

VA**U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs**
Veterans Benefits Administration

Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance

What Is Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance?

Survivors' and Dependents' Education Assistance (DEA) is an education benefit for eligible spouses and children of certain Veterans.

How Much Entitlement Will I Receive?

If your first enrollment using DEA in a education or training program is after August 1, 2018, you will receive 36 months of entitlement.

If you started using DEA before August 1, 2018, you qualify for a maximum of 45 months of entitlement.

Eligible people can receive full-time or equivalent benefits for:

- College, business, technical or vocational courses
- High school diploma or GED
- Independent study or distance learning courses
- Correspondence courses (spouses only)
- Apprenticeships or on-the-job training
- National exams (e.g., SAT, LSAT, GRE, GMAT)
- Remedial, deficiency, and refresher training (in some cases)
- The costs for necessary licenses and certifications
- Preparatory courses designed to prepare for licensure or certification

For more information on DEA and to apply, please visit:

<https://www.va.gov/education/survivor-dependent-benefits/dependents-education-assistance/>.

To search for GI Bill approved schools, please visit: <https://www.va.gov/education/gi-bill-comparison-tool/>.

Who Is Eligible?

To be eligible for DEA, you must be the son, daughter, or spouse of:

- A Veteran who died or is permanently and totally disabled because of a service-connected disability
- A Veteran who died from any cause while the service-connected disability was in existence
- A Service member missing in action or captured in the line of duty by a hostile force
- A Service member forcibly detained or interned in the line of duty by a foreign government or power
- A Service member hospitalized or receiving outpatient care for a VA-determined service-connected permanent and total disability and is likely to be discharged for that disability

When Can This Benefit Be Used?

Generally, spouses and surviving spouses have 10 years to use this benefit. The 10 years begins on the date the VA establishes DEA eligibility or from the Veteran's date of death. Spouses and surviving spouses remain eligible for 20 years if VA rates the Veteran permanently and totally disabled with an effective date of three years from discharge. Surviving spouses of Service members who died while on active duty also have 20 years from the date of the Servicemember's death to use the benefit.

Children can use the benefit between the ages of 18 and 26.

Note: These time limits can be extended under certain circumstances. Call 888-442-4551 for details.

How Much Does VA Pay?

The amount VA pays is based on the type of training program. It's also based on whether the individual attends part-time or full-time. Benefits are paid monthly and in arrears or at the end of the course of study. If attendance is less than a month or less than full-time, payments will be reduced. Find current payment rates on our website.

How Can You Apply?

Apply online and find more information at <https://www.va.gov/education/survivor-dependent-benefits/dependents-education-assistance/>.