

Before we begin...

- The webinar will start at **2 pm** (eastern daylight time)
- Please make sure to:
 - Mute your phone
 - Turn off any webcams or microphones (if applicable)
- **Audio can ONLY be accessed by calling 1-800-767-1750**
 - **Conference code: 37638**
- Slides will be available in 1-2 weeks on our website under the **School Training Resources** page



VBA Education Service Quarterly Webinar

September 27, 2017

Veterans Benefits Administration

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Agenda

- Harry W. Colmery Educational Assistance Act of 2017 (Forever GI Bill)
- Back to School
 - General Reminders & Best Practices
 - Requirement of COE
 - Vets.gov Letter
 - Reduction in Credit Hours
- Dual Certification
- Question & Answer

Housekeeping

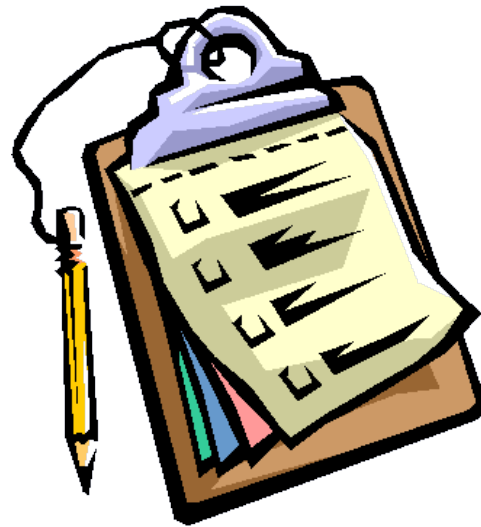
- Participants may submit questions and feedback during the webinar. We want this to be beneficial for you.
- Answers to questions will be provided when a copy of the webinar is uploaded to www.benefits.va.gov/gibill
- To find the webinars, visit www.benefits.va.gov/gibill
 - Click on “For School Administrators”
 - Select “School Resources”
 - Select “Education Benefit Presentations” under the Certifications and Training header
- For any specific or situational questions you may have, please contact your ELR or call the School Certifying Official Hotline

Director Worley



Welcome

Harry W. Colmery Educational Assistance Act of 2017



Overview

The Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017 (“Forever GI Bill”) is one of the most comprehensive changes to the Post-9/11 GI Bill.

Some of the significant changes to the 31 education-related sections of the bill are below:



Provisions - *Date of Enactment*

There are several provisions, that impact schools, that went into effect on the date of enactment, when the President signed the bill into law. These are:

- The 15-year time limitation for using Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits is eliminated for Veterans who left active duty on or after January 1, 2013, and qualifying dependents (Fry children who became eligible on or after January 1, 2013 and all Fry spouses)
- Reservists who had eligibility under the Reserve Educational Assistance Program (REAP) and lost it due to the program sunset provision will have that service credited toward the Post-9/11 GI Bill program

Provisions - *Date of Enactment* (cont.)

- Certain work-study activities are permanently authorized; previously it had to be re-approved by Congress every few years.
- Improvement of information technology for the Long-Term Solution
- Beneficiaries can now use Post-9/11 GI Bill to pursue accredited independent study programs at certain education institutions that are not institutions of higher learning (IHLs)
- VA will help Veterans to more clearly identify schools that offer them priority enrollment

Provisions - *January 2018 and beyond*

August 1, 2018

- Educational assistance under Post-9/11 GI Bill for those individuals awarded the Purple Heart.
- Inclusion of Fry Scholarship recipients and Purple Heart recipients in Yellow Ribbon Program
- Calculation of monthly housing stipend under Post-9/11 GI Bill, based on location of campus where classes are attended.
- Charge to entitlement for certain licensure and certification tests and national tests under Post-9/11 GI Bill.

Provisions- *January 2018 and beyond* (cont.)

August 1, 2018

- Monthly stipend for certain members of Reserve component individuals receiving Post-9/11 GI Bill
- Duration of education assistance under Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance Program (DEA) (from 45 to 36 months of entitlement)
- Limitation on use of reporting fees payable to educational institutions and sponsors of programs of apprenticeship.

Provisions- *January 2018 and beyond* (cont.)

August 1, 2018 (cont.)

- Training requirements for School Certifying Officials as condition of GI Bill approval
- Provision of information regarding Veteran entitlement to educational assistance
- Eligibility of Reserve Component members for Post-9/11 GI Bill

October 1, 2018

- Increase in amounts of educational assistance payable under DEA.

Provisions- *January 2018 and beyond*

(cont.)

August 1, 2019

- Additional benefits for pursuit of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) programs

August 1, 2020

- Consolidation of certain eligibility tiers under Post-9/11 GI Bill

August 1, 2022

- Inclusion of certain active duty members in the Yellow Ribbon Program

Bottom Line

- Substantial IT changes may result in longer processing times during implementation.

Back to School!



General Reminders

- Enrollment Certs can be submitted to VA up 120 days before the 1st day of class
- Holiday breaks between Fall and Spring semester; no break pay, no MHA payment
- We encourage open and honest communication with your GI Bill beneficiaries
- Communication with beneficiaries about reductions to schedule is CRUCIAL to helping them avoid debts – please remind your students

Best Practices

- Transparency with GI Bill users is crucial
- Time during Fall enrollment can be hectic
 - Many GI Bill users find their way to the GI Bill Facebook page to vocalize frustrations or issues they are having
 - That also expands to their experience with schools
- News of bad customer service reaches more than **twice as many** ears as praise for a good service experience
 - Source: White House Office of Consumer Affairs; <http://www.bbb.org/phoenix/news-events/business-tips/2014/09/negative-reviews-a-golden-opportunity-for-business/>

Best Practices (cont.)

- Common themes include:
 - Delayed submission of enrollment to VA
 - Requiring a new or updated Certificate of Eligibility before submitting enrollment
 - Inability to reach School Certifying Official
- To help mediate this we encourage open and honest communication with your GI Bill beneficiaries
 - Provide them with information/resources as appropriate

Resources

- School Certifying Official Handbook
 - https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/docs/job_aids/sco_handbook.pdf
- School Certifying Official Hotline
 - Direct line of communication with VA for inquiries on student issues
 - For tuition payment issues where you are waiting for VA to release the funds, please contact us using the SCO Hotline rather than the student
 - Education Case Managers who have the expertise to answer and resolve most SCO questions work between 7:00am to 5:00pm (CST) Monday through Friday
 - **Contact your ELR for the number**
- School Training Resources on GI Bill Website
 - Includes VA ONCE training, online training, handbook, links to webinars, etc.
 - http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/school_training_resources.asp

Verification of Benefits

- WAVE & eBenefits have information that can serve in lieu of a Certificate of Eligibility (COE)
- WAVE
 - Term Dates, credits and status –directly from the 22-1999
 - Monthly Rate – Based on the training time
 - Benefit Program
 - Remaining Benefits – current as of the date printed
 - Delimiting Date
- eBenefits
 - Delimiting Date
 - Benefit Level
 - Entitlement – original, used, and remaining as of the last enrollment date
 - Enrollment Period – Taken directly from the 22-1999 submitted by the school
 - Hours
 - Type of Change – Changes to enrollment displayed here.

Verification of Benefits - WAVE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS



Search All VA Web Pages [Open Advanced Search](#)

Home Veteran Services Business About VA Media Room Locations Contact Us GI Bill Links

-  [WAVE Homepage](#)
-  [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
-  [Policies & Disclaimers](#)
-  [Logout](#)

Thank you for using WAVE to check your benefit status. Please note that it takes 3 to 5 days to process all on-line verifications through the WAVE system. The information provided below is the most current information we have on file in this system for payments made to you. If you do not see payment information for a certification you submitted using our system, please check back again later.

Payee Information:	
Full Name:	JOHN SMITH
Claim Number:	XXXXXXXXXX
Address:	XXXXXXXXXX
	XXXXXXXXXX
Zip Code:	XXXXXX

If your address is incorrect, please click [Change Address](#)

Your School Attendance:

The following information is taken directly from your VA record. The dates displayed may not represent dates your training started or stopped. For example, a date of October 1, generally represents a rate change. Since the table below provides your monthly rate, you may print this page for Financial Aid purposes in lieu of an award letter.

Start Date:	End Date:	Credits:	Status:	Monthly Rate:
08/24/2016	09/30/2016	21	Full Time	\$368.00
10/01/2016	12/15/2016	21	Full Time	\$369.00

Verification of Benefits - WAVE

Benefit Program:	
The program and chapter under which you are receiving benefits:	MGIB - Selected Reserve (Chapter 1606)

Remaining Benefits:

This is the amount of entitlement you have left as of 12/16/2016. It is expressed in the number of months and days you are eligible for full time benefits.

Months:	Days:
09	17

Delimiting Date:	
Benefits are not payable after:	12/14/2026

Your Last Verification Information:	
Last Check or Direct Deposit Amount:	\$184.50

Verification of Benefits - eBenefits

Education Enrollment Status

The information shown on this page is the same information contained in your Certificate of Eligibility (COE) letter. In lieu of a COE letter, you can print a copy of this screen for benefit and eligibility verification.

Entitlement Information

Personal Info		Enrollment Dates		Entitlement Duration	
Name	██████████	Post-9/11 GI Bill Eligibility Date	04/01/2002 (Benefits cannot be paid prior to this date)	Original	36 months and 0 days
Date of Birth	10/04/1950	Delimiting Date	11/02/2017 (Benefits cannot be paid after this date)	Used	3 months and 15 days
VA File Number	xxx-xx-██████	Benefit Level	50%	Remaining	14 months and 15 days
Regional Processing Office	Central Office Washington, DC				

Enrollment History

This feature is not available if you are currently taking flight training, on-the-job training, apprenticeship training, or correspondence training.

Enrollment Period: 08/31/2015 - 12/15/2015
PURDUE UNIVERSITY
Facility Code (11902614)

Residence Hours	Distance Hours	Type of Change	Change Effective Date
12.0	0.0		

Vets.gov Statement of Benefits

- Vets.gov has a new feature for beneficiaries who have previously used Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits
- Prior Post-9/11 beneficiaries can access a statement of benefits from Vets.gov that will have real-time information on their remaining benefits and delimiting date.

Vets.gov Statement of Benefits

- Schools are encouraged to accept a printout of the Statement of Benefits in lieu of a COE
- Information provided on Vets.gov is from the same system used by processors
- Statement of Benefits can be accessed
 - Go to vets.gov
 - At the top, select drop down “Manage Your Health & Benefits”
 - Select “Check Post-9/11 GI Bill Benefits”

Statement of Benefits Example



Post-9/11 GI Bill Benefit Information

Date generated: 07/17/2027*

Name: MARK WOOD
Date of birth: 10/04/1950
VA file number: 6000-4437
Regional processing office: Buffalo, NY

Your Benefits

Total months received: 3 months, 0 days
Months you've used: 3 months, 0 days
Months you have left to use: 0 months, 0 days

Your eligibility percentage is 100%.

[Find out how much money you can expect to get based on your eligibility percentage.](#)

Benefit End Date

You have until 11/02/2026 to use these benefits.

Reductions In Credit Hours

- Reductions in credit hours for students can result in debts and financial hardships
- **Please** be transparent with your students when they are considering dropping a course about potential consequences
- Student questions regarding how a debt may be established can be direct to the hotline

Dual Certification



Dual Certification

- Schools are obligated to submit student's enrollment "without delay"
 - In the SCO handbook (page 44) this is expressed as, "Schools are requested to submit certifications as early as possible in order to ensure that students receive their benefit payments in a timely manner, but must be submitted 30 days of the beginning of the term."
- An effective way to minimize student debts and adjustments that are confusing to students is for schools to submit an enrollment certification with \$0.00 (as if they were unknown), and then follow-up after the drop add period or term's conclusion with the actual enrollment information and tuition and fees. This best practice is called "dual certification."
- Dual certification is the process by which a school may certify an enrollment and fill out the term dates, credit hours, and other pertinent information (claimant's SSN, address, school facility code etc.).

Dual Certification

- SCOs are encouraged to leave the tuition and fee field blank with \$0 being reported. After the drop/add period or another specified time by the school, the SCO may send another enrollment certification (VA Form 22-1999) or an amended enrollment certification (AM 22-1999) with tuition and fees on the 2nd enrollment.
- **This process is highly encouraged** but is not mandatory
- The benefits of dual certifications are two-fold:
 - It allows the school to certify an enrollment in a timely manner while ensuring that the student receives housing allowance, books and supplies stipend, and;
 - It allows for a more precise report from the schools when they certify tuition and fees and ***prevents overpayments***.
- In addition, schools also get an accurate picture of how many credits a student pursued during a term, quarter, or semester and have the ability to track what an individual student owes.

Questions & Answers



Questions and Answers – WAVE

Question #1: What credentials do you need to log into and/or use WAVE?

Answer #1: Individuals who are in receipt of Chapter 30, 1606, or 1607 benefits within the last 12 month are eligible to use WAVE.

Question #2: Does WAVE provide info for chapter 33 and 35?

Answer # 2: No, WAVE is only for those who must verify their attendance each month like Chapter 30, 1606, and 1607.

Question #3: How do we get access to WAVE?

Answer #3: SCOs cannot access WAVE. They can request that the student print their Benefits Status page and bring it to them in lieu of a COE.

Questions and Answers – WAVE

Question #4: Is WAVE available for SCO's of apprenticeship schools?

Answer #4: No, WAVE is only available for IHL or NCD schools.

Question #5: Can SCOs log into Vets.gov and print out a student's Statement of Benefits?

Answer # 5: No, only the student has access to their record.

Questions and Answers – Dual Certifications

Question #6: When a student requests certification after the refund period is dual enrollment still preferable?

Answer #6: YES

Question #7: What should a student do, if SCO delays sending second enrollment cert. after drop/add? Students using financial aid/loans are being affected by this.

Answer # 7: If the first enrollment was sent with \$0 tuition and fees, the student would be receiving housing and books. The second enrollment is specific for the school to report tuition and fees. If the student is concerned, they ask that the SCO not use dual certification in the future.

Contact Us

Website: www.benefits.va.gov/gibill

Facebook: www.facebook.com/gibilleducation

GI Bill Hotline: 1-888-442-4551

