

Rice University to offer free tuition to low-income and middle-income undergraduate students

By Gisela Crespo, CNN

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Rice University announced Tuesday the expansion of their scholarship program to offer free tuition to low-income and middle-income students.]

(CNN)Rice University will award scholarships that will cover the cost of tuition to students from low-income and middle-income families starting next fall, [the school announced Tuesday](#).

Under an initiative called The Rice Investment, US students seeking an undergraduate degree with family incomes under \$130,000 will not pay tuition. Those with family incomes below \$65,000 will also receive grant aid to cover school fees and room and board.

Students with family incomes between \$130,000 and \$200,000 will be eligible to receive scholarships that will cover at least half of their tuition. The plan will impact continuing students who are eligible based on need.

[An entire medical school class will get free tuition thanks to an anonymous \\$3 million donation](#)

Tuition for an undergraduate student at Rice this year is \$46,600, the university said in the statement. Rice had an undergraduate student body of nearly 4,000 for the 2017-2018 academic year.

In a statement, the private university said the expansion of scholarships "is intended to address challenges faced by families with moderate incomes" and reduce student debt.

Rice's announcement comes as the average cost of college --public and private-- keeps increasing. [According to US News & World Report](#), tuition and fees at private colleges rose 3% for the 2018-2019 academic year. The average cost of tuition and fees for a private institution in the US this year is \$35,676.

David Leebron, Rice University president, called the initiative a "bold step" in making education at Rice "accessible and affordable for students from all backgrounds."

"Talent deserves opportunity," Leebron added.

Fourteen other colleges and universities in the US offer financial aid that covers tuition, according to a [list compiled by US News & World Report](#). Last month, [New York University announced it will offer a scholarship that covers tuition to medical students, regardless of their financial need or academic performance.](#)

Rice said it is undertaking a \$150 million fundraising campaign to support expanding its scholarship program.