

Apply for Education Benefits



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Choose VA

This guide will help you apply for VA Education Benefits, which include the Post-9/11 GI Bill, the Montgomery GI Bill, other educational assistance programs, on-the-job training, and career counseling.

A checklist to help you apply for VA Education Benefits:

1

RESEARCH

- Decide which type of education benefit you want to use
- Learn about schools that offer VA-approved programs by using the GI Bill Comparison Tool (<https://www.va.gov/gi-bill-comparison-tool>) to:
 - Determine your out-of-pocket costs for each school
 - Compare school statistics (graduation and loan repayment rates)

HOW DO I DECIDE WHAT IS BEST FOR ME?

VA provides personalized career planning and guidance to help you decide how best to use your education benefits to support your career goals.

Visit <https://www.va.gov/careers-employment/education-and-career-counseling>

2

PREPARATION

- Apply to the program that is best for you
- Collect the following information
 - **Discharge papers (DD214 member-4** or equivalent)
 - **Orders**, if activated from the Guard or the Reserves

WHERE CAN I FIND MY DISCHARGE PAPERS?

Visit <https://www.va.gov/records/get-military-service-records> to request a copy of your DD214 records.

3

APPLICATION

- Apply by submitting all documents in one of these ways:
- Submit your application **online** by visiting <https://www.va.gov/education/how-to-apply>
 - Complete an application **in-person** at a VA Regional Office
 - Work with your school's VA certifying official (this person is usually in the Registrar or Financial Aid office **at the school of your choice**)

4

DECISION

- For further information about your benefit, **call** the Education Call Center 888-442-4551

Information you'll need to know to apply for education benefits:

Am I eligible for VA education benefits?

Your eligibility depends on a number of factors, including length and era of service, type of discharge, and time since separation. It's difficult to summarize eligibility, because requirements are different for each type of GI Bill. Refer to the table below and **visit** <https://www.va.gov/education/about-gi-bill-benefits> to learn more about eligibility.

Note: Work with VA to find out if you are eligible for education benefits as soon as possible. Not all Veterans are eligible.

Do I have to use education benefits for college?

You can use the GI Bill for more than just academic programs, such as advanced training and certifications in your area of expertise. Examples include:

- Work Study
- On-the-Job Training and Apprenticeships
- Co-op Training
- Non-College Degree Programs
- Entrepreneurship Training
- Flight Training
- National Tests (SAT, GRE)
- Licensing and Certifications

What are the different types of education benefits?

The GI Bill is the umbrella term for many VA Educational Benefits programs. Review the chart below to determine which GI Bill benefit you should apply for. This is only a basic summary—these are NOT the only eligibility criteria.

| BENEFIT TYPE | BASIC ELIGIBILITY | WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE? |
|--|---|---|
| Post-9/11 GI Bill | Qualifying active service on or after 9/11/2001 | Payment for 40%-100% of tuition; stipend for housing and books |
| Montgomery GI Bill—Active Duty | Qualifying active service, high school diploma or GED | Monthly stipend for tuition and fees (refer to rates table online)* |
| Montgomery GI Bill—Selected Reserve | Six-year commitment to Selected Reserve (usable only while serving) | Monthly stipend for tuition and fees (refer to rates table online)* |
| Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance | Spouse or dependent of a qualifying Veteran | Monthly stipend for tuition and fees (refer to rates table online)* |

*To find the rates for monthly stipends, **visit** <https://www.va.gov/education/benefit-rates>

Where is my nearest VA Regional Office?

- To locate **your nearest VA Facility**, visit <https://www.va.gov/find-locations>

OTHER QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE:

What is the Yellow Ribbon Program?

The Yellow Ribbon Program helps cover costs that are not covered by the Post-9/11 GI Bill, such as higher tuition at private colleges or those paying out-of-state tuition.

- **Visit** <https://www.va.gov/education/about-gi-bill-benefits/post-9-11/yellow-ribbon-program> to learn more

How does my disability rating affect my benefits?

Additional benefits, including personalized job training and academic counseling, may be available for Veterans with disability ratings of at least 10%. These programs are separate from the GI Bill and must be applied for separately.

- **Visit** <https://www.va.gov/careers-employment/education-and-career-counseling> to learn more

Can I transfer my Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits to my family?

Service members may be eligible to transfer up to 36 months of benefits to eligible dependents. This is a military retention benefit administered individually by each military service. For Veterans who have transferred entitlement prior to separating from service, VA provides the benefits to the eligible dependents.

- **Visit** <https://www.va.gov/education/transfer-post-9-11-gi-bill-benefits> to learn more

Are survivors and dependents eligible for benefits?

Dependents or survivors of a Veteran may be eligible for educational assistance through a GI Bill program if one of the following applies to the Veteran:

- Died while on active duty, or
 - Is a prisoner of war or missing in action, or
 - Died or is permanently and totally disabled due to a service-connected disability, or
 - Is hospitalized or receiving outpatient treatment for a service-connected permanent and total disability and is likely to be discharged for that disability
- **Visit** <https://www.va.gov/education/survivor-dependent-benefits> to learn more