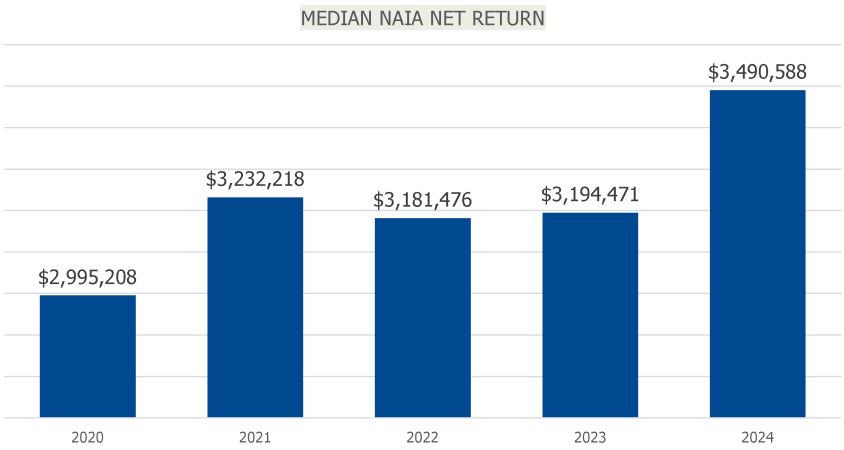
2026 Trends Report

RCA POWERED BY NAIA

NET RETURN

While dropping off in 2022 and 2023, the median net return of NAIA athletics increased to **$3,490,588** in the 2024-2025 academic year.



QUICK STATS

16.5%
INCREASE IN MEDIAN NET RETURN FROM 2020 TO 2024

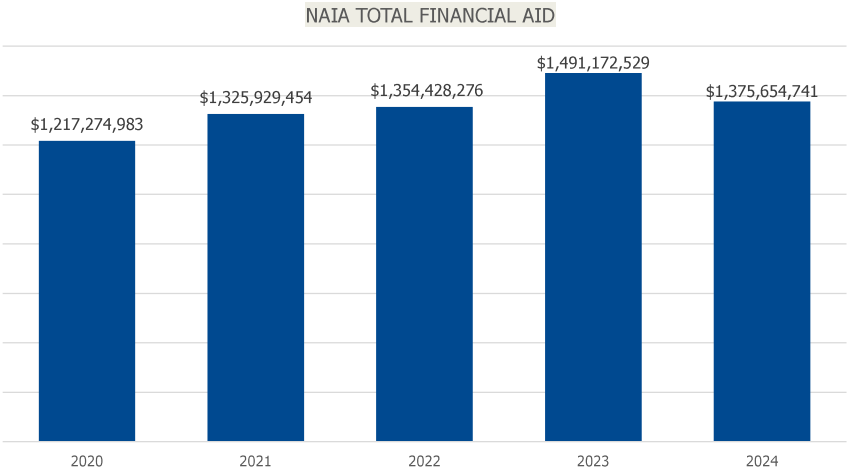
$4,557,865
AVERAGE NET RETURN IN 2024

15.4%
INCREASE IN AVERAGE NET RETURN FROM 2020 TO 2024

FINANCIAL AID

The total financial aid awarded to NAIA student athletes increased by **$158,379,758** from 2020 to 2024.

In the same time frame, the number of NAIA athletes increased by roughly 9%. In 2020, 81,294 athletes were playing NAIA sports. By 2024, 88,733 athletes were playing in the NAIA. (See page 2 for further details.)



QUICK STATS

13%
INCREASE IN TOTAL FINANCIAL AID FROM 2020 TO 2024

44.46%
AVG COA DISCOUNT RATE IN 2024

58.75%
AVG DISCOUNT RATE IN 2024

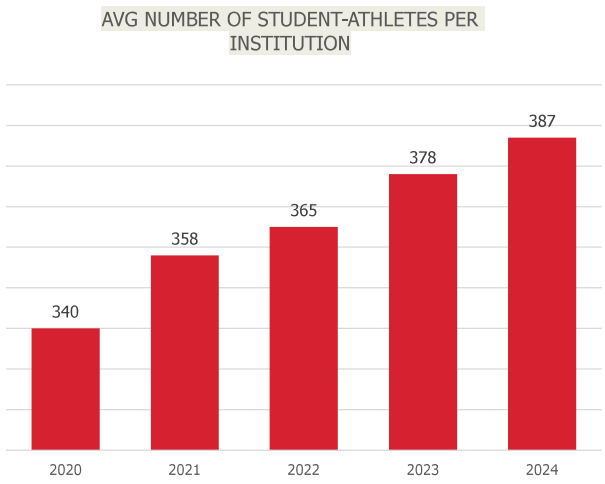
$14,669
AVG AMOUNT OF FINANCIAL AID PER STUDENT ATHLETE IN 2024

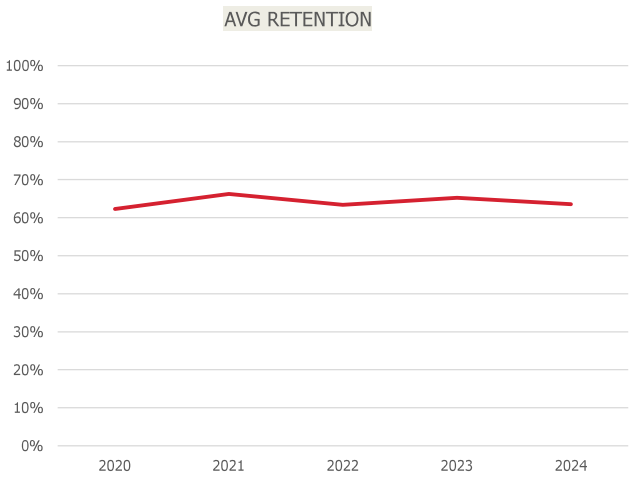
2026 Trends Report

ENROLLMENT AND RETENTION

The number of student-athletes enrolled at NAIA institutions grew from 81,294 in 2020 to 88,733 in 2024 – a **9.2%** increase.

Student-athlete retention held steady during that same time frame. The average retention rate for NAIA institutions in 2020 was 62.28%. While it peaked at 66.30% in 2021, the average retention rate was 63.54% in 2024.

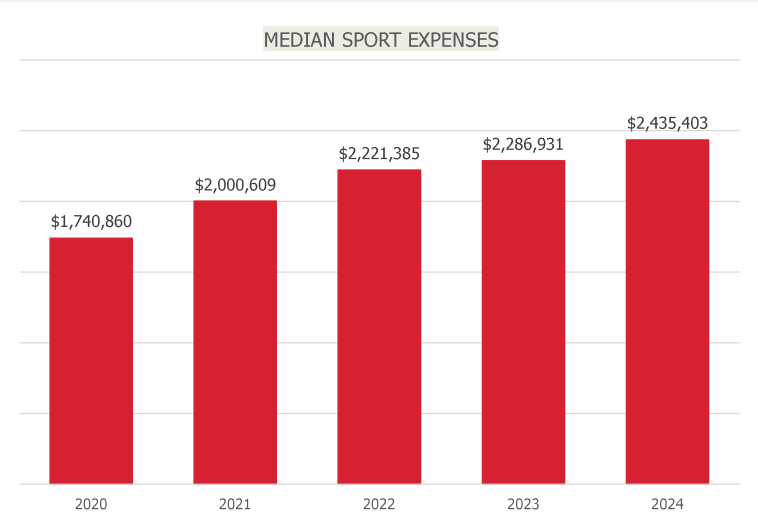




SPORT EXPENSES

The median amount spent on sports for all NAIA institutions was $2,435,403 in 2024. The is a 40% increase from 2020.

Similarly, average sport expenses and average sport expenses per athlete have increased over time. In 2020, the average sport expenses across NAIA institutions was $1,860,657, with institutions spending $5,470 on each athlete on average. In 2025, the average sport expense was $2,883,868, with institutions spending $7,443 per athlete on average. This is a 14.5% and 36% increase, respectively.



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