

Today's Presenters



Bill Spruce

VBA Education Service

Acting Director, CA State Approving Agency Team

Hired by VA in 2000 as a VCE, Buffalo RPO

Hired by VA Central Office in 2005

US Army Veteran 1985-1990



Randy Lazaro

VBA Education Service

Management & Program Analyst, CA State Approving Agency Team

Hired by VA in 2000 as a VSR, ECSS, and ELR

Hired by VA Central Office in 2009

US Navy Veteran 1990-1998





POST★9/11
GI BILL

It's Your Future

Veterans Affairs Acting as
California State Approving
Agency (SAA)

October 11, 2019

benefits.va.gov/gibill

Today's Agenda

- Address Veterans Affairs (VA) as Acting California SAA
- Current Operational Status
- School Approval Process
- Where to Submit
- Contact Information
- Questions & Answers Examples

Content Information

- Participants may submit questions during the webinar. If not answered live, they will be posted, along with this presentation on our GI Bill Site:
- To find the previous SCO webinars, visit www.benefits.va.gov/gibill
 - Click on “For School Administrators”
 - Select “School Training Resources”
 - Select Certifications and Training header
- For any specific or situational questions you may have, please contact your [ELR](#) or call the School Certifying Official Hotline

VA Now Acting SAA For California

- Effective October 1, 2019, The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is now serving as the Acting State Approving Agency (SAA) for the State of California.
- The Executive Director of Education Service, Ms. Charmain Bogue, has identified **Mr. Bill Spruce** to serve as the Acting Director, State Approving Agency – CA, to lead and direct VA's handling of the core functions of this SAA.

Current Operational Status

- A team of six has been on the ground in Oakland, CA since Monday inventorying and cataloguing the work sent to VA by CSAAVE
- Processing of approval requests began late Monday afternoon
- The email address CA-Approvals@va.gov is the same as the previous ACLApprovals@vbamus@va.gov and is being monitored for information.
- The VA-SAA Point of Contact Number will be (202) 632-8701 and will be monitored Monday –Friday between 9:00am to 2:00pm (PST)
- Please do **not** call for the status of your approval request until **21 days** has passed

School Approval Process

- As of October 1, 2019, all applications for Program Approval, Original, Renewals or Amendments are now publicly available on VA's website at https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/school_resources.asp
- The process and requirements for approval for GI Bill benefits are set by Federal law and VA regulations, so it will be similar to how the process worked during fiscal year 2019
- California Education and Training Institutions should forward all electronic approval material (e.g., applications, catalogs updates, changes, etc.) and applicable questions to: CA-Approvals@va.gov

Potential Questions & Answers



Q&A

Q1. On September 9, 2019, CSAAVE sent a communication to all schools indicating they will continue to fulfill their role as the SAA with oversight responsibility for Veterans' program approvals, even after October 1, 2019. Is this correct?

A1. No. VA informed CSAAVE on September 6, 2019, that it will not offer a "Cooperative Agreement" to the agency for FY 2020. Without such an agreement in place, CSAAVE will lack the authority to approve programs of education for GI Bill participation. CSAAVE sent a subsequent communication to all schools on October 1, 2019 retracting their initial notice.

Q&A

Q2: How should my school proceed with New and Amended approvals?

A2. After October 1, 2019, all requests for New, Amended and Re-Approvals for GI Bill programs should be sent to VA via email CA-Approvals@va.gov

Q3: We have changes to our programs. How can I obtain a copy of the program application?

A3: VA's application for program approval can be found here, under the School Resources section: https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/school_resources.asp

Q&A

Q4: Our school submitted an application and updated catalog to CSAAVE recently. We are waiting on response for our approval, so students can be certified. Will our application be delayed?

A4: **No.** VA will be working with CSAAVE to help ensure a seamless transition of all pending approvals. As of October 1, 2019, VA took possession of all pending actions and have been processing them as expeditiously as possible. VA will contact any CA school should it require any further information that may have had an application still pending with CSAAVE.

***Please Do Not** Re-Submit an application that has been submitted to CSAAVE as this may generate a backlog effect within the system.



POST★9/11
GI BILL

It's Your Future 10

Q&A

Q5: What if SCOs have questions regarding student certifications matters

A5: The Education Liaison Representative (ELR) continues to serve as the Main Point of Contact for all certification and training matters. The ELR can be contacted at elr.vbasdc@va.gov.

The Education Call Center (ECC) is the main point of contact for all payment related issues. SCOs can directly contact the ECC at 888-442-4551

Q6: Q. Will I be able to call and speak with someone concerning my approval if I have questions

A6. Yes- You may contact the Acting State Approving Agency Team via email at CA-Approvals@va.gov; or via telephone at 202-632-8701. This line is monitored Monday - Friday, 9:00am to 2:00pm (PST)



POST★9/11
GI BILL

It's Your Future 11

Conclusion



**Thank you so much for your attendance folks.
We truly hope this clarified any confusion during this transition.
Stay tuned for more Webinars and announcements!**