Federal Benefits for Veterans, Dependents and Survivors

This chapter provides a summary of VA educational and training benefits. Additional information can be found atwww.benefits.va.gov/gibill/ or by calling **1-888-GI-BILL-1** (**1-888-442-4551**).

Post–9/11 GI Bil

**Eligibility**

The Post-9/11 GI Bill is an education benefit program for Servicemembers and Veterans who served on active duty after Sept.10, 2001. Benefits are payable for training pursued on or after Aug. 1, 2009. No payments can be made under this program for training pursued before thatdate.

To be eligible, the Servicemember or Veteran must serve at least 90 aggregate days on active duty after Sept. 10, 2001, and remain on active duty or be honorably discharged. Active duty includes active service performed by National Guard members under title 32 U.S.C. for the purposes of organizing, administering, recruiting, instructing, or training the National Guard; or under section 502(f) for the purpose of responding to a national emergency. Veterans may also be eligible if they were honorably discharged from active duty for a service-connected disability after serving 30 continuous days after Sept. 10, 2001. Generally, Servicemembers or Veterans may receive up to 36 months of entitlement under the Post-9/11 GI Bill.

Eligibility for benefits expires 15 years from the last period of active duty of at least 90 consecutive days. If released for a service- connected disability after at least 30 days of continuous service, eligibility ends 15 years from when the member is released for the service-connected disability. If, on Aug. 1, 2009, the Servicemember or Veteran is eligible for the Montgomery GI Bill; the Montgomery GI Bill – Selected Reserve; or the Reserve Educational Assistance Program, and qualifies for the Post-9/11 GI Bill, an irrevocable election must be made to receive benefits under the Post-9/11 GI Bill.

In most instances, once the election to receive benefits under the Post-9/11 GI Bill is made, the individual will no longer be eligible to receive benefits under the relinquished program.

Based on the length of active duty service, eligible participants are entitled to receive a percentage of the following:

* Cost of in-state tuition and fees at public institutions and for the 2013-2014 academic year, up to $19,198.31 toward tuition and fee costs at private and foreign institutions (paid directly to the school),
* Monthly housing allowance\* equal to the basic allowance for housing payable to a military E-5 with dependents, in the same ZIP code as the primary school (paid directly to the Servicemember, Veteran, or eligible dependents),
* Yearly books and supplies stipend of up to $1,000 per year (paid directly to the Servicemember, Veteran, or eligible dependents), and
* A one-time payment of $500 paid to certain individuals relocating from highly rural areas.

*\* Housing allowance is not payable to individuals pursuing training at halftime or less*

| **ACTIVE DUTY SERVICE** | **MAXIMUM BENEFIT** |
| --- | --- |
| At least 36 months | 100 percent |
| 30 continuous days and discharged due to service-connected disability | 100 percent |
| At least 30 months < 36 months (1) | 90 percent |
| At least 24 months < 30 months (1) | 80 percent |
| At least 18 months < 24 months (2) | 70 percent |
| At least 12 months < 18 months (2) | 60 percent |
| At least 6 months < 12 months (2) | 50 percent |
| At least 90 days < 6 months (2) | 40 Percent |

**(1)** *Includes service on active duty in entry level and skill training.*

**(2)** *Excludes service on active duty in entry level and skill training.*

**(3)** *If the individual would only qualify at the 70 percent level when service on active duty in entry level and skill training is excluded, then VA can only pay at the 70 percent level time or less.*

Approved training under the Post-9/11 GI Bill includes graduate and undergraduate degrees, vocational/technical training, on-the- job training, flight training, correspondence training, licensing and national testing programs, and tutorial assistance.

Individuals serving an aggregate period of active duty after Sept. 10, 2001, can receive the following percentages based on length of service:

Individuals serving an aggregate period of active duty after Sept. 10, 2001, can receive the percentages listed in the chart on page 54 based on length of service:

1. Includes service on active duty in entry level and skill training.
2. Excludes service on active duty in entry level and skill training.
3. If the individual would only qualify at the 70 percent level when service on active duty in entry level and skill training is excluded, then VA can only pay at the 70 percent level

**The Yellow Ribbon G.I. Bill Education Enhancement Program**

This program may assist eligible individuals with payment of their tuition and fees in instances where costs exceed the in-state tuition charges at a public institution or the national maximum payable at private and foreign institutions. To be eligible, the student must be:

* A Veteran receiving benefits at the 100-percent benefit rate payable,
* a transfer-of-entitlement-eligible dependent child,
* or a transfer-of- entitlement-eligible spouse of a Veteran.

The school of attendance must have accepted VA’s invitation to participate in the program, state how much student tuition will be waived (up to 50 percent) and how many participants will be accepted into the program during the current academic year. VA will match the school’s percentage (up to 50 percent) to reduce or eliminate out-of-pocket costs for eligible participants.

**Transfer of Entitlement**

DoD may offer members of the armed forces on or after Aug. 1, 2009, the opportunity to transfer benefits to a spouse or dependent children. DoD and the military services must approve all requests for this benefit. Members of the armed forces approved for transfer of entitlement may only transfer any unused portion of their Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits while a member of the armed forces, subject to their period of eligibility.

Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship

This scholarship entitles children of those who die in the line of duty on or after Sept. 11, 2001, to use Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits.

**Eligible children:**

* Are entitled to 36 months of benefits at the 100 percent level,
* Have 15 years to use the benefit beginning on their 18th birthday,
* May use the benefit until their 33rd birthday, and
* Are not eligible for the Yellow Ribbon Program

VetSuccess on Campus

This is designed to provide on-campus benefits assistance and readjustment counseling to assist Veterans in completing their college educations and entering the labor market in viable careers. Under this program, a full-time, experienced Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor and a part-time Vet Center Outreach Coordinator are assigned at each campus to provide VA benefits outreach, support, and assistance to ensure their health, educational, and benefit needs are met.

Montgomery GI Bill

**Eligibility**

VA educational benefits may be used while the Servicemember is on active duty or after the Servicemember’s separation from active duty with a fully honorable military discharge. Discharges “under honorable conditions” and “general” discharges do not establish eligibility.

Eligibility generally expires 10 years after the Servicemember’s discharge. However, there are exceptions for disability, re-entering active duty, and upgraded discharges. All participants must have a high school diploma, equivalency certificate, or have completed 12 hours toward a college degree before applying for benefits.

Previously, Servicemembers had to meet the high school requirement before they completed their initial active duty obligation. Those who did not may now meet the requirement and reapply for benefits. If eligible, they must use their benefits within 10 years from the date of last discharge from active duty.

Additionally, every Veteran must establish eligibility under one of four categories.

**Category 1:**

**Service after June 30, 1985**

For Veterans who entered active duty for the first time after June 30, 1985, did not decline MGIB in writing, and had their military pay reduced by $100 a month for 12 months. Servicemembers can apply after completing two continuous years of service. Veterans must have completed three continuous years of active duty, or two continuous years of active duty if they first signed up for less than three years or have an obligation to serve four years in the Selected Reserve (the 2x4 program) and enter the Selected Reserve within one year of discharge.

Servicemembers or Veterans who received a commission as a result of graduation from a service academy or completion of an ROTC scholarship are not eligible under Category 1 unless they received their commission:

* After becoming eligible for MGIB benefits (including completing the minimum service requirements for the initial period of active duty), or
* After Sept. 30, 1996, and received less than $3,400 during any one year under ROTC scholarship.

Servicemembers or Veterans who declined MGIB because they received repayment from the military for education loans are also ineligible under Category 1. If they did not decline MGIB and received loan repayments, the months served to repay the loans will be deducted from their entitlement.

**Early Separation from Military Service:** Servicemembers who did not complete the required period of military service may be eligible under Category 1 if discharged for one of the following:

1. Convenience of the government – with 30 continuous months of service for an obligation of three or more years, or 20 continuous months of service for an obligation of less than three years,
2. Service-connected disability,
3. Hardship,
4. A medical condition diagnosed prior to joining the military,
5. A condition that interfered with performance of duty and did not result from misconduct,
6. A reduction in force (in most cases)
7. Sole Survivorship (if discharged after 9/11/01).

**Category 2:**

**Vietnam Era GI Bill Conversion**

For Veterans who had remaining entitlement under the Vietnam Era GI Bill on Dec. 31, 1989, and served on active duty for any number of days during the period Oct. 19, 1984, to June. 30, 1985, for at least three continuous years beginning on July 1, 1985; or at least two continuous years of active duty beginning on July 1, 1985, followed by four years in the Selected Reserve beginning within one year of release from active duty. Veterans not on active duty on Oct. 19, 1984, may be eligible under Category 2 if they served three continuous years on active duty beginning on or after July 1, 1985, or two continuous years of active duty at any time followed by four continuous years in the Selected Reserve beginning within one year of release from active duty.

Veterans are barred from eligibility under Category 2 if they received a commission after Dec. 31, 1976, as a result of graduation from a service academy or completion of an ROTC scholarship.

However, such a commission is not disqualifying if they received the commission after becoming eligible for MGIB benefits, or received the commission after Sept. 30, 1996, and received less than $3,400 during any one year under ROTC scholarship.

**Category 3:**

**Involuntary Separation/Special Separation For Veterans who meet one of the following requirements:**

1. Elected MGIB before being involuntarily separated, or
2. Were voluntarily separated under the Voluntary Separation Incentive or the Special Separation Benefit program, elected MGIB benefits before being separated, and had military pay reduced by $1,200 before discharge.

**Category 4:**

**Veterans Educational Assistance Program For Veterans who participated in the Veterans Educational Assistance Program (VEAP) and:**

1. Served on active duty on Oct. 9, 1996.
2. Participated in VEAP and contributed money to an account.
3. Elected MGIB by Oct. 9, 1997, and paid $1,200.

Veterans who participated in VEAP on or before Oct. 9, 1996, may also be eligible even if they did not deposit money in a VEAP account if they served on active duty from Oct. 9, 1996, through April 1, 2000, elected MGIB by Oct. 31, 2001, and contributed $2,700 to MGIB.

**Certain National Guard Servicemembers may also qualify under Category 4 if they:**

1. Served for the first time on full-time active duty in the National Guard between June 30, 1985, and Nov. 29, 1989, and had no previous active duty service.
2. Elected MGIB during the nine-month window ending on July 9, 1997; and
3. Paid $1,200.

**Payments**

Effective Oct. 1, 2013, the rate for full-time training in college, technical or vocational school is $1,648 a month for those who served three years or more or two years plus four years in the Selected Reserve. For those who served less than three years, the monthly rate is $1,339.

Benefits are reduced for part-time training. Payments for other types of training follow different rules. VA will pay an additional amount, called a “kicker” or “college fund,” if directed by DoD. Visit www. benefits.va.gov/gibill for more information. The maximum number of months Veterans can receive payments is 36 months at the full-time rate or the part-time equivalent.

**The following groups qualify for the maximum**

Veterans who served the required length of active duty, Veterans with an obligation of three years or more who were separated early for the convenience of the government and served 30 continuous months, and Veterans with an obligation of less than three years who were separated early for the convenience of the government and served 20 continuous months.

**Types of Training Available:**

* Courses at colleges and universities leading to associate, bachelor or graduate degrees, including accredited independent study offered through distance education.
* Courses leading to a certificate or diploma from business, technical or vocational schools.
* Apprenticeship or on-the-job training for those not on active duty, including self-employment training begun on or after June 16, 2004, for ownership or operation of a franchise.
* Correspondence courses, under certain conditions.
* Flight training, if the Veteran holds a private pilot’s license upon beginning the training and meets the medical requirements.
* State-approved teacher certification programs.
* Preparatory courses necessary for admission to a college or graduate school.
* License and certification tests approved for Veterans.
* Entrepreneurship training courses to create or expand small businesses.
* Tuition assistance using MGIB as “Top-Up” (active duty Servicemembers).

Accelerated payments for certain high-cost programs are authorized.

**Work-Study Program**

Participants who train at the three-quarter or full-time rate may be eligible for a work-study program in which they work for VA and receive hourly wages. Students under the work-study program must be supervised by a VA employee, and all duties performed must relate to VA. The types of work allowed include:

* The preparation and processing of necessary papers and other documents at educational institutions
* Any activity at a VA facility
* Any activity at Department of Defense, Coast Guard, or National Guard facilities relating to the administration of Chapters 1606 or 1607 of Title 10 U.S.C.
* Any activity of a State Veterans agency related to providing assistance to Veterans in obtaining any benefit under Title 38, U.S.C. or the laws of the State
* A position working in a Center for Excellence for Veteran Student Success, as established under 20 U.S.C. 1161t, which purpose is to support and coordinate academic, financial, physical, and social needs of Veteran students
* A position working in a cooperative program carried out jointly by VA and an Institution of Higher Learning
* Any Veterans-related position in an institution of higher learning, such as:
  + Assisting with dissemination of general information regarding Veteran benefits and/or services
    - \*providing assistance to Veteran students with general inquiries about Veteran benefits via phone, email, or in person; or
    - \*Maintaining and organizing Veteran-related files

Veterans’ Educational Assistance Program

**Eligibility**

Active duty personnel could participate in the Veterans’ Educational Assistance Program (VEAP) if they entered active duty for the first time after Dec. 31, 1976, and before July 1, 1985, and made a contribution prior to Apr. 1, 1987.

The maximum contribution is $2,700. Active duty participants may make a lump-sum contribution to their VEAP account. For more information, visit [www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/](http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/).

**Servicemembers who participated in VEAP are eligible to receive benefits while on active duty if:**

1. At least three months of contributions are available, except for high school or elementary, in which only one month is needed.
2. And they enlisted for the first time after Sept. 7, 1980, and completed 24 months of their first period of active duty.

Servicemembers must receive a discharge under conditions other than dishonorable for the qualifying period of service.

Servicemembers who enlisted for the first time after Sept. 7, 1980, or entered active duty as an officer or enlistee after Oct. 16, 1981, must have completed 24 continuous months of active duty, unless they meet a qualifying exception.

Eligibility generally expires 10 years from release from active duty, but can be extended under special circumstances.

**Payments**

DoD will match contributions at the rate of $2 for every $1 put into the fund and may make additional contributions, or “kickers,” as necessary. For training in college, vocational or technical schools, the payment amount depends on the type and hours of training pursued. The maximum amount is $300 a month for full-time training.

**Training, Work-Study, Counseling**

VEAP participants may receive the same training, work-study benefits and counseling as provided under the MGIB with the exception of preparatory courses.,/