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Veterans Affairs

DEPENDENTS' EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (DEA)



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INTRODUCTION

This pamphlet provides a general description of the Dependents' Educational Assistance program, or DEA (chapter 35 of title 38, U. S. Code). The DEA program provides education and training opportunities to eligible dependents and survivors of certain veterans.

We in the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) who produce this pamphlet hope that it will be a helpful guide for you. The pamphlet doesn't cover every exception to the rules and regulations, but gives you a general summary of the benefits available under this program.

So please don't rely on this pamphlet to determine if you're eligible for education benefits. To receive a formal decision from VA, you must file a claim for benefits. (See [How Do You Apply For Benefits?](#))

We try to cover the main questions you may have about DEA benefits, including:

- Eligibility rules (summarized)
- Types of training available under DEA
- How the program works, including:
 - Payment rates
 - How to apply
 - How you'll receive payments
 - What you need to know during your training, and
 - Where you can go for more help

PART 1: ELIGIBILITY

ARE YOU ELIGIBLE?

To be eligible, you must be a spouse, son, or daughter (including stepchild or adopted child), of a

- Veteran who is permanently and totally disabled as the result of, or dies of, a service-connected disability. The disability must arise out of or be aggravated by active duty.
- Veteran with a permanent and total service-connected disability who dies from any cause.
- Service member who is missing in action or is captured in the line of duty and is currently being held by a hostile force.
- Service member who is currently being forcibly detained or interned in the line of duty by a foreign government or power.
- Service member who VA determines has a service-connected permanent and total disability; and
 - at the time of VA's determination is member of the Armed Forces who is hospitalized or receiving outpatient medical care, services, or treatment; and
 - is likely to be discharged or released from service for this service-connected disability.

HOW LONG CAN YOU RECEIVE BENEFITS?

Generally, you can receive benefits until your eligibility period ends or you use all your entitlement, whichever comes first. (We use the term entitlement to mean the number of months of benefits you can receive.) We'll discuss your eligibility and your entitlement separately. (See page 10 for information on entitlement.)

ELIGIBILITY PERIOD: SON OR DAUGHTER

How Long Are You Eligible?

As a son or daughter (including stepchild or adopted child), as long as you have entitlement left, you can generally receive benefits under this program from age 18 to 26 (eight years).

However, in certain instances, you can begin before age 18 and continue after age 26. In some instances, you can choose among possible beginning dates. If we find that you're eligible, we'll notify you of your possible beginning dates and ending dates based on your claim.

Effect of Your Active Duty on Your Eligibility



Following are the effects of active duty on your period of eligibility. See also [Effect of Active Duty on Your Available Months of Benefits](#) on page 10.

- You cannot receive DEA benefits while on active duty in the Armed Forces.
- To receive DEA benefits after military service, your discharge must not be under dishonorable conditions.
- We can generally extend your eligibility period for eight years from the date of your first unconditional release from active duty, if your service was between ages 18 and 26. But this extension can't go beyond your 31st birthday.

- If, on or after September 11, 2001, you were called to active duty under Title 10, U.S. Code, (Federal Authority) or if you were involuntarily ordered to full-time National Guard duty under Section 502(f) of Title 32, U.S. Code (State Authority), in most cases we can extend your eligibility period for DEA by the number of months and days you spent on active duty plus four months. This extension can go beyond your 31st birthday, depending on the facts in your claim.

Other Extensions of Your Eligibility Period

Circumstances Beyond Your Control

If you provide evidence that you had to stop training because of conditions beyond your control, in some cases we can extend your eligibility for the period you had to stop training.

Circumstances that may be considered beyond your control (if verified by evidence) include:

- Service in an official missionary capacity.
- Immediate family or financial obligations that require you to stop training, for example, to take employment.
- Unavoidable conditions of your employment that require you to stop training.
- Your illness, or death or illness in your immediate family.

While in Training

If you're enrolled in training when your eligibility period ends, in most cases we can extend your eligibility to the end of the semester or quarter, or to the end of 12 weeks if the course isn't operated on a semester or quarter basis.

If You Marry

As a son or daughter, marriage doesn't affect your period of eligibility.

Other Educational Benefits for Surviving Children

Fry Scholarship

Public Law 111-32, the Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship, amends the Post-9/11 GI Bill (Chapter 33) to include the children of service members who die in the line of duty after Sept. 10, 2001. The benefit is effective August 1, 2009; the same day the Post-9/11 GI Bill takes effect. Eligible children attending school may receive up to the highest public, in-state undergraduate tuition and fees, plus a monthly living stipend and book allowance under this program. For more detailed and up to date information about the Fry Scholarship, please visit our website at www.gibill.va.gov.

ELIGIBILITY PERIOD: SPOUSE

Throughout this pamphlet, we use the term "spouse" to mean the spouse of a living veteran, and "surviving spouse" to mean the spouse of a deceased veteran. If you're the veteran's surviving spouse, see **Eligibility Period: Surviving Spouse** on page 8.

How Long Are You Eligible?

Veteran's Disability

If you're a spouse and you're eligible because the veteran has a permanent and total service-connected disability, benefits generally end 10 years from one of the following dates:

- Effective date of the veteran's permanent and total disability evaluation.
- Date VA notifies the veteran of the permanent and total disability evaluation.
- Beginning date you choose, between the date you become eligible and the date VA notifies the veteran of the permanent and total disability evaluation.

New Provision: Public Law 110-389 amended VA education benefits by providing a 20-year period of eligibility for spouses of veterans with a permanent and total rating effective within 3 years of release from active duty. The 20-year period of eligibility begins on the date the permanent and total rating decision was effective (not the date of the rating decision) but only if the eligible person remains the spouse of the disabled person throughout the period. This new 20-year period of eligibility applies to permanent and total disability effective dates that occurred before or after the date of enactment, October 10, 2008.

Service member Held Captive Or Missing

If you're a spouse and you're eligible because the service member is being held or is missing, as

- a prisoner of war
- missing in action, or
- forcibly held by a foreign government or power

your 10-year period of eligibility begins on the 91st day after the date the service member was listed as a captive or missing.

If the veteran or service member is released from captivity, or is determined to be alive and no longer missing, your period of eligibility ends on that date. If you're enrolled in training, and have remaining entitlement on that date, your eligibility can be extended to the end of the term or course.

Effect of Divorce on Your Eligibility

If marriage to the veteran ends in divorce, your eligibility for DEA benefits ends on that date. But if you're in training, and the divorce occurs through no fault of yours, we can extend your eligibility as explained below under [While in Training](#).

Effect of Your Active Duty on Your Eligibility

Following are the effects of active duty on your eligibility period:

- You can not receive DEA benefits while on active duty in the Armed Forces.
- To receive DEA benefits after military service, your discharge must not be under dishonorable conditions.
- If, on or after September 11, 2001, you were called to active duty under title 10, U.S. Code (Federal Authority) or involuntarily ordered to full-time National Guard duty under section 502(f) of Title 32, U.S. Code (State Authority), in most cases we can extend your eligibility period for DEA by the number of months and days you spent on active duty plus four months.

Other Extensions of Your Eligibility Period

Disability

We can extend your eligibility period by the amount of time you were prevented from training during that period because of a disability you incurred.

While in Training

If you're enrolled in training when your eligibility ends, and you have remaining entitlement, in most cases we can extend your eligibility to the end of the semester or quarter, or to the end of 12 weeks if the course isn't operated on a semester or quarter basis.

ELIGIBILITY PERIOD: SURVIVING SPOUSE

How Long Are You Eligible?

Veteran Died of Service-Connected Disability

If you're an eligible surviving spouse and the veteran died of a service-connected disability, you can choose the beginning date for your 10-year period of eligibility. That date must be between the date of death and the date we determine that the death was due to service-connected disability.

Veteran Had Permanent and Total Service-Connected Disability at Time of Death

If you're an eligible surviving spouse and the veteran had a permanent and total service-connected disability at time of death, the beginning date of your 10-year period is the date of death.

Veteran Died on Active Duty

If you're an eligible surviving spouse and your spouse died on active duty, your eligibility period is 20 years from the date of death.

Note: This is a change in law that became effective December 10, 2004. If you were previously eligible based on your spouse's death on active duty, and your 10-year eligibility period expired before December 10, 2004, you now have a new eligibility period of 20 years from the date of your spouse's death. However, in those cases we can pay only for training that began on or after December 10, 2004.

Example: A Service member died on active duty on July 1, 1985. Until the change in law, the surviving spouse's 10-year eligibility period would have ended on July 1, 1995. Now, the surviving spouse has a new eligibility period ending on July 1, 2005. However, VA can pay only for training that began on or after December 10, 2004.

Other Extensions of Your Eligibility Period

Disability

We can extend your eligibility period by the amount of time you were prevented from training during that period because of a disability you incurred.

While in Training

If you're enrolled in training when your eligibility ends, and you have remaining entitlement, in most cases we can extend your eligibility to the end of the semester or quarter, or to the end of 12 weeks if the course isn't operated on a semester or quarter basis.

If You Remarry

The following explains the effects of remarriage on your DEA benefits.

Note: Remarriage will not extend your eligibility period.

Before Age 57

If you remarry before age 57, your eligibility ends on the date of remarriage.

Can benefits be reinstated? If you remarried after November 30, 1999, and your remarriage ends, we can reinstate your eligibility to DEA.

The remarriage must be ended by death, divorce, or because you stopped living with your spouse and stopped holding yourself out to the public as the person's spouse.

In most cases, we can reinstate your eligibility if you remarried before November 30, 1999; but, you must be within your eligibility period.

After Age 57

If you remarry on or after January 1, 2004, and you're 57 or older, you can still be eligible for DEA benefits.

If you remarried after age 57 and before December 16, 2003, you must have applied in writing before December 16, 2004, for eligibility to be reinstated.

Note: Remarrying after age 57 doesn't extend the period of eligibility that you established before you remarried.

Example: A surviving spouse established eligibility for a 10 year period ending on November 15, 2005, which is 10 years from the date of the veteran's death. She remarried in April 2004 at age 58.

She will keep her eligibility for DEA through November 15, 2005.

YOUR ENTITLEMENT: HOW MANY MONTHS OF BENEFITS CAN YOU RECEIVE?

The following applies to sons and daughters (including stepchildren and adopted children), spouses and surviving spouses.

You may be entitled to receive up to 45 months of DEA benefits. You can receive a maximum of 48 months of benefits combined if you're eligible under more than one VA education program.

For example, you could be eligible as a veteran yourself and also as a veteran's dependent. As a veteran, you already used 30 months of benefits under the Montgomery GI Bill - Active Duty (MGIB-AD) program. You could then have 18 months of benefits remaining under the DEA program.

Effect of Your Active Duty on Your Available Months of Benefits

If you're called up to active duty under title 10, U.S. Code (federal authority) or title 32, U.S Code (state authority) while you're receiving benefits, and you have to drop out of school without receiving credit, we'll restore (give you back) the months of benefits you used for that period of training.

Example: You attend two months of fall term and have to drop out, receiving no credit. You can keep the benefits you received for that period. We'll add back two months of benefits that you can use at a later time.

How Do We Charge You for Use of Benefits?

You're charged one full day for each day of full-time benefits paid. Entitlement is charged in months and days. Each month is counted as 30 days. If you train part-time, we adjust the entitlement charge according to your training time.

For example, if you're attending college for 90 days (three months) at the full-time rate, you'll be charged three months of benefits. If you attend for 105 days at the full-time rate, your benefits charge will be 3.5 months.

For correspondence courses, tests for licenses or certifications, preparatory tests for college or graduate school entrance exams, national admission exams, national exams for college or university credit, and apprenticeship and on-the-job training, we determine the entitlement charge by dividing the amount you were paid by the monthly rate for full-time training.

Example: If you receive \$456.50 for a test for a license, and your full-time rate is \$803, divide \$456.50 by \$803. Your entitlement charge is one-half month.



CAN YOU BE ELIGIBLE FOR MORE THAN ONE VA EDUCATION BENEFIT?

You can be eligible for more than one VA education benefit. If you are, you must elect which benefit to receive. You can't receive payment for more than one benefit at a time. Following are the other benefits and Web addresses where you can get more information.

OTHER VA EDUCATION BENEFITS

- For the following programs, go to www.GIBILL.VA.GOV:
 - Montgomery GI Bill – Active Duty Educational Assistance Program (MGIB – AD)
 - Montgomery GI Bill – Selected Reserve (MGIB – SR)
 - Post-Vietnam Era Veterans’ Educational Assistance Program (VEAP)
 - Educational Assistance Test Program (Section 903 of Public Law 96-342)
 - Educational Assistance Pilot Program (Section 901 of Public Law 96-342)
 - Reserve Educational Assistance Program (Chapter 1607 of Title 10, U.S. Code)
 - National Call to Service Incentive (Section 531 of Public Law 107-314)
 - The Post 9/11 GI Bill (Chapter 33 of Title 38 U.S.Code)
- For Training and Rehabilitation for Veterans with Service-Connected Disabilities (Vocational Rehabilitation), go to www.va.gov. Click on **Benefits**, then **Vocational Rehab**.
- For the Omnibus Diplomatic Security and Antiterrorism Act of 1986, contact us to request the pamphlet, VA Pamphlet 22-90-4. See **How Do You Contact VA?**

IMPORTANT: If you’re eligible for more than one benefit, we strongly suggest that you discuss your education plans with us. See **How Do You Contact VA?**

We can help you explore the options open to you and help plan your program for maximum use of your benefits.

WHAT IF YOU RECEIVE OTHER VA BENEFITS AS THE VETERAN'S DEPENDENT?

If you're a spouse or surviving spouse, your DEA benefits have no effect on your benefits as a dependent on the veteran's disability or death award. The disability benefit is called compensation or pension; the death benefit is called DIC (Dependency and Indemnity Compensation) or death pension.

If you're a son or daughter (including stepchildren or adopted children) of a veteran receiving a disability benefit, the veteran can generally receive an additional allowance for you as a dependent until you reach age 23 if you're attending school. However, if you elect DEA, the additional allowance to the veteran will stop when you begin receiving DEA benefits.

If you're a son or daughter (including stepchildren or adopted children) of a deceased veteran, you could be eligible to receive death benefits yourself from age 18 to age 23 if you continue attending school.

If you're also eligible for DEA, you must elect which benefit to receive. If you elect DEA, the death benefits will stop when you begin receiving DEA benefits.

IMPORTANT: If your program will last longer than 45 months, it can be to your advantage to defer DEA benefits. You could continue to receive death benefits while you attend school, as explained above.

If you believe a deferral is to your advantage, we recommend that you contact us to discuss the various options open to you. See [How Do You Contact VA?](#)

PART 2: TRAINING

WHAT TRAINING CAN YOU TAKE?

Caution: A State Approving Agency (SAA) or VA, in certain cases, must approve each program offered by a school or company.

You can receive benefits for a wide variety of training, including:

- Degree programs, undergraduate and graduate, at colleges or universities, including cooperative training programs and accredited independent study programs that may be offered through distance education.

Cooperative training is a full-time program of alternating school instruction and training in a business or industrial establishment.



- Certificate programs, at colleges, universities, and other degree-granting institutions, including accredited independent study courses that can be offered through distance education.
- Certificate programs at business, technical, or vocational schools.

- Apprenticeships or on-the-job training (OJT) programs offered by companies or unions. Apprenticeships or OJT programs can offer an alternative to college or vocational school to help you gain experience in the field you choose.
- Correspondence courses, if you're a spouse or surviving spouse.
- Farm cooperative courses.
- Programs overseas that lead to college degrees.
- Preparatory courses for college or graduate school entrance examinations.
- High school programs, after age 18, if you aren't a high school graduate.

You can use your benefits for other types of programs, as described in the next few sections.

Can You Receive Special Restorative or Specialized Vocational Training?

If you're handicapped by a physical or mental disability, you can be eligible to receive Special Restorative Training or Specialized Vocational Training. The disability must prevent you from pursuing an educational program.

Special Restorative Training can involve speech and voice correction, language retraining, lip reading, auditory training, Braille reading and writing, or other training of this nature.

Specialized Vocational Training includes specialized courses leading to a vocational objective. The objective must be suitable for you, and required because of a physical or mental handicap.

As a son or daughter, you must be at least 14 to receive benefits for Specialized Vocational Training.

Can You Receive Benefits for a Test for a License or Certification?

You can receive benefits for the cost of a test to obtain a license or certification needed to get, keep, or advance in a job. You can't receive benefits for other fees relating to a license or certification. (However, many courses leading to a license or certification are also approved for benefits.)

You can take as many tests as you need. You don't have to pass the test to receive benefits. You can receive benefits to retake a test you failed, and to renew or update your license or certificate.

You can receive reimbursement for the cost of the test, up to \$2,000 per test. For more information, including the tests that are approved for VA benefits, check WWW.GIBILL.VA.GOV.

Can You Receive Benefits for Tests Required for Admissions to Certain Programs?

Effective December 10, 2004, you can receive benefits for national tests required for admission to various college and university programs. These tests include, but aren't limited to, the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), Law School Admission Test (LSAT), Graduate Record Exam (GRE), and Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT).

Can You Receive Benefits for Tests for Course Credit at Colleges and Universities?

Effective December 10, 2004, you can receive benefits for approved national tests that provide an opportunity for course credit at colleges and universities. These tests include, but aren't limited to, the Advanced Placement (AP) exam, and the College-Level Examination Program (CLEP).

Can You Receive Benefits for Remedial, Deficiency, or Refresher Training?

You can receive benefits for remedial or deficiency courses if you need them to assist you in overcoming a weakness in a particular area of study.

You can take refresher training at the elementary or high school level to review or update material previously covered in a course that you satisfactorily completed.

The remedial, deficiency, or refresher course must be necessary to enable you to pursue an approved program of education.

No entitlement is charged for these courses for the first five months of training.

Can You Receive Tutorial Assistance?

You can receive a special allowance for individual tutoring if you train in school at one-half time or more. To qualify, you must have a deficiency in a subject, making the tutoring necessary. The school must certify the tutor's qualifications and the hours of tutoring.

If eligible, you can receive a maximum monthly payment of \$100. The maximum total benefit is \$1,200.

We don't charge your entitlement for tutorial assistance.

To apply, complete VA Form 22-1990t, Application and Enrollment Certification for Individualized Tutorial Assistance. See **[How Do You Get and Submit the Application for Benefits?](#)** The school's certifying official and your tutor must complete part of the form.

Can You Receive Work-Study Benefits?

While using your DEA benefits, you can be eligible for an additional allowance under a work-study program, if you're training at the three-quarter or full-time rate. (Work-study benefits are also payable under most other VA education benefit programs.)

Under the work-study program, you may assist in preparing VA paperwork at schools, training facilities or VA facilities as well as perform other duties as approved by Congress and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs. Please see **[How to Contact Us](#)** to receive more information.

The maximum number of hours you can work is 25 times the number of weeks in your enrollment period. Payments will be at the Federal minimum wage or minimum wage of your State, whichever is greater.

To apply, complete VA Form 22-8691, **Application for Work-Study Allowance**. See **How Do You Get the Application for Benefits?** Send it to the VA Regional Processing Office that handles your DEA claim. (The addresses are on pages **27 & 28**.)

WHAT ARE RESTRICTIONS ON TRAINING?

You can not receive benefits for the following courses:

Restrictions on Specific Courses

- Bartending
- Non-accredited independent study courses
- Any course given by radio
- Self-improvement courses such as personality development courses, reading, speaking, woodworking, basic seamanship, and English as a second language
- Any course that is avocational (not generally related to employment) or recreational in character
- Audited courses

General Restrictions

- Courses that don't lead to an educational, professional, or vocational objective
- Courses you've taken before and successfully completed
- Courses you take under the Government Employees' Training Act, if you're a Federal government employee

- A program at a proprietary school if you're an owner or official of the school
- Courses you take while you're receiving benefits for the same program from the Office of Workers' Compensation programs

Other Restrictions

If you seek a college degree, you cannot receive benefits beyond a second term if you haven't, by that time, been formally admitted into a degree program.

You cannot receive DEA benefits while serving on active duty in the Armed Forces.

We must reduce your benefits if you're in a Federal, State, or local prison after being convicted of a felony.

We must stop payment of your education benefits if Federal or State law enforcement has identified you, or the veteran (on whom your award is based), as a "fugitive felon." A person is considered a fugitive felon if he or she has an outstanding warrant for a felony, or has violated a condition of probation or parole for committing a felony.

CAN YOU RECEIVE COUNSELING?

Counseling is available inside the States, territories and possessions of the United States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. Upon request, we'll provide counseling services, including testing, to help you:

- Select an educational, vocational, or professional objective and develop a plan to achieve that goal, and
- Overcome any personal or academic problems that can interfere with the successful achievement of your goal.

Professionally qualified personnel will provide these counseling services to you free of charge. You must pay the cost of any travel to and from the counseling appointment. We'll make every effort to arrange counseling appointments at times and places convenient to you.

Counseling is required if you're a disabled son or daughter who needs special services to pursue a program of education and for certain other sons or daughters.

VA requires and provides counseling for disabled spouses and those who need specialized programs of vocational training as a result of the handicapping effects of their disabilities.

See [How Do You Contact VA?](#) for more information or to schedule a counseling appointment.

CAN YOU GO PART-TIME?

If you're unable to attend full-time, consider going part-time. Benefit rates for part-time training are less than the full-time rate. However, the entitlement charge for part-time training is less than the charge for full-time training.

For example: If you receive full-time benefits for 12 months, the charge is 12 months. If you receive one-half time benefits for 12 months, the charge is six months.

CAN YOU CHANGE PROGRAMS?

The rules for changing your program are different, depending on whether you're a spouse, a surviving spouse, or a son or daughter (including stepchildren or adopted children).

If you're a spouse or surviving spouse, you can make one change of program without VA approval if your attendance, conduct, and progress in the last program were satisfactory. We can approve additional changes if the proposed program is suitable to your abilities, aptitudes, and interests.

If you're a son or daughter, you must receive VA approval for every change of program.

What does VA consider a change of program? If you change your educational or vocational objective, and this requires a change in the courses you're taking, we must assign a change of program.

Exception: If you successfully completed your last program, we won't assign a change of program when you enroll in a new program.

MUST YOU MAINTAIN SATISFACTORY ATTENDANCE, CONDUCT, AND PROGRESS?

To continue receiving benefits, you must maintain satisfactory attendance, conduct, and progress. If you don't meet your school's standards, the certifying official must notify us. We must stop your benefits if the school reports unsatisfactory attendance, conduct, or progress.

We can resume benefits if you reenter the same program at the same school, and your school certifies your enrollment to VA.

If you don't reenter the same program at the same school, we can resume benefits if the cause of your unsatisfactory attendance, conduct, or progress has been removed. We also must find that the program you intend to take is suitable to your abilities, aptitudes, and interests.

PART 3: RECEIVING PAYMENTS

HOW MUCH EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE WILL YOU RECEIVE?

This section explains the rates of benefits you can receive.

For the current rates for all types of training, check www.GIBILL.VA.GOV or contact us through phone or e-mail. See [How Do You Contact VA?](#)

The basic monthly rates increase October 1 every year with the Consumer Price Index (CPI) increase.

While you're in training, you'll receive a letter with the current rates when the increase goes into effect each year.

The rates can increase at other times by an act of Congress.

You receive the rates as described on the next page, up to the remaining amount of your entitlement for benefits, or up to the end of your eligibility period, whichever comes first. See [How Long Are You Eligible?](#) and [How Many Months of Benefits Can You Receive?](#)

Note: If your training is in the Philippines, you receive 50% of the regular rate.

PAYMENT CHART

Type of Training	Frequency and Rate of Payment
College and Vocational School	Monthly payments based on your training time—Full time, three quarter time, half time. When you train at less than half time, you'll be paid tuition and fees. But if tuition and fees amount to more than you would be paid at the half-time rate (or the quarter-time rate if you're training at quarter-time or less), your payments will be limited to the half-time (or the quarter-time rate).
On-the-job training (OJT) and apprenticeship programs	Monthly payments based on your length of time in the program—Rates decrease three times (your wages should generally be increasing)—once after your first six months, again after your second six months, then again after your third six months.
Correspondence courses	Quarterly payments, at the rate of 55% of the approved charges for completed course, up to your remaining DEA entitlement.
Test for License or Certification	Single payment for each test, as reimbursement of 100% of the charges up to a maximum of \$2,000 per test, and up to your remaining DEA entitlement.
Cooperative Training	Monthly payments at fulltime school rate only.
Farm Cooperative Training	Monthly payments based on training time—Full time, three-quarter, and half time.

HOW DO YOU APPLY FOR BENEFITS?

How you apply for benefits depends on whether or not you've decided on what program you want to take.

If You've Decided on the Program



If you've decided on a program, follow these steps:

- 1** Find out whether the program you want to take is approved for VA benefits—check with the school's Financial Aid Office or training facility employment office, or contact us (see [How Do You Contact VA?](#)).

If the facility hasn't requested approval before, ask an official to contact VA to request approval. We'll refer the official to the State Approving Agency (SAA).

If the program has been approved for VA benefits, check in with the school or training facility official who certifies enrollments for VA benefits.

At a school, this certifying official can be in one of the following offices: Financial Aid, Veterans Affairs, Registrar, Admissions, Counseling, or other office. At an OJT or an apprenticeship, the official may be in the Training, Finance, Human Resources, or other office.

Note: *The certifying official is not a VA employee.*

- 2** Complete the application (VA Form 22-5490, [Application for Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance](#)) and submit it to the appropriate VA regional office. See [How Do You Get and Submit the Application for Benefits?](#) and [Where Do You Send Your Application?](#) on page 27.

- 3** Ask the school or training official to certify your enrollment to VA.

If You Haven't Decided on the Program



If you haven't decided on a program, or simply want a determination of your eligibility for DEA, just submit the application. See **How Do You Get and Submit the Application for Benefits?**

If you're eligible, you'll receive a **Certificate of Eligibility** showing how long you're eligible and how many months of benefits you can receive.

How Do You Get and Submit the Application for Benefits?

You can get and submit the application, VA Form 22-5490, **Application for Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance** on-line, or submit a printed copy.

On-Line

Just go to **www.GIBILL.VA.GOV** and click **Apply for Benefits** to link to the online application. When you've completed the form, click on the Submit button and submit it electronically to VA.

Printed Form

If you prefer, you can obtain the printed application form and mail it to VA. You can get the printed form in several ways:

- Go to **www.GIBILL.VA.GOV** Click on **Submit a Question** and then click the **Ask a Question** tab and ask for an application (VA Form 22-5490 for original and 22-5495 for supplemental) to be sent to you.
- You can pick up the application from the school or training facility you're attending.
- Call **1-888-GIBILL-1 (1-888-442-4551)** to speak with a benefits counselor.

Where Do You Send Your Application?

One of the following VA Regional Processing Offices will handle your claim. Check the list below to see which office has jurisdiction over the State where you'll train.

<p>Eastern Region VA Regional Office PO Box 4616 Buffalo, NY 14240-4616</p>	<p>Connecticut Delaware District of Columbia Maine Maryland Massachusetts New Hampshire</p>	<p>New Jersey New York Ohio Pennsylvania Rhode Island Vermont Virginia West Virginia</p>
<p>Southern Region VA Regional Office PO Box 100022 Decatur, GA 30031-7022</p>	<p>Florida Georgia</p>	<p>North Carolina South Carolina</p>
<p>Central Region VA Regional Office PO Box 66830 St. Louis, MO 63166-6830</p>	<p>Colorado Illinois Indiana Iowa Kansas Kentucky Michigan Minnesota</p>	<p>Missouri Montana Nebraska N. Dakota S. Dakota Tennessee Wisconsin Wyoming</p>
<p>Western Region VA Regional Office PO Box 8888 Muskogee, OK 74402-8888</p>	<p>Alabama Alaska Arizona Arkansas California Hawaii Idaho Louisiana</p>	<p>Mississippi New Mexico Nevada Oklahoma Oregon Texas Utah Washington</p>

Training Outside the 50 States and the District of Columbia

If you're training outside the 50 States and the District of Columbia, check the list below for the office that will handle your claim. See the list on page 27 for the mailing address.

Southern Region (Decatur, GA)

Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands

Western Region (Muskogee, OK)

American Samoa, Wake Island,
Guam, Federated States of Micronesia,
Midway of the Marshall Islands,
Republic of Palau.

Manila Regional Office

The Manila Regional Office processes DEA claims for claimants training in the Republic of the Philippines.

VA Regional Office
1131 Roxas Blvd., Ermita
0930 Manila, PI 96440

Eastern Region (Buffalo, NY)

Any other country or area outside the 50 States and the District of Columbia.

HOW DO YOU RECEIVE PAYMENTS?

After you've been approved for payments, receiving payments is basically a two-step process.

Certifying Your Enrollment

The first step: the school or training program official certifies to VA your enrollment in an approved program.

Verifying Your Continued Enrollment

The second step involves verifying your continued enrollment. The next two pages explain how your enrollment is verified for the type of training you're taking, and how you verify a test for a license or certification.

Verifications of Continued Training: The Last Step for Payment

<p>Degree Programs</p>	<p>Other School Courses (leading to certificate or diploma, including entrepreneurship training)</p>
<p>If you're in a degree program at a college or university, the school periodically verifies to VA your continued enrollment. You'll receive payment after the first of each month for your training during the preceding month.</p>	<p>You'll receive VA Form 22-8979, Student Verification of Enrollment, each month. You must use the form to verify your continued enrollment for the previous month. Complete the form and return it to us. (See the table under Where Do You Send Your Application?) We'll release a payment, if appropriate.</p>

<p>On-the-job Training or Apprenticeship</p>	<p>Correspondence Course</p>
<p>You'll receive a form to report the hours you worked each month. The certifying official must also complete the form and send it to the appropriate VA regional office.</p>	<p>You'll receive a form at the end of each quarter, i.e., at the end of March, June, September, and December. Show the number of lessons you completed that quarter, and send the form to the school. The school official will certify the number of lessons serviced, and send the form to the appropriate VA regional office. Payment is based on the number of lessons the school serviced during the quarter.</p>

Verification of a Test for a License or Certification: The Last Step for Payment

Test for License or Certification

Send VA a copy of your test results.

Attach a note or VA Form 21-4138, [Statement in Support of Claim](#), requesting reimbursement. Include:

- name of the test you took
- name and address of the organization issuing the license or certificate (not necessarily the organization that administered the test)
- the date you took the test
- cost of the test
- the signed statement: "I authorize release of my test information to VA."

What If You Don't Receive a Payment or Verification Form?

If you haven't received your payment or verification form within the times shown below, immediately call **1-888-GIBILL-1 (1-888-442-4551)**. If you're hearing impaired, call **1-800-829-4833**. Whenever you contact VA, have your VA file number: the veteran's claim number with a suffix consisting of a letter of the alphabet—for example, A, B, C, etc.

1 Type of Training **Call Immediately If**

Any Type of Training

Your claim was submitted more than six weeks ago, and you haven't received notice of VA's decision.

2 Type of Training **Call Immediately If VA Has Notified You of the Award, and**

Degree Program

You don't receive your payment for each month by the fifth of the next month.

Other School Courses (Diploma or Certificate)

You don't receive your monthly verification form, VA Form 22-8979, [Student Verification of Enrollment](#), for each month, by the fifth of the next month.

OJT or Apprenticeships

You haven't received a verification form by the end of the month.

Correspondence Courses

You haven't received a verification form by the end of the quarter (end of March, June, September, or December).

3 Type of Training **Call Immediately If VA Has Notified You of the Award, and**

Other School Courses (Diploma or Certificate)

You haven't received a payment at the end of two weeks after you verify your attendance.

OJT or Apprenticeships, and Correspondence Courses

You haven't received a payment at the end of two weeks after the training official has submitted verification of your attendance.

Should You Get an Advance Payment?

In some cases, you can get an advance payment to meet tuition expenses up front.

Example: You request an advance payment for enrollment from September 15-December 20. You receive the advanced payment September 15. The payment will cover September 15-October 31. Your next payment, covering the month of November, will not be received until the first week of December.

Caution: After receiving the advance payment, which covers the first month or partial month of your enrollment and the following month, you won't receive another payment until at least two months later.

How Can You Get an Advance Payment?

You can get an advance payment if:

- The school's break is at least 30 days between the term you're applying for and the preceding term, and you won't be paid for the break. VA can generally pay for a break between terms (with some exceptions) if the break is eight weeks or less, and both the term before and the term after the break aren't shorter than the break.
- You train at halftime or more;
- The school agrees to handle advance payments;
- You request an advance payment in writing and
- VA receives your enrollment certification at least 30 days before classes start.

We'll mail an advance payment check to the school, made out to you, for delivery to you at registration. We can't issue the check more than 30 days before classes start.

Your signed request for an advance payment must be included with your enrollment certification that the school submits.

If you reduce your enrollment or withdraw from all courses during the period covered by an advance payment, you'll have an overpayment that VA is required to collect from you if you cash the check. If you think the amount of a VA check is incorrect, contact us before cashing the check.



What Happens if You Drop One or More Courses?

If you drop one or more of your courses, you should always notify VA and your school's certifying official as soon as possible. If you drop after the end of the school's drop period, you'll need to let us

know the reasons for the change. We must reduce or stop your benefits from the beginning date of the term.

Unless you can show that the change was due to mitigating circumstances, you may have to repay all benefits for the course or courses. "Mitigating circumstances" are unavoidable and unexpected events that directly interfere with your pursuit of a course and are beyond your control.

If you can show mitigating circumstances, we can pay benefits up to the last date of your attendance.

Examples of reasons we can accept are extended illness and unscheduled changes in your employment. Examples of reasons we cannot accept are withdrawal to avoid a failing grade or dislike of the instructor.

We may ask you to furnish evidence to support your reasons for a change. If a serious illness or injury caused the change, obtain a statement from your doctor. If a change in employment caused the change in enrollment, obtain a statement from your employer.

The first time you drop from up to six credit hours, we'll "excuse" the drop and pay benefits for the period you attended. You won't have to explain the reasons for dropping the course(s). Remember, this only applies to your first drop.

What Happens if You Receive a Grade That Doesn't Count?

If you receive a grade that doesn't count toward graduation, you may have to repay all benefits for the course or courses. (We refer to these grades as “non-punitive.”)

Check your school's grading policy with the registrar or the office handling VA paperwork. A common example is a “W” grade for withdrawing.

If you receive a non-punitive grade, the school will notify us. We can reduce or stop benefits. You may not have to repay the benefits if you can show that the grades were due to mitigating circumstances.

(If you receive an “I” for “Incomplete,” we won't require your reasons for one year from the date you received the grade, or by the end of the time period the school allows you to make up the grade, whichever comes first.)

Note: Receiving a failing grade won't effect your DEA benefits, as long as your school counts the grade toward graduation, and as long as you have continued to meet the school's requirements for satisfactory progress.

PART 4: OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

WHAT ARE YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES FOR NOTIFYING VA?

You're responsible for notifying VA of any changes discussed below. To notify us, see [How Do You Contact VA?](#)

Change in Your Enrollment

If you change your enrollment, immediately tell the certifying official at your school. Ask the certifying official to notify VA of the change.

Also notify us of the change yourself. If we don't receive prompt notice of a change, you could be liable for an overpayment of benefits. We'll tell you how to return your incorrect payment.

Note: School employees who process VA forms are not VA employees.

Change of Address

Promptly notify us of any change in your address. Send your complete address, including the ZIP Code.

Change in Marital Status

If you're a spouse or surviving spouse, you must report any of the following changes in marital status which may affect your eligibility:

- Separation from the veteran
- Divorce from the veteran
- Remarriage following the death of the veteran.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU DISAGREE WITH A VA DECISION?

You can appeal VA decisions on education benefits. Each notice of decision we send you will contain your legal rights and appeal procedures.

If you disagree with our decision, simply write and tell us why. You can request a personal hearing on your claim. Don't wait too long to respond. We must receive your letter about your disagreement within one year of the date of our letter that notified you of a decision. We'll then give your claim a second review.

If you need assistance with your appeal, contact VA or a veterans service organization. See [How Do You Contact VA?](#)

HOW CAN YOU PREVENT AN OVERPAYMENT?

An overpayment is an incorrect benefit payment that is more than the amount to which you're entitled. If you promptly notify VA of changes affecting your benefits, you can prevent or reduce overpayments. See [How Do You Contact VA?](#)

In addition, use reasonable judgment when you accept and cash a check. Carefully read all letters from us about the monthly rates and effective dates of your benefits. If you think the amount of a check is wrong, contact us before cashing the check. We'll tell you how to return your incorrect payment. If you cash a check for the wrong amount, you'll be liable for repayment of any resulting overpayment.

PART 5: WHERE DO YOU GO FOR HELP?

HOW DO YOU CONTACT VA?

If you need help with your VA education benefits, or if you need to notify us of any changes affecting your benefits, you can contact us in the following ways:

- Go to www.GIBILL.va.gov, for general or detailed information about education benefits. To send us an e-mail, click on **Submit A Question**, then click the **Ask a Question** tab and complete the page with your inquiry. We will send you a reply via email.
- Call **1-888-GIBILL-1 (1-888-442-4551)**.

If your hearing is impaired, call
1-800-829-4833.

Toll-free telephone service is available in all 50 States, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Any of the following offices or representatives can also assist you:

- Any VA Regional Office, VA Medical Center or Vet Center (To locate the VA facility closest to you, go to www.va.gov and click on *Facility Locator* at the bottom).
- State or local representatives of veterans organizations.
- Education Service Officers or education counselors at military bases.
- American Embassies or consulates, if you're in a foreign country.

For help or information on other VA benefits, including home loans, disability, death benefits, health care, and life insurance, call **1-800-827-1000**, or access the main VA Web site at www.va.gov. If your hearing is impaired, call **1-800-829-4833**.

HOW CAN YOU FIND OUT ABOUT OTHER FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR EDUCATION?

For information on other sources of assistance, check with the Financial Aid office at your school.

Also check with the state office that handles Veterans Affairs for the state where your training facility is located. Your state may offer other education benefits based on military service or being a dependent of a veteran.

To locate the state office, go to www.va.gov. Click the About VA tab at the top of the page and then go to the Partners section for State ***[Veterans Affairs Offices listing or Veterans Service Organizations](#)***.

Here are some other useful Web sites:

- www.ed.gov, the Department of Education.
- www.collegeispossible.org, the Coalition of America's Colleges and Universities.
- www.doleta.gov, the Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (ETA) site.

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Department of Veterans Affairs

Washington DC 20420

OFFICIAL BUSINESS

Summary of Educational Benefits
Dependent's Educational
Assistance Program (DEA)
VA Pamphlet 22-73-3
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