



Department of
Veterans Affairs

VEAP AND SECTION 903

SUMMARY OF

EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS UNDER

(THE POST-VIETNAM ERA VETERANS'
EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
and THE EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE
PILOT PROGRAM)

Chapter 32 of Title 38 U. S. CODE and
Section 903 of Public Law 96-342)

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Veterans Benefits
Administration
Washington DC 20420

INTRODUCTION

The Post-Vietnam Veterans' Educational Assistance Program, or VEAP (chapter 32 of title 38, U. S. Code) and the Educational Assistance Pilot Program (Section 903 of Public Law 96-342) were enacted by Congress to attract high quality men and women to the all-voluntary Armed Forces.

VEAP provides education and training opportunities to eligible persons who contributed to the program while on active duty. Certain persons were selected from the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps to participate in section 903. DoD (Department of Defense) paid the contributions for those individuals. Certain section 903 participants could transfer their benefits to a spouse or child.

We hope this pamphlet is helpful. It provides a general description of the education benefits. We include information on how you receive payments, and suggestions on where to go for help or more information.

Caution: Don't rely on this pamphlet to determine if you're eligible for education benefits. To receive a formal decision from VA, you must file a claim for benefits. See *How Do You Apply for Benefits?*

Part 1 ELIGIBILITY

ARE YOU ELIGIBLE?

If You're Separated From Active Duty

If you're separated from active duty, you may be eligible for VEAP or section 903 if:

- **Date of entry.** *VEAP.* You entered active duty after December 31, 1976 and before July 1, 1985.

Section 903. You enlisted on active duty or contracted under a delayed enlistment agreement after November 30, 1980, and before October 1, 1981. If you contracted under a delayed enlistment agreement, you must have entered active duty before October 1, 1982.

- **Not eligible for Vietnam Era GI Bill.** You can't be eligible for VEAP or section 903 if you were

eligible for the Vietnam Era GI Bill (chapter 34), unless

- You were only eligible for the Vietnam Era GI Bill because of your active duty for training for at least 181 consecutive days. One day must have been before January 1, 1977.
 - You served on active duty for at least one year after December 31, 1976.
 - You never received Vietnam Era GI Bill benefits.
 - You elected VEAP or section 903.
- **Contributions.** You contributed money to VEAP (or DOD contributed money for you for section 903) while on active duty, and you have money available for benefits. You must have enrolled and original contributions must have been made before April 1, 1987.
 - **Length of active duty.** The length of active duty you are required to serve depends on the date you enlisted or entered active duty. (For periods of service that don't count as active duty for eligibility, see **Active Duty that Doesn't Establish Eligibility.**)
 - If you enlisted for the first time before September 7, 1980, and entered active duty before October 16, 1981, or entered active duty as an officer before October 16, 1981, you must have served a continuous period of 181 days or more. You may be eligible if you were discharged from a shorter period of active duty for a service-connected disability.
 - If you enlisted for the first time after September 7, 1980, or entered active duty as an officer or enlistee after October 16, 1981, you must have completed 24 continuous months of active duty, unless you meet one of these exceptions:
 - ◇ Your discharge was for early-out, hardship, or service-connected disability.
 - ◇ Your service department called or ordered you to a shorter period of active duty that you completed.
 - ◇ VA has determined that you have a service-connected disability at a percentage that qualifies you to receive VA disability compensation.

- ◇ You entered on active duty after October 16, 1981, and had served a period of at least 24 continuous months of active duty before that date, or had received an “early out” discharge before that date.

- **Character of discharge.** Your discharge or release from active duty for the period your eligibility is based on was under conditions other than dishonorable.

If You're On Active Duty

You may be eligible for education benefits under VEAP or Section 903 while still on active duty if

- **Date of entry.** *VEAP.* You entered active duty for the first time after December 31, 1976, and before July 1, 1985.

Section 903. You enlisted on active duty or contracted under a delayed enlistment agreement after November 30, 1980, and before October 1, 1981. If you contracted under a delayed enlistment agreement, you must have entered active duty before October 1, 1982.

- **Contributions.** You enrolled in and contributed to VEAP (or had money contributed for you by DoD for section 903) before April 1, 1987, and have at least three months of contributions available. For a high school or pre-high school program you need at least one month of contributions available.
- **Length of active duty.** The length of active duty you're required to serve depends on the date you enlisted or entered active duty and the type of training. (For periods of service that don't count as active duty for eligibility, see **Active Duty that Doesn't Establish Eligibility.**)
 - If you're training in a pre-high school or high school program, and you enlisted for the first time before September 7, 1980, you must have completed a continuous period of 181 days after December 31, 1976.
 - For all other types of training, if you enlisted for the first time before September 7, 1980, you must have completed one of the following periods, whichever is less:

- ◇ a continuous period of 181 days after December 31, 1976, or
 - ◇ your first active duty commitment which began after December 31, 1976, or
 - ◇ a six-year period of active duty that began after December 31, 1976.
- For all types of training, if you enlisted for the first time after September 7, 1980, you must have completed 24 months of your first period of active duty.

OTHER ISSUES

Active Duty that Doesn't Establish Eligibility.

The following types of active duty don't count in establishing eligibility for VEAP or section 903:

- Time assigned full time by the military to a civilian institution for the same course provided to civilians
- Time served as a cadet or midshipman at a service academy, or
- Time spent on active duty for training in the National Guard or Reserve.

Montgomery GI Bill Active Duty election. If you elected MGIB – AD (chapter 30 of title 38, US Code), you're no longer eligible for VEAP or section 903. (The last election deadline was October 31, 2001.)

However, because you established eligibility to benefits under both programs, you will be entitled to a maximum of 48 months of benefits combined (but not more than 36 months under each program.)

HOW LONG ARE YOU ELIGIBLE?

Benefits end 10 years from the date of your last discharge or release from active duty, or when you use your total benefits available, whichever comes first. (See **How Many Months of Benefits Can You Get?**)

We can extend your 10-year period by the amount of time you were prevented from training during that period because of a disability or because you were held by a foreign government or power.

We can also extend your 10-year period if you reentered active duty for 90 days or more after becoming eligible. The extension ends 10 years from the date of separation from the later period. Periods of active duty of less than 90 days can

qualify you for extensions only if you were separated for

- A service-connected disability
- A medical condition existing before active duty
- Hardship, or
- A reduction in force.

If your discharge is upgraded by the military, the 10-year period begins on the date of the upgrade.

CAN YOU BE ELIGIBLE FOR MORE THAN ONE VA EDUCATION BENEFIT?

You can be eligible for more than one education benefit. If you are, you must elect which benefit to receive. You can't receive payment for more than one benefit at a time. The benefits are:

- Montgomery GI Bill – Active Duty Educational Assistance Program (MGIB–AD)
- Montgomery GI Bill-Selected Reserve Educational Assistance Program (MGIB–SR)
- Training and Rehabilitation for Veterans With Service-Connected Disabilities, (Vocational Rehabilitation)
- Post-Vietnam Era Veterans' Educational Assistance Program (VEAP)
- Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance (DEA)
- Educational Assistance Test Program (Section 903 of Public Law 96-342)
- Educational Assistance Pilot Program (Section 901 of Public Law 96-342), and
- The Omnibus Diplomatic Security and Antiterrorism Act of 1986.

IMPORTANT: If you're eligible for more than one benefit, we strongly suggest that you discuss your education plans with us. See **How Do You Contact VA?** We can help you explore the options open to you and help plan your program for maximum use of your benefits.

You may be eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (chapter 31 of title 38, U.S. Code) benefits if you have a service-connected disability or disabilities rated by VA at 10% or more.

For more information on Vocational Rehabilitation, go to <http://www.va.gov/>. Click on *Vocational Rehab and Employment Services*.

For more information on the other benefits above, see <http://www.gibill.va.gov/>. Click on *Education Benefits* on the left of the page, then click on *GI Bill*

Benefits. You can choose *General Information* or *Detailed Information*.

PART 2

TRAINING

WHAT TRAINING MAY YOU TAKE?

You may receive benefits for a wide variety of training, including:

- An undergraduate or graduate degree at a college or university, including cooperative training programs and accredited independent study programs (which are often offered through distance learning).
- A certificate or diploma from a business, technical, or vocational school.
- An apprenticeship or OJT program offered by a company or union. Apprenticeships or OJT programs may offer an alternative to college or vocational school for helping you gain experience in the field you choose.
- A correspondence course.
- Flight training. You must have a private pilot certificate and meet the medical requirements for the desired certificate before beginning training.
- Programs overseas that lead to a college degree.

Caution: A State agency or VA must approve each program offered by a school or company.

Can You Receive Benefits for Remedial, Deficiency, or Refresher Training?

You may receive benefits for remedial or deficiency courses if you need them to assist you in overcoming a weakness in a particular area of study. The courses must be necessary for your program of education.

Refresher training is for technological advances that occurred in a field of employment. The advance must have occurred while you were on active duty or after your separation.

We must charge entitlement for these courses.

Can You Receive Benefits For A Test For A License Or Certification?

You may receive reimbursement, up to \$2,000 per test, for a test you took on or after March 1, 2001 to

obtain a license or certification. You can't receive benefits for other fees relating to a license or certification. (However, many courses leading to a license or certification are also approved for benefits.)

You may take as many tests as you need. You don't have to pass the test to receive benefits. You can receive benefits to retake a test you failed, and to renew or update your license or certificate.

For more information, go to www.gibill.va.gov, click on *Education Benefit Programs*, then on the *Licensing and Certification Tests* link, or contact us. See **How Do You Contact VA?**

Can You Receive Tutorial Assistance?

You may receive a special allowance for individual tutoring if you train in school at one-half time or more. To qualify, you must have a deficiency in a subject, making the tutoring necessary. The school must certify the tutor's qualifications and the hours of tutoring.

If eligible, you may receive a maximum monthly payment of \$100. The maximum total benefit is \$1,200.

We won't charge you entitlement for the first \$600 of tutorial assistance. For payments beyond \$600, we figure your entitlement charge by dividing the amount we paid beyond \$600 by your full-time rate for schooling.

To apply, complete VA Form 22-1990t, Application and Enrollment Certification for Individualized Tutorial Assistance. See **How Can You Get Other VA Forms?** The school's certifying official must complete part of the form.

Can You Receive Work-Study Benefits?

You may be eligible for an additional allowance under a work-study program.

Under a work-study program, you may do the following work:

- Outreach work under the supervision of a VA or State Approving Agency employee
- VA paperwork at schools, training facilities or VA facilities
- Help providing care to veterans at VA medical centers or state veterans homes

- Administrative work at national or state veterans cemeteries

To receive work-study benefits, you must train at the three-quarter or full-time rate. The maximum number of hours you may work is 25 times the number of weeks in your enrollment period. Payments will be at the Federal or State minimum wage, whichever is greater.

To apply, complete VA Form 22-8691, **Application for Work-Study Allowance**. See **How Can You Get Other VA Forms?** If you're applying for work-study in Florida, send the application to the VA Regional Office, 9500 Bay Pines Blvd, St. Petersburg, FL 33731. For any other state, send it to the VA Regional Processing Office that handles your VEAP claim. (See **Where To Send Your Application**.)

What Are Restrictions on Training?

You may not receive benefits for the following courses:

- **Restrictions on Specific courses**
 - Bartending
 - Non-accredited independent study courses
 - Any course given by radio
 - Personality development courses, or self-improvement courses such as reading, speaking, woodworking, basic seamanship, and English as a second language
 - Any course that is avocational (not related to employment) or recreational in character
 - Farm cooperative courses
 - Audited courses
- **General Restrictions**
 - Courses that don't lead to an educational, professional, or vocational objective
 - Courses you've taken before and successfully completed
 - Courses you take on active duty through Tuition Assistance or other Armed Forces program
 - Courses you take as a Federal government employee under the Government Employees' Training Act

- A program at a proprietary school if you're an owner or official of the school

Other Restrictions. We must reduce your benefits if you're in a Federal, State, or local prison after being convicted of a felony.

If you seek a college degree, the school must admit you to a degree program by the start of your third term.

CAN YOU RECEIVE COUNSELING?

Counseling is available only inside the states, territories and possessions of the United States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. Counseling is available at your request if you meet **one** of the following requirements:

- You're eligible for VA education assistance, or
- You're on active duty, within 180 days of discharge, or
- You're separated from active duty, with a discharge that isn't dishonorable, and within one year from the date of your discharge.

If you meet one of these qualifications, we'll provide services to help you understand your educational and vocational strengths and weaknesses. We can also help you plan your education or employment goals and job search. See **How Do You Contact VA?** for more information or to schedule a counseling appointment.

CAN YOU CHANGE PROGRAMS?

You can receive benefits for one change of program without VA approval for the change if your attendance, conduct, and progress in the last program were satisfactory.

We may approve additional changes if the proposed programs are suitable to your abilities, aptitudes, and interests. We won't charge a change of program when you enroll in a new program if you successfully completed your last program.

MUST YOU MAINTAIN SATISFACTORY ATTENDANCE, CONDUCT, AND PROGRESS?

Once you start receiving benefits, you must maintain satisfactory attendance, conduct, and progress. If you don't meet your school's standards, the certifying official must notify us. We must stop your benefits if the school reports unsatisfactory attendance, conduct, or progress.

We may resume benefits if you reenter the same program at the same school, and your school approves your reentry and certifies it to VA.

If you don't reenter the same program at the same school, we may resume benefits if the cause of your unsatisfactory attendance, conduct, or progress has been removed. We also must find that the program you intend to take is suitable to your abilities, aptitudes, and interests.

PART 3

RECEIVING PAYMENTS

HOW MUCH EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE WILL YOU RECEIVE?

How much educational assistance you'll receive depends on total contributions (yours, the Government's, and DoD's), your type of training, and (for training in college or vocational school) your training time (number of credit hours).

Total Contributions

The total amount of your contributions can't exceed \$2,700. To determine total contributions, add

Total contributions you made

+Matching funds equal to two times your contributions (Government contributions)

+Any additional contributions or "kickers" by DOD
= Your total benefits available

Monthly Rate For Each Type of Training

College or Vocational/Technical School: To find your monthly rate, divide the total contributions by the number of months you contributed. If you contributed for more than 36 months, divide by 36. This is your full-time rate for schooling.

(Lump-sum contributions are converted into equivalent numbers of months—one month for every amount you designated. The amount you designated must be between \$25-\$100 and divisible by 5).

Example: If you contributed \$100 a month for 27 months, compute your total benefits as follows:

\$2,700—Your contributions
+5,400—Matching funds (two times your contribution)
+ 0 —DOD Contributions ("kicker")
\$8,100-- TOTAL BENEFITS

Your full-time monthly rate is:
 $\frac{\$8100 \text{— Total Benefits}}{27 \text{— Months contributed}} = \$300 \text{ FULL-TIME MONTHLY RATE}$

You would receive 27 payments of \$300 per month for full-time schooling. This is the maximum monthly full-time rate payable for individuals who received no "kickers." This will total \$8,100 in educational benefits.

If you attend less than full-time, you would receive a lesser amount, but a greater number of payments.

For example, if you attended three-quarter time, you could receive 36 payments at \$225 per month. At one-half time attendance, you could receive 54 payments at \$150 per month. At one-quarter time attendance, you could receive 108 payments at \$75.00 per month.

Correspondence Training: You can be reimbursed for the entire established charges you pay for a correspondence course up to the amount of your total benefits. As shown above, your total benefits are your contributions plus matching funds plus any additional DoD contributions.

Flight Training: If you take flight training, you can receive 60% of the approved charges for the course, including solo hours, up to the amount of your total benefits.

Apprenticeship Or Job Training: To determine your benefits for an apprenticeship or on-the-job training, first find your full-time school rate (See **College or Vocational/Technical School** above.) The monthly apprenticeship or job training rate is:

- 75% of the full-time school rate for the first six months of training;
- 55% of the full-time school rate for the second six months of training; and
- 35% of the full-time school rate for the rest of your training.

For example, if your full-time school rate is \$225.00 a month, you may receive \$168.75 a month for the first six months of an apprenticeship or job training, \$123.75 a month for the second six months, and \$78.75 a month thereafter.

Your monthly payment is reduced if you work less than 120 hours a month.

If you work less than 120 hours a month, your benefit will be reduced proportionately. For instance, if you work 60 hours during one month of your first six months, your rate for that month will be \$84.38.

COOPERATIVE TRAINING: Cooperative training must be pursued full-time. You receive payment at the monthly full-time school rate. See **College or Vocational/Technical School** above.

YOUR ENTITLEMENT: HOW MANY MONTHS OF BENEFITS CAN YOU RECEIVE?

You may be entitled to receive up to 36 months of education benefits.

Usually, the number of monthly payments for full-time training will be the same as the number of months contributed to VEAP. You can earn a maximum of 36 months under this program.

(Lump-sum contributions are converted into equivalent numbers of months—one month for every amount you designated. The amount you designate must be between \$25-\$100 and divisible by 5.).

You may receive a maximum of 48 months of benefits under more than one VA education program. For example, if you used 36 months of benefits under VEAP, and became eligible for MGIB – AD, you could have a maximum of 12 months of entitlement under MGIB – AD.

HOW DO WE CHARGE ENTITLEMENT?

We use the term *entitlement* to mean the number of months of benefits you may receive.

For training in college or vocational/business schools, you're charged one full day of entitlement for each day of full-time benefits paid.

For correspondence and flight training and a test for a license or certification, you use one month of entitlement each time VA pays the equivalent of one month of full-time benefits.

For example, if your full-time rate is \$300, and you receive \$900 for a correspondence course, the entitlement charge is three months. If your full-time rate is \$250, and you receive \$3,000 for flight training, the entitlement charge is 12 months.

For apprenticeship and job-training programs, the entitlement charge changes every six months. During the first six months, the charge is 75% of full-time. For the second six months, the charge is 55% of full-time. For the rest of the program, the charge is 35% of full-time.

HOW DO YOU APPLY FOR BENEFITS?

How you apply for benefits depends on whether or not you've decided on the program you want to take.

If you've decided on the program you want to take, follow these steps to apply for benefits:

FIRST, find out whether the program you want to take is approved for VA benefits—check with the school's Financial Aid Office or training facility employment office, or contact VA (see **How Do You Contact VA?**).

If the facility hasn't requested approval before, you can ask officials to contact the state Veterans Affairs Office, or VA, to request approval. (Most programs are approved for VA benefits by State Approving Agencies. VA approves some programs. The state Veterans Affairs Office can refer you to the office that acts as an SAA.)

If the program has been approved for VA benefits, check in with the school or training facility official who certifies enrollments for VA benefits.

At a school, this official may be in one of the following offices: Financial Aid, Veterans Affairs, Registrar, Admissions, Counseling, or others. For on-the-job training or an apprenticeship, the official may be in the Training, Finance, Personnel, or other office.

Note: The certifying official isn't a VA employee.

SECOND, complete the application (VA Form 22-1990) and submit it to the appropriate VA regional office. See **How Do You Get and Submit the Application for Benefits?**

THIRD, ask the school or training official to certify your enrollment to VA.

VA will review your application and let you know if we need anything else.

If you haven't decided on the program you want to take, or simply want a determination of your eligibility for MGIB, just submit the application. See **How Do You Get and Submit the Application for Benefits?** If you're eligible, you'll receive a Certificate of Eligibility showing how long you're eligible and how many months of benefits you can receive.

How Do You Get and Submit the Application for Benefits?

You can submit the application (VA Form 22-1990) on-line, or submit a printed copy.

On-line. Just go to www.gibill.va.gov and click on *Education Benefits* on the left of the page, then click on *How to Apply for Benefits*. When you've completed the form, click on the *Submit* button and submit it electronically to VA. You'll still need to send us the printed signature page, as we must have your original signature.

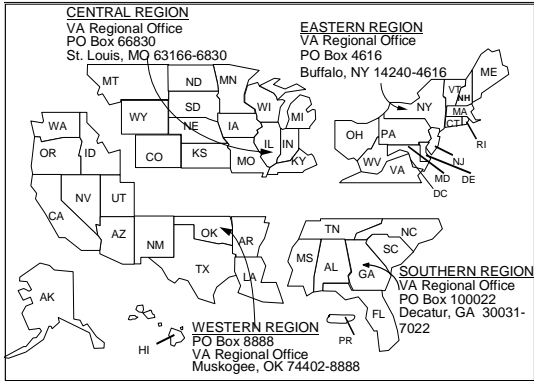
If you know the program you want to take, you should also print the form after completing it on-line and take a copy to the school or training official. The official will then send your enrollment certification to VA.

Printed form. If you prefer, you can print the application form and mail it to VA. You can get the printed form in several other ways:

- Go to <http://www.gibill.va.gov/>. Click on *Education Benefits* on the left of the page, then click on *Education Forms* and download the form.
- Send us an e-mail requesting the form. Just go to <http://www.gibill.va.gov/> and click on *Ask a Question & Find an Answer*.
- Call **1-888-GIBILL-1 (1-888-442-4551)** and request the form. (You may have difficulty getting through quickly at the toll-free number, especially when school enrollments are heavy. You may have more success by going to the Internet site.) If your hearing is impaired, call **1-800-829-4833**.
- You may also be able to pick up the application from the school or training facility you're attending.

Where Should You Send Your Application?

One of the following VA regional offices has jurisdiction over your claim. Check the map below to see which office has jurisdiction over the State where you will train.



Eastern Region

VA Regional Office Connecticut Massachusetts Rhode Island
 PO Box 4616 Delaware New Hampshire Vermont
 Buffalo, NY District of New Jersey Virginia
 14240-4616 Columbia New York West Virginia
 Maine Ohio
 Maryland Pennsylvania

Southern Region

VA Regional Office Alabama Mississippi
 PO Box 100022 Florida North Carolina
 Decatur, GA Georgia South Carolina
 30031-7022

Central Region

VA Regional Office Colorado Kentucky Nebraska
 PO Box 66830 Illinois Michigan North Dakota
 St. Louis, MO Indiana Minnesota South Dakota
 63166-6830 Iowa Missouri Tennessee
 Kansas Montana Wisconsin
 Wyoming

Western Region

VA Regional Office Alaska New Mexico Washington
 PO Box 8888 Arizona Nevada
 Muskogee, OK Arkansas Oklahoma
 74402-8888 California Oregon
 Hawaii Texas
 Idaho Utah
 Louisiana

Training Outside the 50 States and the District of Columbia

If you're training outside the 50 States and the District of Columbia, check the list below for the office that will handle your claim. See the list above for the mailing address.

Southern Region (Atlanta, GA)

Puerto Rico U. S. Virgin Islands

Western Region (Muskogee, OK)

American Samoa Midway
Federated States of Republic of the
the Marshall Islands Philippines
Guam Republic of Palau
Republic of Micronesia Wake Island

Eastern Region (Buffalo, NY)

Any other country or area outside the 50 States and the District of Columbia

How Can You Get Other VA Forms?

You can download other VA forms we've mentioned in this pamphlet from our Internet site, **<http://www.gibill.va.gov/>**. Click on Education Benefits on the left of the page, then click on *Education Forms*.

You can also call 1-888-GIBILL-1 (1-888-442-4551), and request a form. If your hearing is impaired, call 1-800-829-4833.

You may be able to pick up a form at the nearest VA regional office. (For the addresses of VA regional offices, go to <http://www.va.gov/>. At the top of the page, click on *Facilities Locator*.

HOW DO YOU RECEIVE MONTHLY PAYMENTS?

After you've been approved for payments, receiving payments is basically a two-step process. You, not the school or training facility, will receive the payment (except for advance payments. See **Should You Get an Advance Payment?**

Note: The law prohibits schools from cashing VA checks under a power of attorney agreement.

CERTIFYING YOUR ENROLLMENT

The first step: the school or training program official submits certification of your enrollment in an approved program to the appropriate VA regional office.

VERIFYING YOUR CONTINUED ENROLLMENT

The second step involves verifying your continued enrollment. The following explains how your enrollment is verified for the type of training you're taking.

Degree Program—The School Verifies Your Continued Enrollment

If you're in a degree program at a college or university, the school periodically verifies to VA your continued enrollment. You'll receive payment after the first of each month for your training during the preceding month.

Other Types of Training—You Verify Your Continued Enrollment

For the types of training below, you must verify your continued enrollment. ***Please note that you won't receive payment until VA receives your verification.***

Training in Technical/Vocational School. You'll receive a VA Form 22-8979, Student Verification of Enrollment, each month. You must use the form to verify your continued enrollment for the previous month. Complete the form and return it to us. (See the map under **Where Do You Send Your Application?**) We'll release a payment, if appropriate.

On-the-Job Training Program (OJT) or Apprenticeship. You'll receive a form to report the hours you worked each month. Sign the form and give it to the certifying official for the company or union. The certifying official must complete the form and send it to the appropriate VA regional office. We'll release a payment, if appropriate.

Correspondence Course. You'll receive a form at the end of each quarter, i.e., at the end of March, June, September, and December. Show the number of lessons you completed that quarter, and send the form to the school.

The school will certify the number of lessons they serviced during the quarter, and send the form to the appropriate VA regional office. We'll release a payment, if appropriate. Payments are based on the number of lessons the school serviced.

Flight Training. The flight school certifies the number of hours, the hourly rate, and the total

charges for flight training received during the month. You must review and sign the certification form and send it to the appropriate VA regional office. We'll release a payment, if appropriate.

Verifying a Test for a License or Certification

Send VA a copy of your test results with a note or a VA Form 21-4138, Statement in Support of Claim, stating that you're requesting reimbursement.

Include

- name of the test you took
- name and address of the organization issuing the license or certificate (not necessarily the organization that administered the test)
- the date you took the test
- cost of the test
- the following statement: "I authorize release of my test information to VA."

We'll release a payment, if appropriate.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU DON'T RECEIVE A PAYMENT OR VERIFICATION FORM?

If you're taking courses leading to a degree at a college or university, you should receive your payment for each month by the fifth of the next month. If you don't, immediately **call 1-888-GIBILL-1 (1-888-442-4551)**. If your hearing is impaired, call **1-800-829-4833**.

If you're taking courses leading to a certificate at a technical or vocational school, you should receive your monthly verification form by the fifth of the next month. If you don't, immediately call the number above.

For any type of training, if you haven't received a payment at the end of two weeks after you verify your attendance, immediately call the number above.

Whenever you contact VA, have your VA file number (usually your Social Security number) readily available.

SHOULD YOU GET AN ADVANCE PAYMENT?

You can get an advance payment for programs for school programs to meet tuition expenses up front.

Advance payment isn't available for on-the-job training or apprenticeships, correspondence courses, flight training, or a test for a license or certification.

Caution: After receiving the advance payment, which covers the first month or partial month of your enrollment and the following month, you won't receive another payment until at least two months later.

Example: You request an advance payment for enrollment from September 15-December 20. You receive the advanced payment September 15. The payment will cover September 15-October 31. Your next payment, covering the month of November, will not be received until the first week of December.

HOW CAN YOU GET AN ADVANCE PAYMENT?

You can get an advance payment if

- You train at half-time or more;
- The school agrees to handle advance payments;
- You request an advance payment in writing; and
- VA receives your enrollment certification at least 30 days before classes start.

We'll mail an advance payment check to the school, made out to you, for delivery to you at registration. We can't issue the check more than 30 days before classes start.

Your signed request for an advance payment must be included with your enrollment certification that the school submits.

If you reduce your enrollment or withdraw from all courses during the period covered by an advance payment, you'll have an overpayment that VA is required to collect from you if you cash the check. If you think the amount of a VA check is incorrect, contact us before cashing the check.

WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU CHANGE YOUR ENROLLMENT?

The following applies only to training in schools (colleges or vocational, business, or technical schools). Follow these steps if you withdraw from one or more of your courses or if you receive a grade that doesn't count toward graduation.

If You Withdraw

If you withdraw from one or more of your courses, you should always notify the VA as soon as possible. If you withdraw after the end of the school's drop period, you'll need to let us know the reasons for the change. Generally, we must reduce or stop your benefits from the beginning date of the term.

Unless you can show that the change was due to mitigating circumstances, you may have to repay all benefits for the course or courses. "Mitigating circumstances" are unavoidable and unexpected events that directly interfere with your pursuit of a course and are beyond your control.

If you can show mitigating circumstances, we can pay benefits up to the last date of your attendance.

Examples of reasons we may accept are extended illness and unscheduled changes in your employment. Examples of reasons we may not accept are withdrawal to avoid a failing grade or dislike of the instructor.

We may ask you to furnish evidence to support your reasons for a change. If a serious illness or injury caused the change, obtain a statement from your doctor. If a change in employment caused the change in enrollment, obtain a statement from your employer.

The first time you withdraw from up to six credit hours, we'll "excuse" the withdrawal and pay benefits for the period you attended. You won't have to explain the reasons for your withdrawal. Remember, this only applies to your first withdrawal.

If you receive a grade that doesn't count

If you receive a grade that doesn't count toward graduation, you may have to repay all benefits for the course or courses. (We refer to these grades as "non-punitive.")

Check your school's grading policy with the registrar or the office handling VA paperwork. A common example is a "W" grade for withdrawing.

If you receive a non-punitive grade, the school will notify us. We may reduce or stop benefits. You may not have to repay the benefits if you can show that the grades were due to mitigating circumstances. (If you receive an "I" for "Incomplete," we won't require your reasons for one

year from the date you received the grade, or by the end of the time period the school allows you to make up the grade, whichever comes first.)

WHAT IF YOU DON'T WANT TO USE YOUR BENEFITS?

If you don't wish to use your VEAP benefits, you may apply to your nearest VA regional office for a refund of your contributions (For the addresses of VA regional offices, go to **www.va.gov**. Go to the top of the page and click on *Facilities Locator*.)

You may not receive a refund of contributions under section 903, since the service department made those contributions for you. Certain participants in section 903 may be allowed to transfer entitlement to a dependent spouse or child.

If you're eligible under section 903, you may transfer entitlement to dependents (one at a time) if

- You reenlisted in the Army after June 30, 1981, and before October 1, 1981,
- You have a critical military specialty designated by the Secretary of Defense,
- You were selected for this part of the section 903 program by the designated DoD official, and
- You're not already receiving benefits under section 903 for the same period.

PART 4

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

WHAT ARE YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES FOR NOTIFYING VA?

You're responsible for notifying VA of a change in your enrollment or a change of your address. **See How do You Contact VA?**

Change in Your Enrollment

If you change your enrollment (number of hours, courses, schools or training facilities, or programs), immediately tell the certifying official at your school or training facility. Request the certifying official to notify the appropriate VA regional office of the change.

Also, notify the appropriate VA regional office of the change yourself. If VA doesn't receive prompt notice of a change, you could be liable for an overpayment of benefits.

Change of Address

Promptly notify the appropriate VA regional office of any change in your address. Send your complete new address, including the zip code.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU DISAGREE WITH A VA DECISION?

You may appeal VA decisions on education benefits. You must file an appeal within one year of the date of our letter notifying you of a decision. Each notice of decision we issue contains your legal rights and appeal procedures. You may request a personal hearing on your claim.

If you need assistance in filing an appeal, contact VA or a veterans service organization. **See How Do You Contact VA?** To contact a veterans service organization, go to <http://www.va.gov/>. Click on *Partners* on the left panel, then *Veterans Service Organizations*.

HOW CAN YOU PREVENT OVERPAYMENTS?

An overpayment is an incorrect benefit payment that is more than the amount to which you're entitled. If you promptly notify VA of changes affecting your

benefits, you can prevent or reduce overpayments.
See **How Do You Contact VA?**

In addition, use reasonable judgment. Carefully read all letters from VA about the monthly rates and effective dates of your benefits.

If you think the amount of a VA payment is wrong, contact VA before cashing the check. We'll tell you where to return the check. If you cash a check for the wrong amount, you'll be liable for repayment of any resulting overpayment.

PART 5

WHERE DO YOU GO FOR HELP?

HOW DO YOU CONTACT VA?

If you need help with your VA education benefits, or if you need to notify us of any changes affecting your benefits, you can contact us in the following ways:

- Go to our Web site: <http://www.gibill.va.gov/>. You can get general or detailed information about education benefits. To send us an e-mail, click on *Ask A Question & Find an Answer*.
- Call **1-888-GIBILL-1 (1-888-442-4551)**. If your hearing is impaired call **1-800-829-4833**.

Toll-free telephone service is available in all 50 states, Puerto Rico, and the U. S. Virgin Islands. (Unfortunately you may have difficulty getting through quickly at the toll-free number, especially when school enrollments are heavy. You may have more success by going to the Internet site.)

Any of the following offices or representatives can also assist you:

- Any VA Regional Office, VA Medical Center or Vet Center (To locate the VA facility closest to you, go to <http://www.va.gov/> and click on *Find a Facility* at the top).
- State or local representatives of veterans organizations.
- Education Service Officers or education counselors at military bases.

- American Embassies or consulates, if you're in a foreign country.

For help or information on other VA benefits, including home loans, disability, death benefits, health care, and life insurance, call **1-800-827-1000**, or access the main VA Web site, <http://www.va.gov/>. If your hearing is impaired, call **1-800-829-4833**.

HOW CAN YOU FIND OUT ABOUT OTHER FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR EDUCATION?

For information on other sources of assistance, check with the Financial Aid office at your school.

Also check with the State office that handles Veterans Affairs for the state where your training facility is located. Your state may offer other education benefits based on military service or being a dependent of a veteran.

To locate the State office, go to <http://www.va.gov/Partners/stateoffice/>.

Here are some other useful Web sites:

- <http://www.dantes.doded.mil/>, the Department of Defense site for Defense Activities Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES). This site provides a wealth of information about education benefits and programs.
- <http://www.ed.gov/>, the Department of Education.
- <http://www.collegeispossible.org/>, the Coalition of America's Colleges and Universities.
- <http://www.dol.gov/vets/> the Department of Labor's site for Veterans Employment and Training Services
- <http://www.acinet.org/>—"the most extensive career resource library online," (America's Career InfoNet) sponsored by the US Department of Labor

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