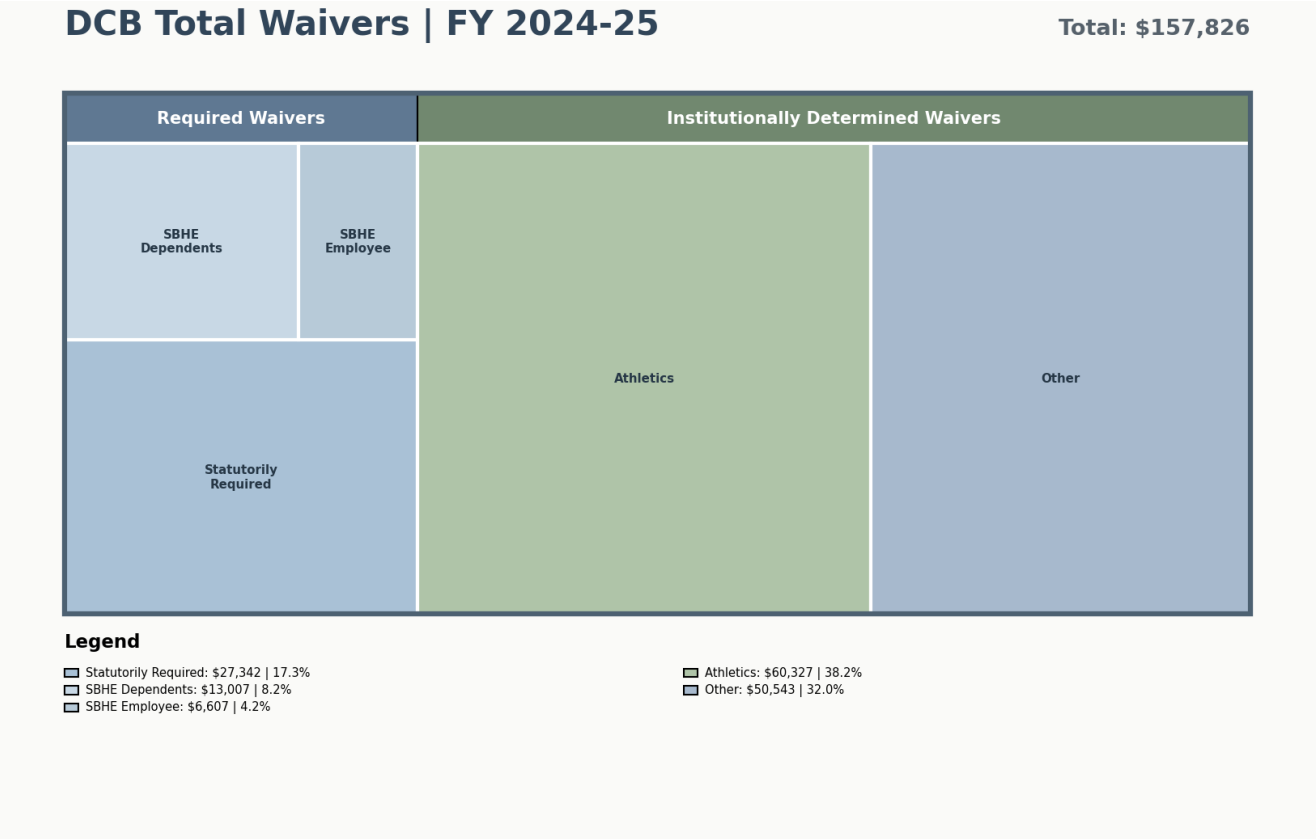
Bismarck State College

BSC Waivers by Category | FY 2024-25



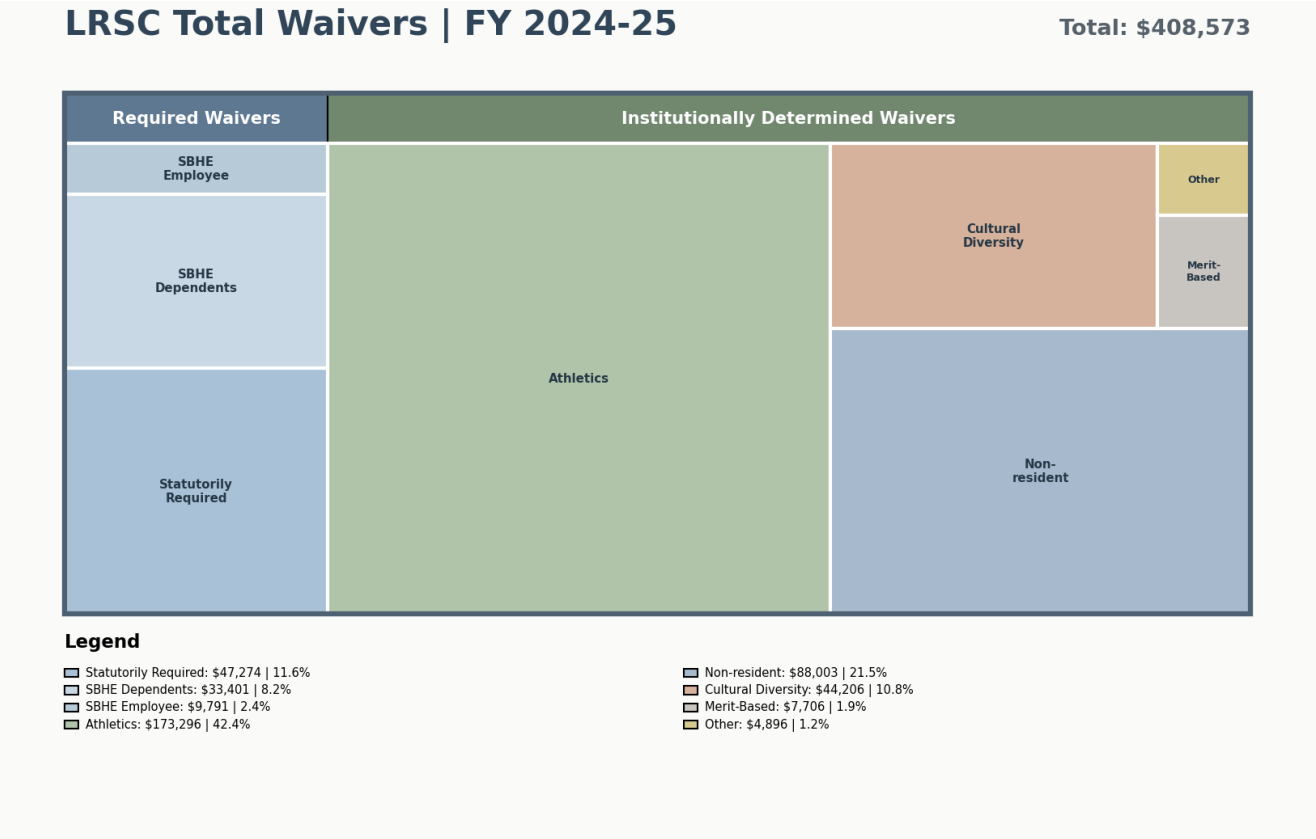
Dakota College at Bottineau

DCB Waivers by Category | FY 2024-25



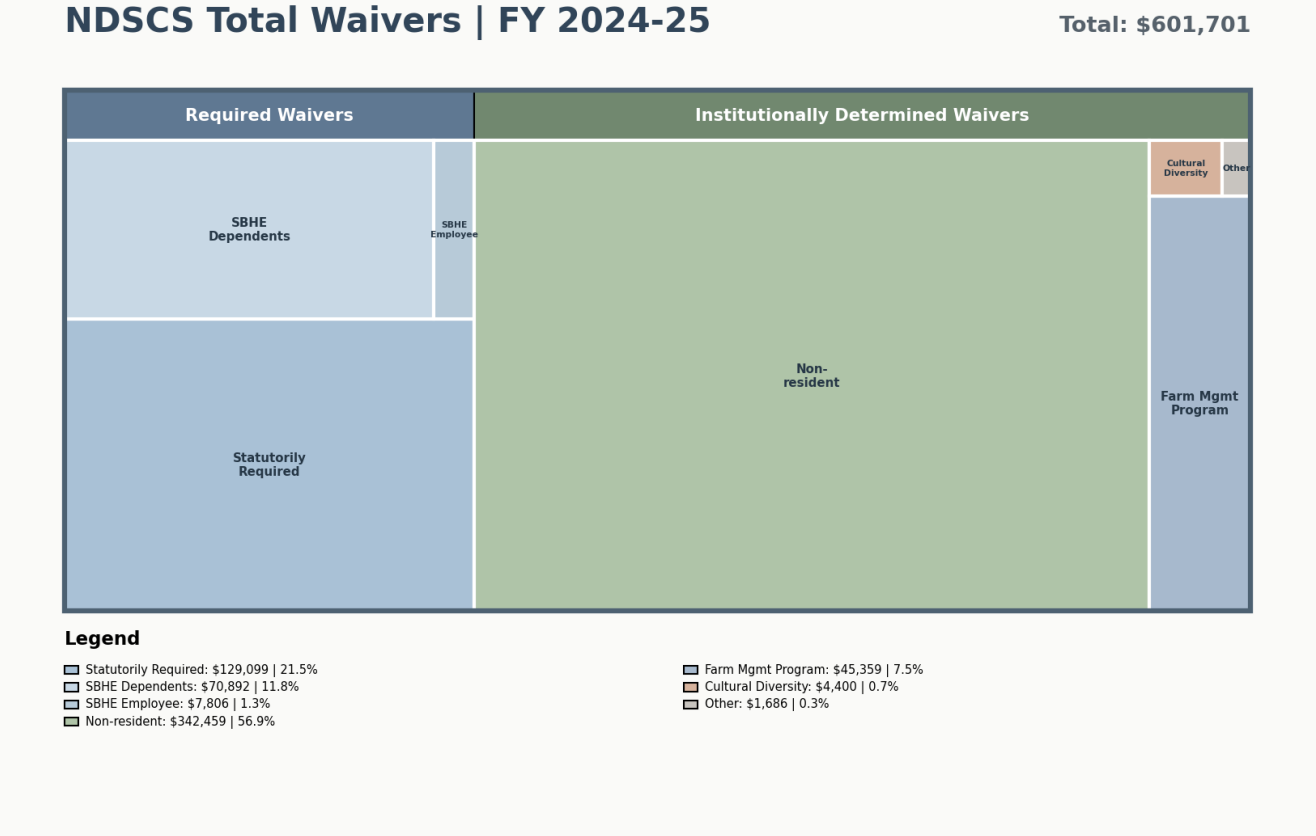
Lake Region State College

LRSC Waivers by Category | FY 2024-25



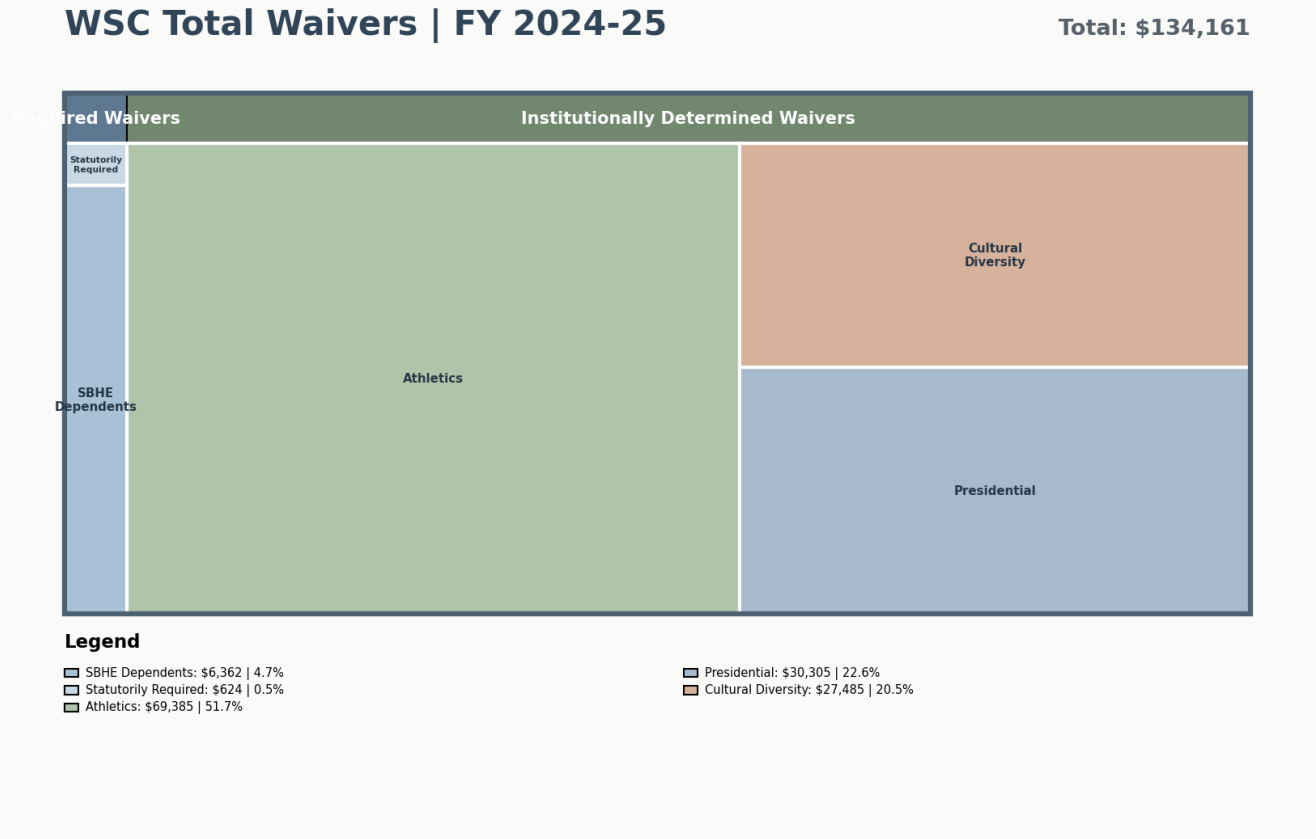
North Dakota State College of Science

NDSCS Waivers by Category | FY 2024-25



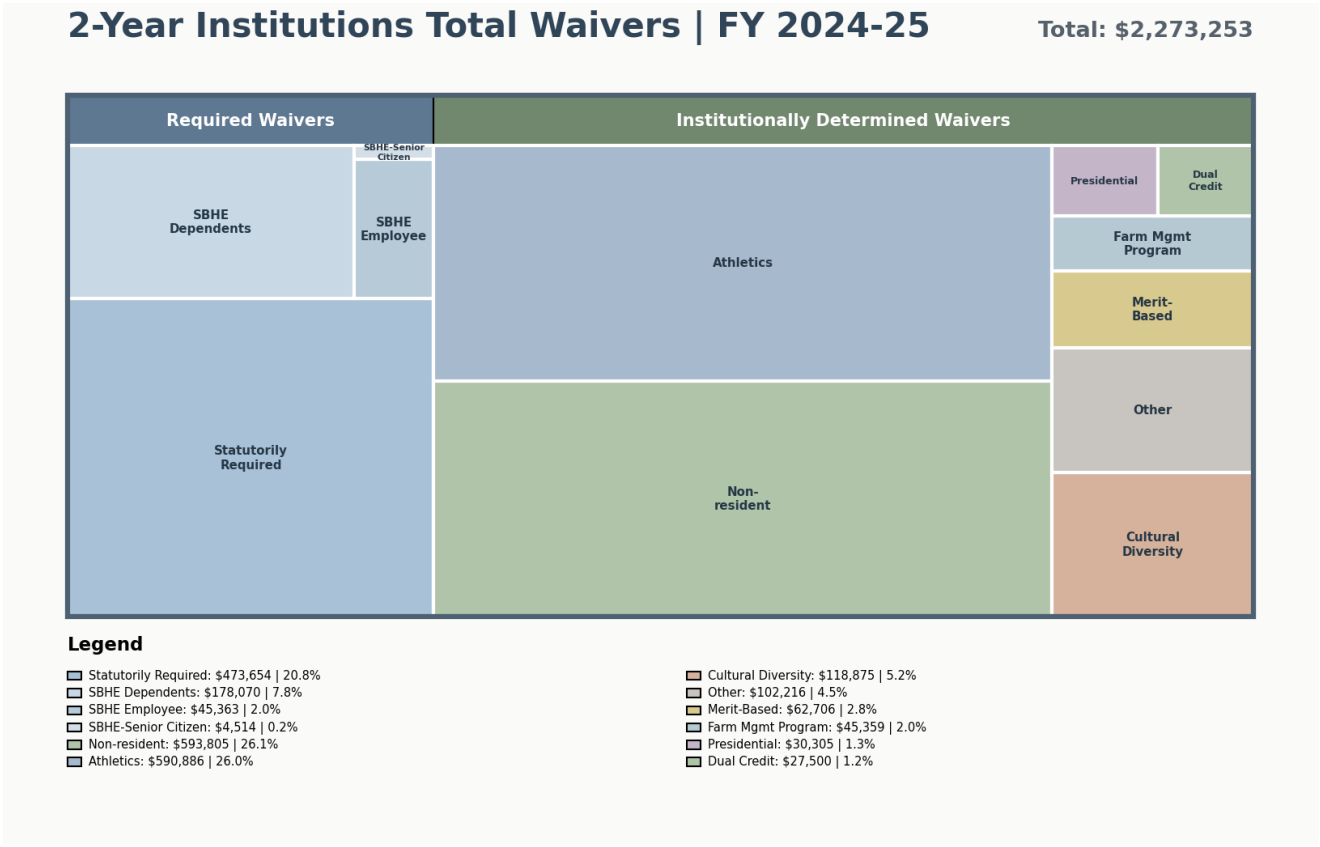
Williston State College

WSC Waivers by Category | FY 2024-25



2-Year Institutions Summary

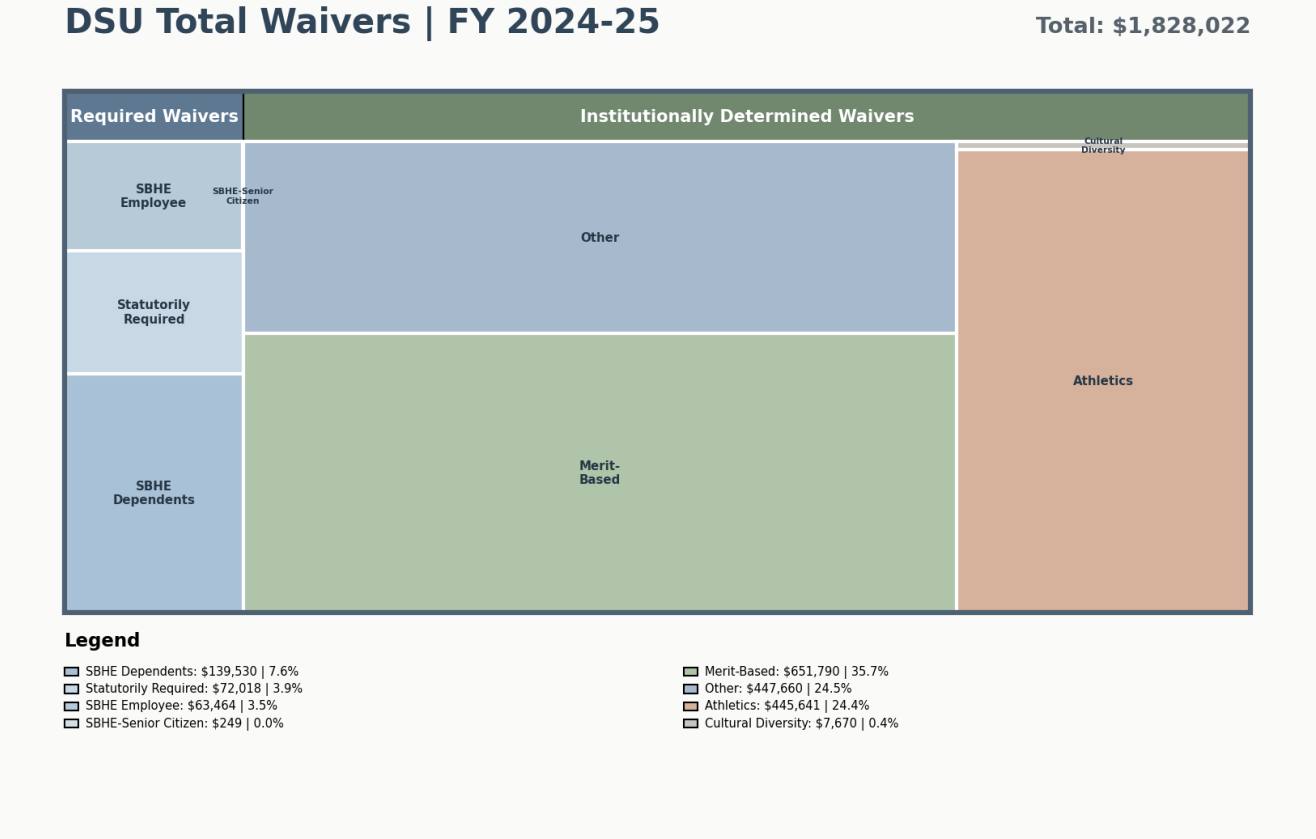
Two-Year Institutions Waivers by Category | FY 2024-25



Four-Year Institutions

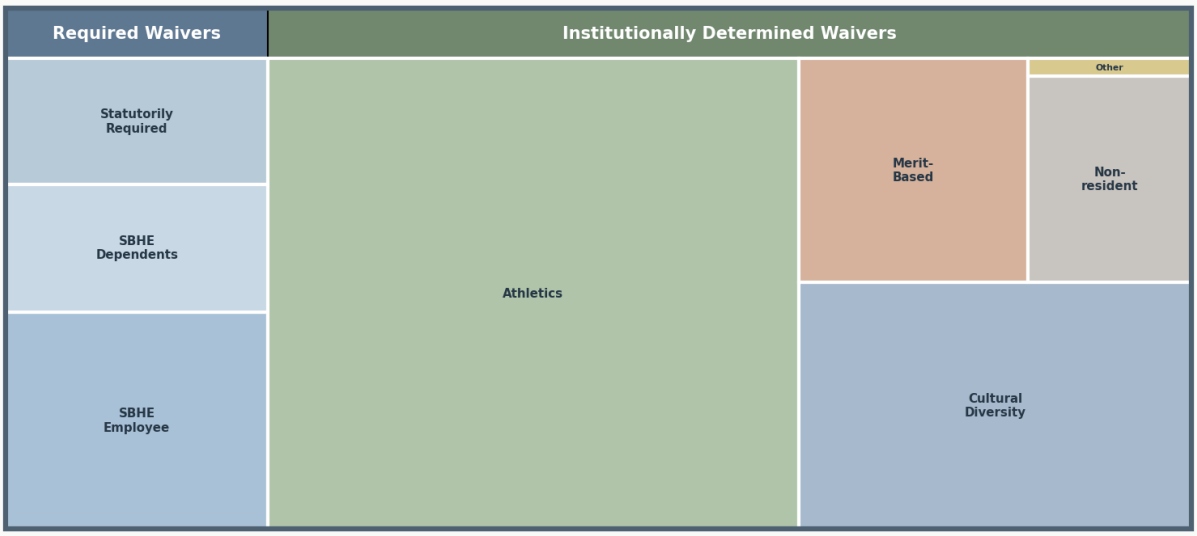
Dickinson State University

DSU Waivers by Category | FY 2024-25



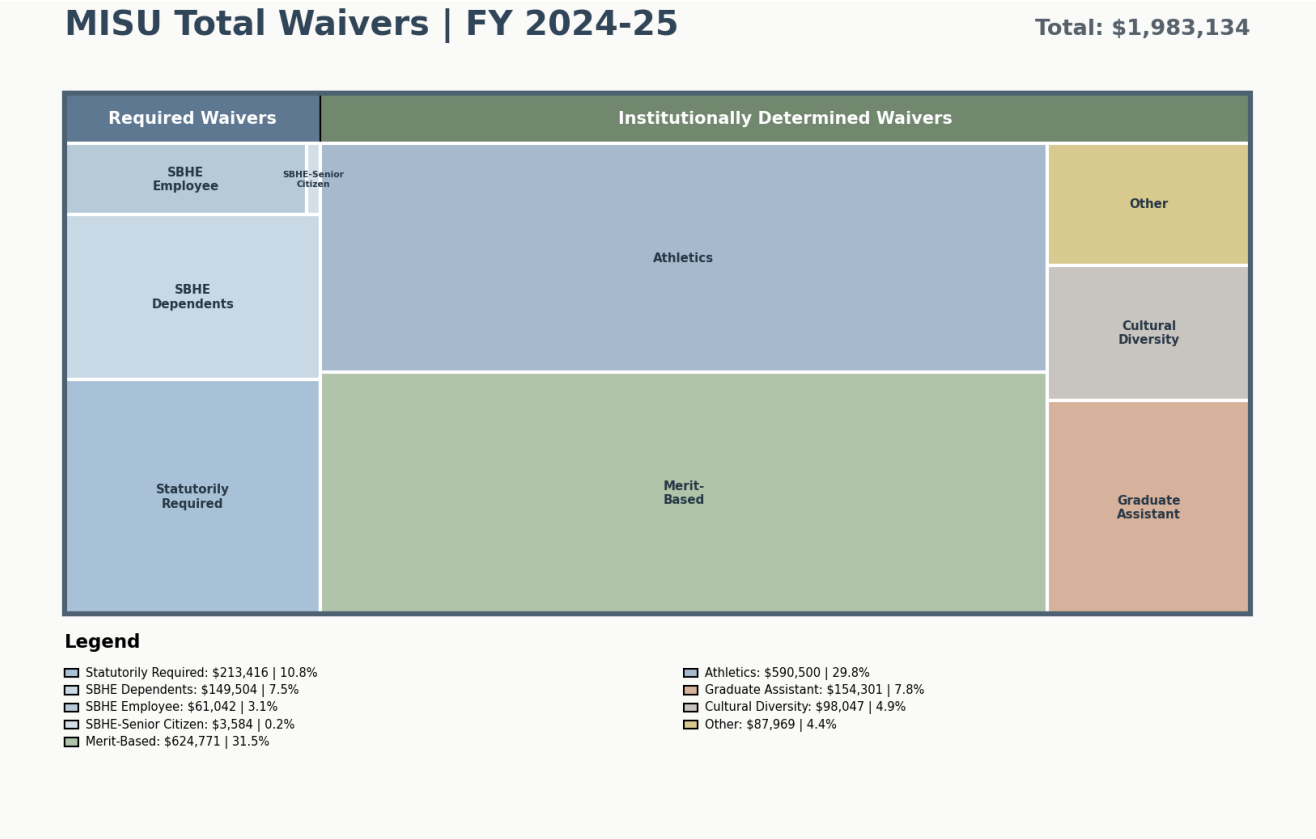
Mayville State University

MASU Waivers by Category | FY 2024-25



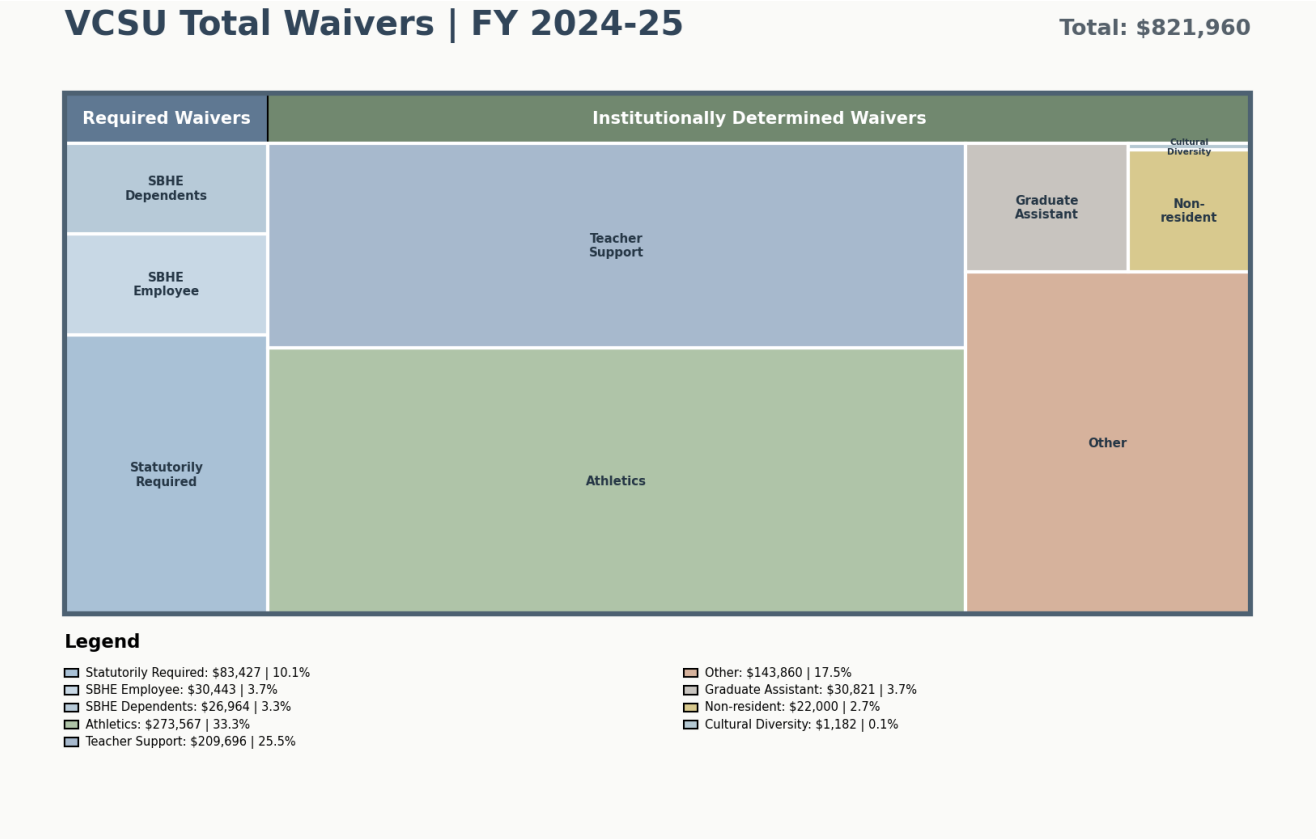
Minot State University

MISU Waivers by Category | FY 2024-25



Valley City State University

VCSU Waivers by Category | FY 2024-25



4-Year Institutions Summary

Four-Year Institutions Waivers by Category | FY 2024-25

