

**VA**



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

# Education Service Office Hours COVID-19 and Colmery Updates

Target Audience: SCOs  
November 2020



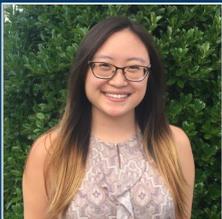
# Agenda

- 1 COVID-19 LEGISLATION UPDATES**
- 2 ROGERS STEM SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM**
- 3 SECTION 107 RECERTIFICATION PROGRESS**
- 5 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

# COVID-19 Legislation Updates

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# COVID-19 Legislation Updates

**With the passage of Public Law 116-159 – Continuing Appropriations Act, 2021 and Other Extensions Act, the special COVID rules have been extended to December 21, 2021.**



## What does this mean for VA?

This legislation authorizes the Department of Veterans Affairs to continue to provide educational assistance for programs of education that have been converted to distance learning due to an emergency or health-related situation until 12/21/2021.

## What does this mean for Schools?

These laws cover situations where (1) your school is combining online with resident training or (2) where your school is offering the student the option to choose online training in lieu of resident (physically in person) training. SCOs should continue to certify converted courses in the same manner as they were certified earlier in the year.



## What does this mean for GI Bill Students?

Among other things, these rules mean that if students pursue resident (physically in person) courses converted to online solely due to COVID-19 at a rate of pursuit that is more than 50%, they will continue to receive the Monthly Housing Allowance (MHA) rate for resident training. **Note: you will find pre-drafted language to share with your students in the invitation to these office hours.**

**For more information please visit the [COVID-19 FAQ page](#).**

# Rogers STEM Scholarship Program

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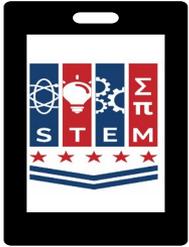
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# STEMTEXT PILOT PROGRAM



**STEMText is an innovative pilot program that provides a convenient and innovative way for Rogers STEM Scholarship recipients to verify their attendance for their Rogers STEM Scholarship program, a requirement to process their Monthly Housing Allowance (MHA).**

.....**How it works**.....



**Existing Rogers STEM Scholarship Recipients** have received a text message to opt-in to **STEMText** if their mobile phone number is on file.



**Future Rogers STEM Scholarship Applicants** will be able to **opt-in** by selecting a **checkbox** directly on the Rogers STEM Scholarship application.



**Rogers STEM Scholarship students with an active enrollment who opt-in** for STEMText, from the opt-in message or on their application, will receive a **monthly text message** asking them to **verify their attendance**.

Mobile phone number *(\*Required)*

I would like to receive text messages from VA about my GI Bill benefits.

Since you've opted to receive text message updates, you need to enter your mobile phone number so we can send updates to your device.

**Note:** Students who do not want to use **STEMText** will still be able to **verify** attendance by **emailing** the Buffalo Regional Processing Office (RPO).



**For more information, let's watch this [short video](#).**



# STEM Scholarship Application Updates

As of October 1, 2020, VA Form 22-10203, Application for Edith Nourse Rogers STEM Scholarship is the only Rogers STEM Scholarship application accepted.

## Rogers STEM Scholarship Applicants



Will [apply on VA.gov](https://www.va.gov).

## School Certifying Officials



### Will receive:

- An email notification
- Instructions on completing application



### Please:

- Submit the completed application within 14 days.

*If VA doesn't receive a response, we will not be able to process the scholar's application for the Rogers STEM Scholarship, and we may follow up for the required information.*

## Apply for the Rogers STEM Scholarship

Form 22-10203

### Step 1 of 6: Applicant information

You aren't required to fill in all fields, but we can review your application faster if you provide more information.

Your first name (\*Required)

Your middle name

Your last name (\*Required)



# Existing STEM Enrollment Process in VA-ONCE

## SCO Responsibilities in VA-ONCE

After receiving the COE confirming that a Rogers STEM Scholarship Recipient has been selected:

- ✓ Select the 'STEM Scholarship Recipient' checkbox on the Bio page if scholar is approved.

**Note:** The chapter must be Chapter 33 or Chapter 33 Yellow for the STEM Scholarship box to be checked.

- ✗ **Do NOT** check this box if the scholar is in a STEM program, but NOT receiving the STEM Scholarship.

The 'STEM Scholarship Recipient' remark will then be automatically inserted on the student's enrollment, and the certification will be routed to the Buffalo RPO.

- ✓ For the first enrollment certification for each STEM Scholarship recipient, please also add the STEM Scholarship CIP remark and input the CIP number for the program.

The screenshot shows the VA-ONCE Bio Data form for student BARBARINO, VINNY. The form includes fields for SSN, Student ID, File Number, Payee#, Chapter#, Training Type, School Short Name, Facility Code, Program, and Address. The 'STEM Scholarship Recipient' checkbox is checked and highlighted with a red box. A message box is overlaid on the form stating: "Chapter Code must be 33 or 33 YELLOW for STEM Scholarship." The message box has an "OK" button.

The screenshot shows the "New Remark" form in VA-ONCE. The "VBA Standard Remarks" dropdown is set to "STEM Scholarship - The CIP For The Program Is". The "CIP Code" field contains "11.05". The "Other Remarks" field is empty, with a character count of 125.

# Section 107 Recertification Reminders

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# Section 107 Recertification Resources

**Important: There are less than 2 months left to complete Section 107 Recertification!**



Resource	Link
Colmery Act Section 107 Recertification Presentation	<a href="https://www.benefits.va.gov/GIBILL/docs/presentations/Colmery_107_Recertification_SCO_Training.pdf">https://www.benefits.va.gov/GIBILL/docs/presentations/Colmery_107_Recertification_SCO_Training.pdf</a>
VA-ONCE Recertification Demo Videos	<a href="https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/resources/education_resources/school_certifying_officials/presentations.asp">https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/resources/education_resources/school_certifying_officials/presentations.asp</a>
Recertification VA-ONCE Quick Reference Guide	<a href="https://www.benefits.va.gov/GIBILL/docs/presentations/107_Recertification_VAONCE_QuickRefGuide.pdf">https://www.benefits.va.gov/GIBILL/docs/presentations/107_Recertification_VAONCE_QuickRefGuide.pdf</a>
Facility Extension Campus Report	<a href="https://benefits.va.gov/gibill/docs/fgib/recertificationwaivers_extensioncampusreport.xlsx">https://benefits.va.gov/gibill/docs/fgib/recertificationwaivers_extensioncampusreport.xlsx</a>
Section 107 Recertification FAQs	<a href="https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/docs/fgib/fgib_stakeholder_faqs.pdf">https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/docs/fgib/fgib_stakeholder_faqs.pdf</a>
Monthly Housing Allowance Adjustment Letters Infographic (For Students)	<a href="https://benefits.va.gov/gibill/docs/fgib/MHA_adjustment_letters_infographic.pdf">https://benefits.va.gov/gibill/docs/fgib/MHA_adjustment_letters_infographic.pdf</a>



# Self-Certify Your School's Section 107 Recertification Completion

If you need to recertify enrollments impacted by Section 107:

1. **Recertify** all impacted enrollments by December 31, 2020
2. **Confirm** with the other SCOs at your school that all necessary recertifications have been submitted
3. **Verify completion** of the Section 107 Recertification process by completing the Section 107 Recertification Completion survey on the SCO Training Portal\*



**If your school does not complete the recertification process by December 31, 2020, your school will be identified as non-compliant with VA policy and may be at risk for suspension or withdrawal of approval from the SAA.**

# Frequently Asked Questions

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# Frequently Asked Questions - Overview



**COVID-19**



**Rogers STEM Scholarship**



**Section 107 Recertification**



**New: Applicable for “covered period” March 1, 2020 – December 21, 2021**

**Q: If a school transitions from resident to online classes to continue the training of some beneficiaries, but must discontinue training in select programs (entire program of education; not just some courses) affecting some beneficiaries, what steps should the school take?**

If the educational institution remains partially open (continues to provide training to some beneficiaries) but must discontinue training to beneficiaries enrolled in select programs the school must report changes for the beneficiaries, whose training is stopped.

- SCOs should review the IHL’s published attendance policy and “Incomplete Grade” policy as all normal VA reporting rules still apply.
- SCOs must report the date that training ceased. When reporting this change using VA-ONCE, SCOs should complete steps to report mitigating circumstances using “COVID-19 Program Suspended” as the reason for the cessation of the training. If paper VA Form 22-1999b termination is reported, SCOs should include “COVID-19 Program Suspended” in the remarks section.
- Beneficiaries enrolled in programs suspended due to COVID-19 will continue to receive their MHA until the end of the term or 4 weeks (28 days) from the date the program was temporarily suspended.
- When the IHL resumes regular operations, if the institution has same or new term dates all standard enrollment procedures remain in place.
- IHLs which convert modalities, follow to instruction in Q1 for certifying changes to training modalities.



# COVID-19 FAQs



**Q: If a beneficiary becomes ill due to COVID-19 and cannot continue training while the IHL continues to offer course instruction, what steps need to take place?**

All normal VA reporting rules still apply and SCOs should review the IHL's published attendance policy and "Incomplete Grade" policy. SCOs should report the withdrawal based on the attendance policy and report COVID-19 as mitigating circumstances. The beneficiary's last day of attendance should be reported as the effective date. In these situations, the law does NOT allow VA to continue payments beyond the last day of attendance.

When a beneficiary drops a course due to COVID-19, SCOs must report the adjusted credit hours (or termination as applicable), along with the "COVID-19 remark" to VA. Liberal mitigating circumstances will be applied, but the student may incur some debt. VA's Debt Management Center (DMC) temporarily suspended collection until December 31, 2020 (currently – but subject to extension). In addition, Veterans can request temporary collection suspension of preexisting debt or arrange for extended repayment plans. Institutions with questions or concerns regarding a VA debt should contact DMC at our dedicated email for School Certifying Officials: [DMCEDU.VBASPL@va.gov](mailto:DMCEDU.VBASPL@va.gov).

**Click here for the full list of updated [COVID-19 FAQs](#)**



# Rogers STEM Scholarship FAQs



**Q: How can my student verify that he or she is opted in to receive STEMText text messages to verify his or her Rogers STEM Scholarship attendance?**

Please have your student contact the Education Call Center to confirm their opt-in status.

**Q: My student never received a STEMText opt-in text message, or he or she opted out to receive updates about his or her Rogers STEM Scholarship via text message. How can he or she opt in?**

If your student opted out by replying “No” to the opt-in message, he or she can opt back in by replying “STOP” and then “START” in the text message conversation. After doing so, if he or she is still not receiving messages, please have the student contact the Education Call Center for further assistance.

**Q: Why is VA sending me an application development email? Is this time sensitive?**

VA may need additional information about a Rogers STEM applicant. This is time-sensitive, as VA needs the applicant’s information in order to determine their eligibility for STEM.

**Note:** Currently the Buffalo RPO STEM team contacts SCOs to develop the Rogers STEM Scholarship Application. **Coming soon**, VA will send an automatic email directly to SCOs listed in WEAMS upon receiving a Rogers STEM Scholarship application on VA.gov.



## Section 107 Recertification FAQs



**Q: If an extension campus qualifies for waiver, do I need to submit anything back to VA?**

No, if an extension campus qualifies for waiver, or if you do not have any recertifications to complete, you do not need to submit the waiver or anything back to VA at this time. However, please note that if one extension qualifies for a waiver, it does not mean all of your extension campuses do. Please review the [Facility Extension Campus report](#) to see which campuses qualify.

**Q: How can I inform VA that my school has completed the Section 107 Recertification Process?**

If you have confirmed with all SCOs at your school that all impacted student enrollments have been recertified, please verify completion of the Section 107 Recertification process by certifying your completion on the SCO Training Portal.

**Q: What happens if my school does not complete recertification on time?**

If your school does not complete the recertification process by December 31, 2020, your school will be identified as non-compliant with VA policy and may be at risk for suspension or withdrawal of approval from the SAA.

Click here for the full list of [Section 107 Recertification FAQs](#).

# Resources and Reminders



# Instructions on How to Self-Certify

1. Click on the URL or copy and paste it in your web browser.  
<https://vba-tpss.vbatraining.org/assess/trkSignIn?refid=XSCO>
2. Enter your email address and eight (8) digit facility code and click Next  
**(If you do not have a user profile, click New User Account and follow the steps to set up your profile.)**
3. Scroll down and click the Conference/Workshop/Virtual Training tab
4. Select the applicable training session from the list of topics that appears on the right side of the screen by clicking Begin
5. To enter Conference/Workshop/Virtual Training Title: Click the dropdown arrow and select SCO Virtual Training Session and click Submit
6. Enter the start date and the end date
7. Enter your Facility Name, City and State (Main Campus) and click Submit
8. Certify your attendance by clicking Agree and then submit.
9. Print your training certificate and keep for your records



# FY'21 Annual Training Reminder

## Completed Your SCO Annual Training by August 31, 2021

Section 305 of the Colmery Act requires SCOs at "[Covered Educational Institutions](#)" to complete annual training by August 31<sup>st</sup>.

To complete the annual training click on the link: [SCO Annual Training](#).



don't  
forget

**Please Note: VA has the authority to remove a SCO's ability to certify enrollments if annual training is not completed.**

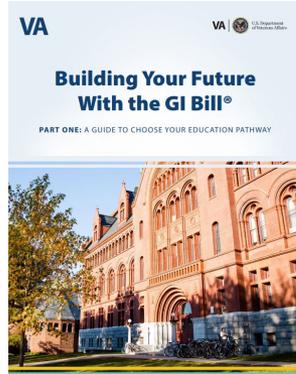


# Student and School Administrator Resources

## Q&A Video with Education Service Executive Director Charmain Bogue

VA asked what questions students had about their GI Bill benefits, we received 34 questions and met with GI Bill leadership to answer them in a town hall style video.

Watch it [here!](#)



## Building Your Future With the GI Bill

This series assists GI Bill students in navigating their education pathways, using benefits and finding employment:

- [Part One: A Guide to Choose Your Education Pathway](#)
- [Part Two: A Guide to Understanding Your Benefits](#)
- [Part Three: A Guide to Furthering Your Career](#)

## Postcard Series

[Yellow Ribbon Postcard](#)



[Benefit Levels Postcard](#)

[Rogers STEM Postcard](#)



[Exam Reimbursement Postcard](#)



## Updated COVID-19 FAQs

- [SCO FAQs](#)
- [Student FAQs](#)



## SCO Training Portal



## Education Call Center

1-888-GIBILL-1 (1-888-442-4551).  
For students outside the U.S., call  
001-918-781-5678



## School Certifying Official's (SCO) Handbook

# Thank You for Attending!

Follow our Social Media Channels to stay up to date on GI Bill Benefits:



@GIBillEducation



@VAVetBenefits



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