The Cost of War vs. The Cost of Care, Education & Infrastructure

A Comparative Analysis of U.S. Military Spending on the Iran Conflict vs. Domestic Needs

Report Date: March 7, 2026

Data Sources: Brown University Costs of War Project, Al Jazeera, CSIS, IranWarCost.com, CBO, KFF, Medicare.gov, GoodRx, SimplePractice, BetterCare, NEA, College Board, ASCE, Education Data Initiative, Federal Student Aid, USDA, and others as cited below.

---

1. Iran War Cost Overview

Operation Epic Fury (Launched February 28, 2026)

Metric	Estimated Cost	Source
First 24 hours of strikes	~$779 million	Anadolu Agency via Al Jazeera
Pre-strike military buildup	~$630 million	Center for New American Security est.
Daily carrier strike group ops (per group)	~$6.5 million/day	Center for New American Security
Phase 2 sustained operations rate	**~$220 million/day**	Iran War Cost Tracker (Days 3-10 phase)
Broader deployment cost estimate	~$30 million/day	Mishpacha / Brown University comparable est.
Total cumulative spending (as of Mar 7, 2026)	~$44.1 billion	Iran War Cost Tracker (includes all appropriations since April 2024)
Per-second burn rate (active ops)	~$2,546/second	Iran War Cost Tracker

Phased Cost Model

The Iran War Cost Tracker employs a three-phase model reflecting operational intensity:

Phase	Duration	Daily Cost	Operational Profile
Phase 1: Initial Strikes	Days 0–3	~$380 million/day	Intensive air campaign, rapid munitions deployment
Phase 2: Sustained Operations	Days 3–10	~$220 million/day	Continuous air operations, logistics surge
Phase 3: Air Dominance/ISR	Day 10+	~$155 million/day	Intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance focus

Seven Component Cost Breakdown (Base Rate, Phase 2)

Component	Daily Cost	Notes

Personnel	$40 million/day	~50,000 deployed personnel
Naval Forces	$22 million/day	2 Carrier Strike Groups, 7 Destroyers, 6 Littoral Combat Ships
Aircraft Operations	$48 million/day	12 airframe types in rotation
Fuel & Logistics	$15 million/day	Transport, basing, supply chain
Non-tracked Ordnance	$35 million/day	Munitions not individually itemized
C4ISR/Cyber/Space	$10 million/day	Communications, cyberwarfare, satellite ops
Overhead & Unmodeled	$50 million/day	Administrative, maintenance, contingencies
Total (Phase 2)	**~$220 million/day**	Confirmed March 7, 2026

Projections

Metric	Cost	Source
Penn Wharton Economic Impact (if <2 months)	~$210 billion total	Penn Wharton Budget Model / Fortune (March 2, 2026)
— Direct Military Costs	~$65 billion	Subset of above
— Broader Economic Fallout	~$115+ billion	Indirect costs, market disruption, energy shocks

Context: Total Conflict-Related Spending Since Oct 7, 2023

Category	Estimated Cost
Military aid to Israel (since Oct 7, 2023)	~$21.7–$22 billion
U.S. military ops in Yemen & wider region	~$9.65–$12.07 billion
Emergency Israel security assistance (H.R.8034, April 2024)	$26.38 billion
FY2025 baseline FMF for Israel	~$3.75 billion
Total post-Oct 7 spending (pre–Epic Fury)	**~$31.35–$33.77 billion**

Key Weapons & Systems Costs Referenced

System	Estimated Unit Cost
THAAD interceptor missile	~$12.7 million each
Total U.S. air defense costs (Twelve-Day War, June 2025)	$2.7–$4.7 billion
F-35A Lightning II (per unit, replacement)	~$80 million
B-2 Spirit stealth bomber (operating cost/hr)	~$130,000/hour
Tomahawk cruise missile	~$2 million each
JDAM guided bomb	~$25,000 each

---

2. Healthcare Cost Reference Table

All costs reflect 2025–2026 U.S. averages. "Without Insurance" = full sticker/out-of-pocket cost. "With Insurance" = typical copay/coinsurance after deductible.

2A. Durable Medical Equipment (DME)

Item	Avg. Cost (Without Insurance)	Avg. Cost (With Insurance)	Source
Insulin Pump (device only)	$6,000	$500–$1,000	BetterCare, Healthline, ThePricer
Insulin Pump + 1st Year Supplies	$9,000–$12,000	$3,000–$6,000	BetterCare, ThePricer
Annual Insulin Supply (vials)	$3,600–$6,000	$420 ($35/mo cap)	RAND, NCOA, manufacturer programs
Continuous Glucose Monitor (CGM, annual)	$3,000–$5,000	$500–$1,500	Healthline
CPAP Machine	$1,500	$250–$500	CostDigest, Medicare.gov
Manual Wheelchair	$1,000	$200	Medicare Tools, GoodRx
Power Wheelchair	$3,500	$700	Disabled World, RestoreMobility
Hearing Aids (pair, mid-range prescription)	$4,000	$800–$1,600	Soundly, GoodRx
OTC Hearing Aids (pair)	$500	N/A (no Rx needed)	Soundly
Prosthetic Leg (below-knee, basic)	$10,000	$2,000–$5,000	PrimeCare Prosthetics
Prosthetic Leg (above-knee, microprocessor)	$45,000	$5,000–$15,000	Orthotics Limited
Prosthetic Arm (myoelectric)	$35,000	$5,000–$10,000	Orthotics Limited
Hospital Bed (home use)	$2,000	$400	Medicare.gov
Oxygen Concentrator	$1,500	$300	SeniorLiving.org
Nebulizer	$300	$60	Medicare.gov
Walker	$200	$40	Medicare Tools

2B. Medical Services & Procedures

Service	Avg. Cost (Without Insurance)	Avg. Cost (With Insurance)	Source
Emergency Room Visit	$2,700	$400–$650	Mira Health, BetterCare
Ambulance Ride (ground, BLS)	$1,200	$250–$450	BetterCare, ConsumerShield
Air Ambulance	$40,000	$5,000–$15,000	MASA, ConsumerShield
Therapy/Counseling Session (1 hr)	$150	$20–$50	SimplePractice, Project Healthy Minds
Annual Therapy (weekly, 52 sessions)	$7,800	$1,040–$2,600	Calculated from above
Knee Replacement Surgery	$35,000	$3,000–$7,000	KFF, Debt.org
Heart Bypass Surgery (CABG)	$57,000	$5,000–$12,000	Weiss & Paarz, KFF
Hip Replacement Surgery	$35,000	$3,000–$7,000	KFF Health System Tracker
Cataract Surgery	$3,500	$500–$1,000	Weiss & Paarz
Childbirth (vaginal, hospital)	$18,000	$2,000–$4,000	KFF
MRI Scan	$1,200	$200–$500	HealthcareBlueBook
Colonoscopy	$1,650	$200–$500	Weiss & Paarz
Hospital Stay (per day)	$3,000	$600	Debt.org, KFF
Appendectomy (laparoscopic)	$23,000	$3,000–$5,000	KFF Health System Tracker

3. Education Cost Reference Table

All costs reflect 2025–2026 U.S. averages unless otherwise noted.

3A. Tuition & Enrollment Costs

Item	Avg. Annual Cost	Source
Public 4-year college (in-state, tuition + fees)	$11,950	College Board, Trends in College Pricing 2025
Public 4-year college (out-of-state, tuition + fees)	$31,880	College Board
Private nonprofit 4-year college (tuition + fees)	$45,000	College Board
Community college (in-district, tuition + fees)	$4,150	College Board
Total cost of attendance: public in-state (tuition, fees, room, board)	$30,990/year	College Board
Total cost of attendance: private nonprofit (tuition, fees, room, board)	$65,470/year	College Board
4-year bachelor's degree, public in-state (total)	~$123,960	College Board (calculated)
4-year bachelor's degree, private nonprofit (total)	~$261,880	College Board (calculated)
Average private K–12 school tuition	$13,302/year	Education Data Initiative, 2025

3B. Education-Related Costs & Resources

Item	Cost / Value	Source
College textbooks & supplies (public 4-year, annual)	$1,220	Education Data Initiative, College Board
College textbooks & supplies (community college, annual)	$1,467	Education Data Initiative
Maximum Pell Grant award (2025–2026)	$7,395	Federal Student Aid
Average starting teacher salary	$46,526	NEA, 2025
National average teacher salary	$74,177	NEA, 2024–25 estimate
Average K–12 per-pupil spending	$17,277	Education Data Initiative, FY2025
Head Start: annual federal funding per funded slot	~$12,600	HHS/ACF (FY2022: $10.5B for ~833K slots)
Free school lunch (federal reimbursement, per meal)	~$4.41	USDA FNS, SY 2024–25 (free rate, contiguous states)
Average student loan debt per borrower (federal)	$39,375	Federal Student Aid, Q3 2025
Total U.S. student loan debt (federal + private)	~$1.84 trillion	LendingTree / Education Data Initiative, Q4 2025
Total federal student loan borrowers	~42.8 million	Federal Student Aid
Average new elementary school construction (per sq ft)	~$295	Gordian RSMeans / Levelset, 2024
Average new high school construction (per sq ft)	~$359	Gordian RSMeans / Levelset, 2024

Typical new elementary school (60,000 sq ft)	~$17.7 million	Calculated from per-sq-ft data
Typical new high school (130,000 sq ft)	~$46.7 million	Calculated from per-sq-ft data

---

4. Infrastructure Cost Reference Table

All costs reflect 2024–2026 U.S. estimates unless otherwise noted.

4A. Transportation Infrastructure

Item	Cost	Source
Road rehabilitation backlog (national)	$435 billion	ASCE 2025 Report Card
Bridge repair/replacement backlog	$117.1 billion ($69.7B replacement + $47.4B rehab)	FHWA, 2023 est.
Annual highway maintenance per lane-mile	~$24,000	ASCE / Transportation for America
Annual road & bridge spending (state + local, 2023)	~$125 billion	Pew Charitable Trusts / BEA
Deferred road & bridge maintenance (2000–2023)	$105 billion	Pew Charitable Trusts, 2025
Total road & bridge capital needs backlog	$786 billion	ASCE 2021/2025 Report Card
Bridges needing repair or replacement	~221,791 (about 1/3 of all U.S. bridges)	ASCE 2025 Report Card
Average bridge replacement rate	~4,927 bridges/year	ASCE (2014–2023 avg.)

4B. Water Infrastructure

Item	Cost	Source
Drinking water infrastructure needs (20-year)	$625 billion	EPA, 2023 Needs Assessment
Drinking water investment gap (2024)	$309 billion (projected to $620B by 2043)	ASCE / Value of Water Campaign, 2024
Lead service lines still in use	~9 million lines	ASCE 2025 Report Card / EPA
IIJA funding for drinking water (total)	$30 billion	IIJA, 2021
Wastewater infrastructure value (national)	>$1 trillion	ASCE 2025 Report Card
Annual wastewater/stormwater funding gap	~$69 billion	ASCE / Value of Water Campaign
Wastewater funding gap (projected, by 2044)	>$690 billion	ASCE 2025 Report Card

4C. Broadband & Digital Infrastructure

Item	Cost	Source
Average monthly home internet cost	$75–$85	Allconnect, CablePapa, industry analysis 2025
Annual household internet cost	~$936 (at $78/mo avg.)	Calculated
BEAD Program allocation (federal)	~$42 billion	IIJA / NTIA
Rural fiber deployment cost (per location, remote)	$77,000–$204,000	USDA ReConnect program data, 2022
Households without home internet	~10 million (7.8%)	U.S. Census Bureau, 2023

Rural Americans lacking 25/3 Mbps broadband	22.3%	FCC

4D. Overall Infrastructure

Category	ASCE 2025 Grade	Investment Gap
Roads	D+	Part of $3.7T total
Bridges	C	$373B over 10 years
Drinking Water	C-	$309B (growing to $620B)
Wastewater	D+	Part of $690B by 2044
Stormwater	D	Part of $69B/yr combined
Transit	D	Part of $3.7T total
Broadband	C-	New category in 2025
Overall U.S. Infrastructure	**C**	**$3.7 trillion (ASCE est.)**

> ***Total infrastructure investment gap:*** *ASCE projects a* ***$3.7 trillion*** *shortfall between planned infrastructure investments and what is needed to achieve good repair — an increase from $2.59 trillion in 2021. Including categories not in the Bridging the Gap study, the total gap reaches approximately* ***$4.4 trillion****.*

---

5. Comparative Calculations: Healthcare

5A. What $220 Million Per Day Could Buy (Phase 2 Sustained Operations Rate)

> ***Base figure:*** *$220,000,000/day — the Phase 2 sustained operations burn rate since Operation Epic Fury began on February 28, 2026.*

Durable Medical Equipment

Item	Unit Cost Used	Units Purchasable Per Day	Annualized (365 days)
Insulin Pumps	$6,000	**36,667**	13,383,333
Insulin Pump + 1yr Supplies	$10,000	**22,000**	8,030,000
Annual Insulin Supply	$5,000	**44,000**	16,060,000
CPAP Machines	$1,500	**146,667**	53,533,333
Power Wheelchairs	$3,500	**62,857**	22,942,857
Manual Wheelchairs	$1,000	**220,000**	80,300,000
Hearing Aid Pairs (mid-range)	$4,000	**55,000**	20,075,000
Prosthetic Legs (below-knee)	$10,000	**22,000**	8,030,000
Prosthetic Legs (above-knee, advanced)	$45,000	**4,889**	1,784,444
Hospital Beds	$2,000	**110,000**	40,150,000
Walkers	$200	**1,100,000**	401,500,000
Nebulizers	$300	**733,333**	267,666,667

Medical Services

Service	Unit Cost Used	Units Fundable Per Day	Annualized (365 days)
ER Visits	$2,700	**81,481**	29,740,741
Ambulance Rides	$1,200	**183,333**	66,916,667
Therapy Sessions	$150	**1,466,667**	535,333,333
Annual Therapy (52 wks)	$7,800	**28,205**	10,294,872
Knee Replacements	$35,000	**6,286**	2,294,286
Heart Bypass Surgeries	$57,000	**3,860**	1,408,772
Hip Replacements	$35,000	**6,286**	2,294,286
Cataract Surgeries	$3,500	**62,857**	22,942,857
Childbirths (hospital)	$18,000	**12,222**	4,461,111
MRI Scans	$1,200	**183,333**	66,916,667
Hospital Stay Days	$3,000	**73,333**	26,766,667

5B. What $30 Million Per Day Could Buy (Deployment Rate)

Base figure: *$30,000,000/day — the estimated broader deployment cost.*

Durable Medical Equipment

Item	Unit Cost Used	Units Purchasable Per Day	Annualized (365 days)
Insulin Pumps	$6,000	**5,000**	1,825,000
CPAP Machines	$1,500	**20,000**	7,300,000
Power Wheelchairs	$3,500	**8,571**	3,128,571
Hearing Aid Pairs	$4,000	**7,500**	2,737,500
Prosthetic Legs (below-knee)	$10,000	**3,000**	1,095,000
Prosthetic Legs (above-knee)	$45,000	**667**	243,333
Walkers	$200	**150,000**	54,750,000

Medical Services

Service	Unit Cost Used	Units Fundable Per Day	Annualized (365 days)
ER Visits	$2,700	**11,111**	4,055,556
Ambulance Rides	$1,200	**25,000**	9,125,000
Therapy Sessions	$150	**200,000**	73,000,000
Knee Replacements	$35,000	**857**	312,857
Heart Bypass Surgeries	$57,000	**526**	192,105
Cataract Surgeries	$3,500	**8,571**	3,128,571
MRI Scans	$1,200	**25,000**	9,125,000

---

6. Comparative Calculations: Education

6A. What $220 Million Per Day Could Buy in Education

Base figure: *$220,000,000/day — the Phase 2 sustained operations burn rate.*

Tuition & Scholarships

Item	Unit Cost Used	Units Fundable Per Day	Annualized (365 days)
Full-year community college tuitions	$4,150	**53,012**	19,349,398
Full-year public in-state tuitions (tuition + fees)	$11,950	**18,410**	6,719,665
Full-year private college tuitions (tuition + fees)	$45,000	**4,889**	1,784,444
4-year public in-state degrees (total cost of attendance)	$123,960	**1,775**	647,868
4-year private college degrees (total cost of attendance)	$261,880	**840**	306,587
Maximum Pell Grant awards ($7,395 each)	$7,395	**29,749**	10,858,282
College textbook sets (annual, public 4-yr)	$1,220	**180,328**	65,819,672

Teacher Pay & School Operations

Item	Unit Cost Used	Units Fundable Per Day	Annualized (365 days)
Annual teacher salaries (avg. $74,177)	$74,177	**2,966**	1,082,549
Annual starting teacher salaries ($46,526)	$46,526	**4,728**	1,725,690
Full-year K–12 per-pupil spending	$17,277	**12,733**	4,647,649
Head Start slots (annual, ~$12,600/slot)	$12,600	**17,460**	6,373,016
Free school lunches (per meal, ~$4.41 federal reimbursement)	$4.41	**49,886,621**	18,208,616,780

Student Debt Relief

Item	Unit Cost Used	Units Fundable Per Day	Annualized (365 days)
Average student loan balances erased ($39,375)	$39,375	**5,587**	2,039,365
Median student loan balances erased (~$22,500)	$22,500	**9,778**	3,568,889

School Construction

Item	Unit Cost Used	Units Fundable Per Day	Annualized (365 days)
New elementary schools (~60,000 sq ft)	$17,700,000	**12.4**	4,537
New high schools (~130,000 sq ft)	$46,700,000	**4.7**	1,720

6B. What $30 Million Per Day Could Buy in Education

Base figure: *$30,000,000/day — the estimated broader deployment cost.*

Item	Unit Cost Used	Units Fundable Per Day	Annualized (365 days)
Community college tuitions	$4,150	**7,229**	2,638,554
Public in-state tuitions	$11,950	**2,510**	916,318
Maximum Pell Grant awards	$7,395	**4,057**	1,480,730
Annual teacher salaries (avg.)	$74,177	**404**	147,620
K–12 per-pupil spending years	$17,277	**1,736**	633,791
Head Start slots	$12,600	**2,381**	869,048
Student loan balances erased (avg.)	$39,375	**762**	278,095
Free school lunches	$4.41	**6,802,721**	2,482,993,197

6C. Education-Focused Time Comparisons ($220M/day rate)

Timeframe	War Spending	Education Equivalent
Per second ($2,546)	$2,546	577 school lunches OR 0.61 community college tuitions
Per minute ($152,778)	$152,778	37 community college tuitions OR 2 teacher salaries
Per hour ($9.17M)	$9,166,667	2,209 community college tuitions OR 124 teacher salaries OR 1,239 Pell Grants
Per day ($220M)	$220,000,000	18,410 public in-state tuitions OR 2,966 teacher salaries OR 5,587 student loans erased
Per week ($1.54B)	$1,540,000,000	128,870 in-state tuitions OR 20,762 teacher salaries
4 weeks (Trump's est.)	$6,160,000,000	515,480 in-state tuitions OR 83,048 teacher salaries OR 156,444 student loans erased
First 24 hrs (actual) ($779M)	$779,000,000	65,188 in-state tuitions OR 10,502 teacher salaries
Pre-strike buildup ($630M)	$630,000,000	52,720 in-state tuitions OR 8,494 teacher salaries

6D. Comparison to U.S. Education Need Statistics

Education Need	Americans Affected	Daily War $ Equivalent
Total student loan borrowers	~42.8 million	$220M/day could erase 5,587 avg. loan balances — enough for all borrowers in ~21 years at this daily rate
Students who skip textbooks (cost)	~65% of college students	$220M/day could provide 180,328 annual textbook sets per day

Children eligible for Head Start but unserved	~300,000+ (est. unmet demand)	$220M/day = 17,460 new Head Start slots/day — enough to close the gap in ~17 days
Teacher shortage (estimated vacancies)	~55,000–100,000 unfilled positions	$220M/day could fund 2,966 teacher salaries — entire shortage addressed in ~19–34 days
Students receiving free/reduced school lunches	~30 million children daily	$220M/day = 49.9 million lunches — enough to feed every eligible child with surplus
Public school buildings needing major repair	~53% of schools (per GAO)	$220M/day could build 12 new elementary schools or 5 new high schools per day
Americans who have never attended college (cost barrier)	~37% of 18–24 yr olds	$220M/day = 53,012 community college tuitions funded daily

---

7. Comparative Calculations: Infrastructure

7A. What $220 Million Per Day Could Buy in Infrastructure

Base figure: *$220,000,000/day — the Phase 2 sustained operations burn rate.*

Transportation

Item	Unit Cost Used	Units Fundable Per Day	Annualized (365 days)
Lane-miles of annual road maintenance	$24,000/yr	**9,167**	3,345,833
Days toward road rehabilitation backlog ($435B)	$220M	**1 day**	Backlog cleared in ~5.4 years
Days toward bridge repair backlog ($117.1B)	$220M	**1 day**	Backlog cleared in ~1.5 years
Days toward total road/bridge backlog ($786B)	$220M	**1 day**	Backlog cleared in ~9.8 years

Water

Item	Unit Cost Used	Units Fundable Per Day	Annualized (365 days)
Days toward drinking water needs ($625B/20yr)	$220M	**1 day**	Would take ~7.8 years at this rate to close full 20-yr need
Days toward drinking water gap ($309B)	$220M	**1 day**	Gap closed in ~3.8 years
Days toward wastewater/stormwater annual gap ($69B/yr)	$220M	**1 day**	Full annual gap met in ~314 days

Broadband

Item	Unit Cost Used	Units Fundable Per Day	Annualized (365 days)
Households' annual internet service ($936/yr)	$936	**235,043**	85,790,598
Years of internet for all unconnected HH (~10M × $936)	$9.36B total	At $220M/day, **43 days** covers a full year for all	—

Overall Infrastructure Gap

Item	Unit Cost Used	Units Fundable Per Day	Annualized (365 days)
Days toward total ASCE gap ($3.7T)	$220M	**1 day**	At $220M/day, $80.3B/year; full gap addressed in ~46.1 years
Days toward total ASCE gap ($4.4T incl. all categories)	$220M	**1 day**	At $220M/day, full gap addressed in ~54.8 years

---

7B. What $30 Million Per Day Could Buy in Infrastructure

Base figure: *$30,000,000/day — the estimated broader deployment cost.*

Item	Unit Cost Used	Units Fundable Per Day	Annualized (365 days)
Lane-miles of annual road maintenance	$24,000/yr	**1,250**	456,250
Households' annual internet service	$936	**32,051**	11,698,718
Annual contribution to bridge repair backlog ($117.1B)	$30M/day	$10.95B/year	Backlog cleared in ~10.7 years
Annual contribution to drinking water gap ($309B)	$30M/day	$10.95B/year	Gap closed in ~28.2 years

---

7C. Infrastructure-Focused Time Comparisons ($220M/day rate)

Timeframe	War Spending	Infrastructure Equivalent
Per minute ($152,778)	$152,778	6.4 lane-miles of road maintenance OR 163 households' internet for a year
Per hour ($9.17M)	$9,166,667	382 lane-miles of road maintenance OR 9,795 households' internet for a year
Per day ($220M)	$220,000,000	9,167 lane-miles maintained OR 0.19% of the bridge repair backlog
Per week ($1.54B)	$1,540,000,000	1.3% of the bridge repair backlog OR 0.50% of the drinking water gap
4 weeks (Trump's est.)	$6,160,000,000	5.3% of bridge repair backlog OR 2.0% of drinking water gap OR 0.17% of total ASCE gap
First 24 hrs (actual) ($779M)	$779,000,000	0.67% of bridge repair backlog OR 0.25% of drinking water gap
$44.1B cumulative	$44,100,000,000	37.7% of bridge repair backlog OR 7.1% of drinking water needs OR 1.19% of total ASCE gap

---

7D. What the $44.1 Billion Cumulative Spend Could Do for Infrastructure

Base figure: *$44,100,000,000 — total cumulative conflict spending as of March 7, 2026.*

Infrastructure Need	Total Cost	$44.1B as % of Need	What $44.1B Covers
Bridge repair/replacement backlog	$117.1 billion	**37.7%**	Over one-third of all U.S. bridge repairs
Road rehabilitation backlog	$435 billion	**10.1%**	10% of road rehab needs

Drinking water gap (2024)	$309 billion	**14.3%**	Significant dent in clean water needs
Lead service line replacement (~9M lines)	~$45–90 billion (est. $5,000–$10,000/line)	**49–98%**	Could potentially replace most or all lead pipes in America
BEAD broadband program	$42 billion	**105%**	Could fully fund the entire federal broadband expansion program
Annual wastewater/stormwater gap	$69 billion/year	**63.9%**	Over half the annual shortfall

---

8. Cross-Sector Comparisons

8A. Time-Based Comparisons ($220M/day rate)

Timeframe	War Spending	Healthcare Equivalent	Education Equivalent	Infrastructure Equivalent
Per second ($2,546)	$2,546	17 therapy sessions	577 school lunches	0.1 lane-mile maintained
Per minute ($152,778)	$152,778	25 insulin pumps	37 community college tuitions	6.4 lane-miles maintained
Per hour ($9.17M)	$9,166,667	262 knee replacements	124 teacher salaries	382 lane-miles maintained
Per day ($220M)	$220,000,000	1.47M therapy sessions	18,410 in-state tuitions	9,167 lane-miles maintained
4 weeks ($6.16B)	$6,160,000,000	176,000 knee replacements	83,048 teacher salaries	5.3% of bridge backlog

8B. What One THAAD Interceptor ($12.7M) Could Buy Across Sectors

Sector	Item	Quantity
Healthcare	Insulin pumps	2,117
Healthcare	Therapy sessions	84,667
Healthcare	Knee replacements	363
Healthcare	Heart bypass surgeries	223
Education	Community college tuitions (1 year)	3,060
Education	Public in-state tuitions (1 year)	1,063
Education	Pell Grant awards (max)	1,717
Education	Teacher salaries (1 year, avg.)	171
Education	Student loan balances erased (avg.)	323
Education	Annual textbook sets	10,410
Education	Free school lunches	2,879,819
Infrastructure	Lane-miles of road maintenance (annual)	529
Infrastructure	Households' internet service (1 year)	13,568

8C. Jobs Created Per $1 Million Invested

Per Brown University Costs of War Project data:

Sector	Jobs per $1 Million
Military spending	5 jobs
Infrastructure / Clean Energy	7–8 jobs
Healthcare	9 jobs
Education	~13 jobs

> ***Implication:*** *$220M/day in military spending creates ~1,100 jobs.*
>
> *The same amount invested in healthcare would create ~1,980 jobs.*
>
> *In infrastructure: ~1,650 jobs.*
>
> *In education:* ***~2,860 jobs*** *— more than 2.5× the military figure.*

---

9. Per-Taxpayer Burden

> ***Base:*** *~150 million U.S. tax filers (IRS Statistics of Income)*

Metric	Amount
Total conflict spending ($44.1B) / taxpayer	~$294 per taxpayer
Daily active ops ($220M) / taxpayer	~$1.47 per taxpayer per day
Projected 4-week campaign ($6.16B) / taxpayer	~$41.07 per taxpayer

For context — what $294 per taxpayer could buy:

Sector	$294 Could Provide
Healthcare	~2.0 therapy sessions, or 1 ambulance ride copay, or 2.4 months of insulin at the $35 cap
Education	1 month of community college tuition, or 24% of annual textbook costs, or ~67 school lunches
Infrastructure	12 lane-miles of road maintenance contribution, or 3.8 months of household internet

For context — what $41 per taxpayer (4-week campaign) could buy:

Sector	$41 Could Provide
Healthcare	~8.2 months of insulin copays at $35/mo
Education	~9.3 school lunches, or half an annual Pell Grant increase
Infrastructure	~1.7 lane-miles of road maintenance contribution

---

10. Comparison to U.S. Need Statistics (Summary)

Need Area	Americans Affected	Daily War $ Equivalent ($220M)
Healthcare		
Uninsured Americans	~27.6 million	$7.97 per uninsured person per day

Americans with diabetes	~37.3 million	36,667 insulin pumps/day — all equipped in ~3.4 years
Americans needing hearing aids	~28.8 million (NIDCD)	55,000 pairs/day — full unmet need met in ~14.6 months
Americans with sleep apnea	30 million (22M unequipped)	146,667 CPAPs/day — unmet need met in ~150 days
Cannot afford mental health care	~57 million (NAMI)	1.47M therapy sessions/day
Annual amputations	~185,000/year (Amputee Coalition)	22,000 prosthetics/day — full year's need met in 8.4 days
Annual U.S. insulin pump sales	~260,000 units/year	36,667/day — full year's market supplied in ~7 days
Annual hearing aid sales	~5.09M units/year (2023)	55,000 pairs/day — 11× the daily market rate
New wheelchair users annually	~2M/year (all types)	62,857 power chairs/day — a month of new demand per day
Education		
Student loan borrowers	~42.8 million	5,587 loans erased/day — all cleared in ~21 years
Children eligible but unserved by Head Start	~300,000+	Gap closed in ~17 days
Estimated teacher vacancies	~55,000–100,000	Entire shortage funded in ~19–34 days
College students skipping textbooks	~65% of enrollees	180,328 textbook sets/day
Students receiving free school lunch	~30 million/day	49.9 million lunches/day — full coverage with surplus
Infrastructure		
Bridges needing repair	~221,791	Bridge backlog ($117.1B) cleared in ~1.5 years
Lead service lines in use	~9 million	Potentially all replaced with $44.1B cumulative spending
Households without internet	~10 million	All connected for a year in ~43 days
Total ASCE infrastructure gap	$3.7–$4.4 trillion	$44.1B cumulative = 1.0–1.2% of total gap

---

11. Methodology Notes

1. **War cost figures** are estimates compiled from publicly available reporting. The Pentagon has not disclosed official totals. The $220M/day Phase 2 sustained operations rate is derived from the Iran War Cost Tracker, which employs a three-phase model ($380M/$220M/$155M/day) with seven component-level costs (personnel, naval forces, aircraft ops, fuel/logistics, ordnance, C4ISR/cyber/space, overhead) and is anchored at $44.1B cumulative spending on March 7, 2026, incrementing at $2,546/second. The Penn Wharton Budget Model projects up to $210B total economic cost if the conflict resolves in under 2 months ($65B direct military + $115B+ broader fallout). The $30M/day figure comes from comparable deployment estimates published by Mishpacha Magazine citing Brown University data.

2. **Healthcare costs** use national averages for uninsured/self-pay patients. Actual costs vary dramatically by geography, provider, and insurance plan. Where a range exists, we use the midpoint for calculations unless otherwise noted.

3. **Education costs** use published 2025–2026 data from the College Board, NEA, Federal Student Aid, Education Data Initiative, and USDA. Tuition figures reflect "sticker price" (published tuition and fees) for public and private institutions. Actual net price after aid varies. Teacher salary figures use the NEA's 2024–25 national average estimate of $74,177. Per-pupil spending uses the Education Data Initiative's FY2025 figure of $17,277. Head Start per-slot costs are estimated by dividing FY2022 federal funding (~$10.5 billion) by funded enrollment (~833,000 slots). School construction costs use Gordian RSMeans 2024 national average per-square-foot data, applied to typical school sizes.

4. **Infrastructure costs** draw primarily from the ASCE 2025 Infrastructure Report Card and its associated Bridging the Gap economic study (2024), EPA needs assessments, FHWA bridge data, Pew Charitable Trusts analysis, and USDA broadband program data. The $3.7 trillion total infrastructure gap is ASCE's projection for the 11 categories covered in the Bridging the Gap study; the $4.4 trillion figure adds

estimates for the remaining 7 categories (broadband, dams, levees, hazardous/solid waste, parks, schools). Lead service line replacement costs are estimated at $5,000–$10,000 per line based on EPA and industry estimates.

5. **Calculations are simple division** (daily war cost ÷ unit cost = units purchasable). They do not account for supply constraints, manufacturing capacity, workforce availability, procurement complexity, or systemic delivery challenges. They are intended to illustrate scale, not propose literal policy alternatives.

6. **"Annualized" figures** assume the daily rate continues for 365 days, which is not the expected duration of the conflict. Trump has estimated 4–5 weeks. These figures are provided for scale comparison only.

7. **Per-taxpayer calculations** use the IRS figure of ~150 million individual tax returns filed annually.

8. **Jobs-per-million data** comes from the Brown University Costs of War Project, which estimates employment impacts across sectors using Bureau of Labor Statistics data and input-output economic models.

---

12. Source Citations

War Costs

• Al Jazeera, "How much could the Iran war cost the US?" (March 3, 2026)

• Brown University Costs of War Project (costsofwar.watson.brown.edu)

• CSIS, "Operation Epic Fury and the Remnants of Iran's Nuclear Program" (March 2026)

• CSIS, "$3.7 Billion: Estimated Cost of Epic Fury's First 100 Hours" (March 2026)

• Iran War Cost Tracker (iran-cost-ticker.com) — Phased cost model (Days 0–3: $380M, Days 3–10: $220M, Day 10+: $155M/day) with seven sourced component costs

• Mishpacha Magazine, "The High Cost of a Hostile Iran" (February 2026)

• JINSA, Missile and Interceptor Cost Estimates (July 2025)

• Penn Wharton Budget Model / Fortune, "Trump's strikes on Iran could cost American economy as much as $210 billion" (March 2, 2026)

Healthcare

• BetterCare.com — Insulin and ER visit cost data (2025–2026)

• Healthline — Insulin pump and delivery cost data (May 2025)

• Soundly.com — Hearing aid pricing guide (2025)

• Orthotics Limited — Prosthetic limb cost guide (2025)

• KFF Health System Tracker — Surgery and procedure cost data

• Weiss & Paarz — Medical procedure cost analysis

• SimplePractice — Therapy session rate data (2024)

• Medicare.gov — DME coverage and pricing

• Mira Health — ER visit cost analysis (2025)

• ConsumerShield / BetterCare — Ambulance cost data (2025–2026)

• NAMI — Mental health access statistics

• CDC National Diabetes Statistics Report — 38.4M Americans with diabetes, 8.4M insulin-dependent

• SingleCare — Insulin statistics 2025, ~350,000 current pump users

• IMARC Group / Vocal Media — U.S. insulin pump market size ($1.55B in 2024, ~260K units/year estimated)

• CPAP.com — 2025 Sleep Apnea Statistics (~30M affected, ~8M current CPAP users)

• Straits Research — CPAP Devices Market Size Report 2025–2033

• RetirementLiving.com / Disabled World — 3.3M U.S. wheelchair users, ~2M new users/year

• INTCO Medical — United States Wheelchair Market 2026 analysis

• Fortune Business Insights — U.S. Hearing Aids Market (5.09M units sold in 2023)

• MarkeTrak 2025 — Hearing aid adoption rates (39% in 2025, up from 23% in 1989)

• NIDCD — 28.8M Americans who could benefit from hearing aids

• Amputee Coalition / Pro Medical East — 185,000 amputations/year, 2.1M living with limb loss

• NCBI / StatPearls — Prosthetics in Orthopedics, ~1.7M prosthetic users in U.S.

Education

• College Board, *Trends in College Pricing and Student Aid 2025*

• National Education Association (NEA), *Educator Pay Data 2025* (April 2025)

• Education Data Initiative — Public education spending, student loan, and textbook cost statistics (educationdata.org)

• Federal Student Aid (U.S. Department of Education) — Pell Grant award amounts and student loan portfolio data (Q3 2025)

• LendingTree — Student loan debt statistics (Q4 2025)

• U.S. News & World Report — Average college tuition 2025–2026

• USDA Food and Nutrition Service — National School Lunch Program reimbursement rates (SY 2024–2025)

• HHS Administration for Children and Families — Head Start Program Facts (FY2022)

• Gordian / RSMeans — K–12 school construction cost data (2024)

• Levelset / Building Design + Construction — School construction cost guide

• IRS Statistics of Income — Tax filer data

Infrastructure

• American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), *2025 Report Card for America's Infrastructure*

• ASCE / Value of Water Campaign, *Bridging the Gap: The Power of Investment in Water* (2024)

• U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, *Drinking Water Infrastructure Needs Survey and Assessment, Seventh Report to Congress* (2023)

• Federal Highway Administration — Bridge condition data (2023)

• Pew Charitable Trusts, "State and Local Governments Face $105 Billion in Deferred Maintenance for Roads and Bridges" (May 2025)

• Transportation for America — Road condition and maintenance cost analysis

• USDA Rural Development — ReConnect broadband program data

• National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) — BEAD Program

• Federal Communications Commission — Broadband deployment data

• U.S. Census Bureau — Household internet access data (2023)

• Allconnect / CablePapa — Internet pricing analysis (2025)

• Urban Institute — Highway and road expenditure data

This document is intended for analytical and educational purposes. All figures are estimates based on publicly available data as of March 7, 2026. Precise military expenditure totals are not disclosed by the U.S. government. Education and infrastructure cost estimates carry their own uncertainties and vary significantly by geography, institution, and project scope.