



## TUITION ASSISTANCE FOR ACTIVE-DUTY SERVICE MEMBERS IN OTHER STATES

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### TUITION ASSISTANCE FOR ACTIVE-DUTY SERVICE MEMBERS

- 32 states, including Connecticut, treat active-duty service members as in-state residents for higher education tuition purposes
- Five states provide some type of tuition waiver, credit, or refund
- Two states provide grants or scholarships

### ISSUE

What states provide higher education tuition assistance for active-duty service members?

### SUMMARY

The majority of states provide tuition assistance for active-duty service members from or stationed in their state. This can be in the form of allowing these students to pay the lower in-state tuition rate; granting tuition waivers, credits, or refunds; or providing specific grants or scholarships. This report focuses on state tuition assistance programs for states that provide aid to active-duty service members of the armed forces, including reserves called to active-duty, but does not include the National Guard.

Based on Westlaw searches and discussions with the National Conference of State Legislatures, we found that (1) 32 states, including Connecticut, allow active-duty service members stationed in the state to pay the lower in-state tuition rate;

(2) five states (Massachusetts, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, and Oklahoma) have some type of waiver, credit, or refund for active-duty service members; and (3) two states (Colorado and Maryland) provide grants or scholarships for specific service members.

## **WAIVER, CREDIT, OR REFUND**

### ***Massachusetts***

Massachusetts law established a tuition and fee waiver program for various categories of students, including those who are active-duty armed forces member stationed and residing within the state (Mass. Gen. Laws ch.15A § 19). Under the program, tuition waivers are available for any credit courses offered by a public university or college towards an undergraduate or certificate program.

According to the waiver guidelines, in order to be eligible for the categorical tuition waiver, the student must be a permanent legal Massachusetts resident for at least one year before the beginning of the school year. He or she must not be in default of any federal student loans.

### ***Nebraska***

Under Nebraska law, any state resident enlisted in a Nebraska-based active reserve unit of the armed forces may apply for a 50% tuition credit at a state university or college (Neb. Rev. Stat. § 80-901). The service member must get a certificate of satisfactory performance from his or her commanding officer before the credit is granted. The credit is given to a maximum of 200 people in a calendar year.

The recipients must (1) be classified as enlisted personnel with at least two years remaining on their enlistment at the beginning of each school term, (2) have agreed to serve at least three years in the reserve, (3) have less than 10 years of total service, and (4) pursue a course of study leading to a degree or certificate (Neb. Rev. Stat. § 80-902).

### ***Nevada***

Nevada law prohibits in-state public higher learning institutions from charging tuition to active-duty service members who are stationed at a military installation within the state (Nev. Rev. Stat. § 396.540).

### ***New Mexico***

New Mexico law requires in-state public higher learning institutions to forgive any tuition payments owed by full- or part-time students who are New Mexico residents called to active service as part of the military reserves (N.M. Stat. § 21-1-4.1). Tuition forgiveness is only for payments owed for the semester the student is called to active military service. If the student has already paid, the institution must give the student a credit for the full amount of any payment until he or she re-enrolls.

## ***Oklahoma***

During the 2014 legislative session, the Oklahoma General Assembly passed an act that allows any member of the uniformed military services called to active duty to withdraw from a public university or college and receive a full refund (Okla. Stat. tit. 70, § 3248). The leave of absence cannot be more than a cumulative of five years. The law also creates a cause of action for the student to bring suit if the university or college does not comply with the act.

## **GRANTS/SCHOLARSHIPS**

### ***Colorado***

Colorado law authorizes the state commission on higher education to administer a tuition assistance grant program to help residents, including service members, attend in-state nonpublic higher education institutions (Colo. Rev. Stat. § 23-3.7-103). The commission considers, among other things, need and merit.

Grants may be up to \$1,500 per academic year and no student may receive more than one grant per academic year (Colo. Rev. Stat. § 23-3.7-103(3)). Part-time students may receive prorated grants (Colo. Rev. Stat. § 23-3.7-103(4)).

### ***Maryland***

Maryland law created a specific scholarship program to cover educational expenses for those who served (including active-duty service members) in the Afghanistan or Iraq Conflicts, or their children or spouses (Md. Code Ann., Educ. § 18-604).

These scholarships are meant to supplement any federal education benefits and cannot exceed 50% of the annual tuition, mandatory fees, and room and board charges for a resident undergraduate student at an in-state four-year public university. In order to keep the scholarship, the recipient must maintain a minimum 2.5 grade point average (Md. Code Ann., Educ. § 18-604(f)). The scholarship may not exceed five years of full-time study or eight years of part-time study (Md. Code Ann., Educ. § 18-604(g)).

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