



Tuition-Free Colleges - Higher Education, Lower Prices

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If your grades do not merit a full-ride academic scholarship to college and you do not have enough athletic skills to stop your grandmother from dunking on you, keep your chin up – you can still attend college tuition-free. There are a handful of colleges throughout the US that offer a tuition-free education.

What's the catch? It's not a catch, if you don't mind working. You simply provide labor or some form of commitment in return for your tuition. In most circumstances, you will have to pay room and board, and a few other expenses – but the savings are significant.

These colleges are not easy to categorize aside from their tuition-free status, but they can be broken down into a few general types.

Military Academies – The commitment in return for an education is obvious here, but the education is excellent. The Naval Academy at Annapolis, the US Military Academy at West Point, the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs – even the US Merchant Marine Academy at Kings Point, NY – are tuition-free in exchange for a service commitment after graduation.

Not only do you get a free education from the service academies and the pride associated with serving your country, but after your service, you also will be entitled to various veterans' benefits.

Religious-Based Institutions – While these colleges were all established with some religious emphasis, the curriculum is not based solely in religious studies. You can achieve a fine broad-based education – although you should not be surprised to find them ranked at the bottom of the Party School listings each year.

College of the Ozarks, located in Point Lookout, Missouri, near the tourist mecca of Branson, is known nationwide as "Hard Work U" thanks to publicity from the Wall Street Journal in the 1970's. Students are expected to work 15 hours each week along with two 40-hour work weeks at some point in the academic year.

Alice Lloyd College offers free tuition to residents of 108 counties in the area of the Appalachians (West Virginia, Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Ohio). Located in rural Pippa Passes, Kentucky, about 2.5 hours southeast of Lexington, Alice Lloyd requires students to work ten-to-twenty hours each week.

Barclay College in Haviland, KS, offers a full-tuition scholarship to students living on-campus, but the scholarship does not include the cost of room, board and fees. Although it is a Quaker Bible school, the college admits all Christian students.

Williamson College of the Trades is a male-only, Judeo-Christian college in Media, PA. Their full scholarship covers not only tuition, but also room, board and textbooks, with a choice of programs in carpentry, masonry, landscaping, horticulture, turf management, paint & coatings, power plant and machine tool technology.

Specialized Colleges – Deep Springs College is located on an alfalfa farm and cattle ranch in Big Pine, California, northeast of Fresno. This all-male, two-year college requires over twenty hours of work each week in addition to studies. Deep Springs has an excellent record of graduates continuing their education at highly prestigious universities.

The Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia is not only tuition-free; it is one of the world's most highly regarded conservatories for the performing arts. Their alumni populate top orchestras throughout the nation. Leonard Bernstein is one of several famous graduates.

The Macaulay Honors College is a liberal arts college at City University of New York (CUNY). They give full-tuition scholarships to all undergraduate students that meet CUNY residency requirements for in-state tuition.

Webb Institute in Glen Cove, NY, a private college specializing in naval architecture and marine engineering, offers full-tuition scholarships to their undergraduate degree, which features both a sound theoretical education and practical industry experience.

Others – Berea College, a four-year liberal arts college located in Berea, Kentucky (about 45 minutes south of Lexington on I-75), accepts those with a demonstrated financial need tuition-free. Students are required to work at least ten hours per week. Unfortunately, the economy has forced several fine universities in this field to partially abandon their tuition-free status. Cooper Union, founded in 1859 in Manhattan and offering degrees in architecture, art, and engineering, is now offering a half-tuition scholarship for undergraduates enrolling for the first time, while those who first enrolled before autumn 2014 are still given a full tuition scholarship. Olin College of Engineering in Needham, MA, has also switched to a 50% tuition scholarship program.

If you are still looking for a tuition-free — but not labor-free — education, consider these fine colleges and other tuition-free institutions to see if they meet your needs. Alternatively, you can learn to block shots like a 7-footer or dunk like Michael Jordan.

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