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# 501 Ways for Adult Students to Pay for College

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CHAPTER

ONE

# Get the Money You Need



## Get The Money You Need

Congratulations on your decision to go back to school. Believe it or not, you are now part of the fastest-growing population on college campuses. Today more than three million students over the age of 35 are in college pursuing both professional and personal dreams.

While education is known to “free the mind,” education itself is anything but free. Unlike a teenager fresh out of high school, you don’t have the luxury of parental support, college counselors to guide you through applying for financial aid and easy-to-find scholarships. Plus, with families to support and mortgage payments, paying for college takes on a whole new level of complexity.

But we suspect that you already know this and are determined to go back to school despite the costs. That’s where this book can help. In *501 Ways for Adult Students to Pay for College* you will learn valuable strategies that will help you get the money you need to pay for your education. We’ll also show you resources that can make your education affordable. And we’ll do it in a jargon-free manner that is easy to understand and that you can quickly put into action.



### How This Book Will Help You Cut Your Tuition Bill

*501 Ways for Adult Students to Pay for College* covers nearly every conceivable way to pay for college. The following is just a small sampling of what you will learn:

**Find scholarships just for adults.** Banish the thought that scholarships are only for high school students. You will be amazed at how many awards there are for adult students. The key is to know where to look. We’ll show you how to use your past career experience, future career goals, academic interests, hobbies and interests to find scholarships. We’ll also give you a list of scholarships that are aimed specifically at adult students.

**Tap into resources from your employer.** While you may not have parents who can foot the tuition bill, you just might have an employer who is willing to help. We'll show you various deals that you can make with your employer to pay for tuition. We also have a great story of an adult student who was able to successfully negotiate with his employer to pay for his education.

**Turn work and life experience into actual college credit.** You can cut years off of your education (and therefore save \$\$\$ on tuition) by convincing the college that your work and life experiences are worth college credit. We'll give you the low down on the various exams, portfolios and petitions that you can use to get credit.

**Federal and state financial aid programs.** Financial aid should be a part of every student's strategy to get money for college. We take the mystery out of the various financial aid programs and show you what you may qualify for as well as what restrictions you may encounter.

**Get Uncle Sam to help.** You pay a lot in taxes, and it's only fair that you get some of this back in the form of federal retraining programs and child care and education grants. There are also important tax breaks for adult students.

**Go to school without giving up work.** There are many part-time and distance-learning programs that allow you to continue to earn an income while earning a degree. You may even find that a much less expensive certificate program is all you need to advance your career. We'll cover each option and show you both the advantages and disadvantages.

## How To Read This Book

There is no "right way" to pay for college. After reading this book we know you'll be surprised at how many different ways there are to make your education affordable. The best way to read this book is to start with the introduction of each chapter and flip through some of the specific strategies. As you are reading you should feel that great "Ah-ha" when you find a way that you can use in your own situation. Jot the number down and keep reading. By exposing yourself to the many ways that you can pay for school you'll be sure to find a certain number that are right for you.

In our research we have found that the most common cause of stress and hardship among adult students is that they are simply unaware of the various ways to pay for school. Or they have a vague notion (such as “I gotta find a scholarship”) of what they need to do but don’t have real examples and resources to know where to start. *501 Ways for Adult Students to Pay for College* will give you both the variety of opportunities and the detailed understanding to be able to create your own opportunities.

Our no-nonsense approach extends even to the way we have chosen to organize this book. As the title suggests, we have grouped the countless ways that you can pay for tuition into a manageable set of 501 ways. We have further divided these ways into easy-to-digest chapters. We have gone to great lengths to make sure that we give you both general strategies and specific resources. In our chapter on scholarships, for example, we’ll show you how to find scholarships in your own community. At the same time we will also give you a list of specific scholarships just for adults. Our goal is to save you time by giving you as much specific information as possible while also showing you the larger picture so that you can go out and find opportunities on your own.

During the research of this book we met hundreds of wonderful adults, like you, who have gone back to school. Listening to their stories we realized that they not only illustrate the various ways that you can pay for your education but they are also incredibly inspirational. We have included some of their stories throughout the book. When you read them you will realize that you are not alone in the challenges that you face. In fact, countless other adults have gone before, faced similar challenges and ultimately devised ways to overcome them. We are sure that you will find these stories both informative and entertaining.

### **What Are You Waiting For? Let’s Get Started!**

We had more fun writing this and our other book, *Adult Students: An Insider’s Guide to Getting Into College* than many of our other books. The reason is because adult students are very different than typical college students. Think back to when you were 17 or 18 years old. Most of us took everything in our life at that age for granted. We took for granted that we would be going to college. Or maybe that someday

we would go to college. We took for granted the help that our parents and teachers were willing to give to send us to school. But for everything that a teenager takes for granted, an adult student is acutely aware of and appreciates.

Adults know the importance of an education. Adults are aware of the costs and sacrifices it takes to go to school and never miss an opportunity to take advantage of what their colleges offer. Adults know that their education is the one asset that will improve their lives more than anything else—including money. It is for these reasons that colleges love adult students—and so do we.



It has been such an inspiration for us to meet the 30-, 40-, 50- and 60-something men and women who are making the ultimate sacrifice of jobs and material comfort to go back to college. We have seen the energy and effort that is involved in making this transition and we hope that by writing this book we can help those readers who are contemplating taking the plunge to do so with a little less worry.

We have seen the tremendous personal and professional satisfaction that students get from completing their educations. While such an achievement is indeed priceless, we are committed to making that goal as inexpensive and downright as cheap as it can possibly be.

So, find a comfortable chair. Grab a highlighter. And read on to find out how you, too, can make your dream of going to school possible.