What is a tuition waiver?
If you already receive SSI or SSDI payments thorough the Social Security Administration, you may be eligible for a tuition waiver. The waiver covers ONLY tuition for credit courses. You would be responsible for all fees. You must first apply for financial aid at www.fafsa.ed.gov. Please consult with your college’s financial aid office for details. You may also review the MDOD fact sheet about tuition waivers.

Financial Aid and Public Benefits
One of the barriers to education for people with disabilities is the cost. Additionally, there is a fear that any financial aid will affect any benefits received. In fact, educational assistance does not usually affect public cash and medical benefits. Below are the few examples when financial aid can affect your benefits.

SSI (Supplemental Security Income)
- SSI does not count financial aid (grants, scholarships, loans, work study programs, and other aid) as income if it is used for tuition, books, fees, etc. Aid that can be used to pay for food and shelter, however, does count as income, and may reduce SSI nearly dollar for dollar.
- Any unspent financial aid amounts are not counted as resources (assets) for nine months. This means you have up to nine months to spend financial aid on education costs before it will count against the $2,000 SSI resource limit ($3,000 for married couples).
- Qualified tuition programs (also known as 529 plans) count as resources to the owner, but that is usually a parent, not the student who receives SSI. Distributions (withdrawals) from a 529 plan do not count as income to the student as long as they are spent on eligible education costs, and don’t count as resources if they are spent on educational expenses within nine months of the withdrawal.

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Resources

- http://www.collegeanswer.com/
- http://www.dors.state.md.us
- http://www.collegeboard.com/
- http://www.ed.gov/
- http://www.finaid.org/
- http://www.innow.org
- http://www.heath.gwu.edu/