

The 50 Best Private Colleges for Merit Aid

Search Colleges

If your family makes too much to qualify for need-based aid but you still want help with college costs, consider these schools, all of which land in the top half of MONEY's rankings, and have merit aid budgets. Their average merit grant is at least \$6,000 a year, and at least 20% of undergraduates are awarded one. Typically, your odds for merit aid are best at schools where your grades and test scores put you in the top 25% of the applicants pool.

Sources: U.S. Department of Education, Peterson's, PayScale.com, MONEY/College Measures calculations.

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College Name	Overall MONEY Rank	Est. price 2016-17 without aid	Est. price 2016-17 with avg. aid	% who get need-based aid	% who get merit aid	Early career earnings	Avg. SAT/ACT score
▼ ▲		▼ ▲	▼ ▲	▼ ▲	▼ ▲	▼ ▲	▼ ▲
1 University of Dallas Irving, TX	248	\$52,600	\$30,000	60%	36%	\$45,900	1210 / 27
2 Trinity University San Antonio, TX	163	\$52,600	\$30,400	44%	50%	\$43,300	1260 / 29
3 Denison University Granville, OH	140	\$61,100	\$32,100	53%	45%	\$46,100	1260 / 29
4 DePauw University Greencastle, IN	67	\$58,200	\$32,200	55%	42%	\$47,500	1200 / 27
5 Furman University Greenville, SC	208	\$61,400	\$33,400	43%	41%	\$45,000	1230 / 28
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≡	Marquette University Milwaukee, WI	(213)	\$52,300	\$35,900	56%	39%	\$51,200	1180 / 27
7	Centre College Danville, KY	(274)	\$51,400	\$27,100	58%	39%	\$39,600	1230 / 29
8	Gonzaga University Spokane, WA	(114)	\$52,500	\$34,100	57%	40%	\$51,000	1190 / 27
9	Saint Mary's College Notre Dame, IN	(203)	\$51,300	\$28,900	57%	33%	\$45,200	1100 / 26
10	St Lawrence University Canton, NY	(95)	\$64,100	\$33,700	55%	39%	\$49,800	1330 / 28
11	Oberlin College Oberlin, OH	(265)	\$67,000	\$42,400	48%	36%	\$43,300	1360 / 30
12	Augustana College-Sioux Falls Sioux Falls, SD	(306)	\$40,500	\$21,600	62%	37%	\$41,000	590 / 24
13	Southwestern University Georgetown, TX	(195)	\$51,100	\$27,900	63%	35%	\$48,100	1170 / 26
14	Creighton University Omaha, NE	(316)	\$51,300	\$31,100	53%	38%	\$46,200	1180 / 27
15	Illinois Institute of Technology Chicago, IL	(235)	\$59,500	\$24,500	54%	36%	\$59,000	1270 / 28
16	Illinois Wesleyan University Bloomington, IL	(243)	\$54,800	\$30,500	64%	32%	\$46,400	1220 / 28
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	University of Portland Portland, OR	(173)	\$58,500	\$34,200	50%	35%	\$52,200	1200 / 25
18	Northeastern University Boston, MA	(306)	\$62,700	\$33,300	37%	33%	\$55,600	1390 / 32
19	Drake University Des Moines, IA	(284)	\$48,200	\$29,500	58%	34%	\$44,700	1200 / 28
20	Truman State University Kirksville, MO	(336)	\$21,200	\$13,100	50%	35%	\$40,600	1210 / 28
21	Calvin College Grand Rapids, MI	(224)	\$44,300	\$28,300	61%	31%	\$44,000	1180 / 26
22	Carroll College Helena, MT	(328)	\$44,100	\$26,600	63%	31%	\$47,300	1120 / 24
23	Muhlenberg College Allentown, PA	(87)	\$59,300	\$38,800	50%	37%	\$48,400	1240 / 28
24	Fairfield University Fairfield, CT	(185)	\$62,300	\$40,600	43%	35%	\$54,000	1280 / 27
25	Lawrence University Appleton, WI	(114)	\$56,000	\$30,200	66%	36%	\$42,500	1330 / 28
26	Clark University Worcester, MA	(235)	\$52,300	\$26,600	59%	33%	\$41,800	1300 / 27
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	Kalamazoo College Kalamazoo, MI	(182)	\$54,800	\$28,400	66%	29%	\$39,400	1230 / 28
28	Worcester Polytechnic Institute Worcester, MA	(142)	\$61,900	\$40,700	66%	32%	\$64,100	1380 / 29
29	Gustavus Adolphus College Saint Peter, MN	(74)	\$53,600	\$27,300	71%	27%	\$43,900	1210 / 27
30	Butler University Indianapolis, IN	(311)	\$53,100	\$35,700	62%	32%	\$45,400	1170 / 28
31	University of Rochester Rochester, NY	(99)	\$65,800	\$36,000	51%	31%	\$53,000	1350 / 31
32	Case Western Reserve University Cleveland, OH	(173)	\$62,000	\$31,800	48%	33%	\$58,200	1380 / 31
33	Juniata College Huntingdon, PA	(129)	\$53,300	\$28,200	69%	25%	\$42,600	1290 / 27
34	Miami University-Oxford Oxford, OH	(316)	\$30,600	\$23,700	26%	31%	\$50,600	1230 / 28
35	Hobart & William Smith Colleges Geneva, NY	(175)	\$64,500	\$39,100	65%	27%	\$50,300	1310 / 28
36	Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute Troy, NY	(268)	\$66,800	\$39,600	63%	28%	\$63,700	1390 / 29
37	Santa Clara University Santa Clara, CA	(187)	\$64,100	\$39,900	33%	27%	\$60,600	1290 / 29
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≡	Union College-Schenectady Schenectady, NY	(98)	\$64,700	\$36,900	50%	29%	\$51,200	1310 / 30
39	Saint Michael's College Colchester, VT	(299)	\$54,300	\$31,700	62%	32%	\$43,800	1180 / 26
40	Albion College Albion, MI	(302)	\$51,700	\$27,100	73%	28%	\$45,600	1100 / 25
41	Beloit College Beloit, WI	(213)	\$54,400	\$26,400	68%	29%	\$37,900	1230 / 27
42	Gordon College Wenham, MA	(249)	\$48,400	\$32,100	70%	30%	\$42,300	1150 / 26
43	Saint Johns University Collegeville, MN	(25)	\$52,400	\$26,500	66%	24%	\$47,400	1100 / 26
44	Duquesne University Pittsburgh, PA	(325)	\$48,100	\$29,400	69%	27%	\$45,400	1120 / 25
45	Concordia College at Moorhead Moorhead, MN	(353)	\$46,300	\$24,900	72%	25%	\$39,200	1140 / 25
46	Ursinus College Collegeville, PA	(278)	\$63,400	\$34,300	72%	23%	\$44,900	1170 / 27
47	Messiah College Mechanicsburg, PA	(147)	\$46,000	\$28,500	71%	27%	\$44,900	1150 / 26
48	Whitworth University Spokane, WA	(256)	\$52,400	\$28,400	69%	27%	\$42,900	1280 / 27
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☰	Sewanee-The University of the South Sewanee, TN	(312)	\$51,700	\$27,700	48%	30%	\$36,400	1230 / 28
50	Westmont College Santa Barbara, CA	(263)	\$57,800	\$35,600	66%	27%	\$45,100	1190 / 27

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