

Colleagues,

Financial hardships are one of the leading causes that force students to drop out of school. I wanted to share with you information about VA's advance payment feature for GI Bill students as well as funding sources that are available through the Federal Student Aid program. Please help disseminate this information to Veteran students that you know.

You may have come across the term "advance payment" in dealing with GI Bill benefits. Who wouldn't want their pay in advance? Better sooner than later, sign me up! So what exactly is it? Can a Veterans Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP) student request advance payments?

Advance payment is a payment at the beginning of the term that combines the first partial month with the first full month of benefits. If a school agrees to handle advance payments, a student may receive this combined payment at the beginning of the term. VA sends the advance payment check to the school for the student to pick up. VRAP students are also eligible to request an advance payment.

To receive an advance payment, the following conditions must be met:

- The school must have agreed to receive and process advance payments, and
- The student must request an advance payment through his or her school certifying official, and
- VA must receive the enrollment certification at least 30 days before classes start.

Here's an example of how advance payment works:

If a student's enrollment starts on August 15, the first payment would be for the period August 15 through September 30, for a total of 45 days. The full-time monthly rate payable under VRAP is \$1,564. In this case, due to the advance payment feature, the student's first payment would be \$2,346 rather than \$1,564. Schools should submit the enrollment certification with the advance pay request to VA *at least 30 days before the start of the term*. As soon as VA processes the claim, the advance payment is mailed to the school for the student to pick up.

VRAP benefits are paid after the training has been completed and the student verifies his or her enrollment to VA. Since the student received an advance payment of VRAP benefits for the months of August and September, the next payment for October will be issued in early November. The student will need to verify attendance on or after October 31st to receive payment for the month of October.

Please make sure VRAP students are aware of this advance payment feature. As unemployed Veterans, it could be the initial boost they need to start down a path leading to a rewarding career.

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In addition to VA education benefits, did you know that money for college is available from your state and/or the U.S. Department of Education? Check out StudentAid.gov for more information.

To qualify for federal, state and most college financial aid, you must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Visit StudentAid.gov/FAFSA for more information.

Have questions about your college financial aid? Check out StudentAid.gov or call 1-800-4-FED-AID for assistance.

The following grant and scholarships are specifically geared towards Veterans and their families.

- [The Iraq and Afghanistan Service Grant](#)
- [Scholarships for Military Families](#)

V/R

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