

## Post 9/11 G.I. Bill Tips For Military-Connected Students<sup>1</sup>

### *How does a student become eligible for benefits from the Post 9/11 G.I. Bill?*

A sponsor (i.e. an Active Duty or retired Service member) may transfer part or all of his or her education and training benefits from the G.I. Bill to any dependent registered in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) after he or she has served at least six years as Active Duty or Selected Reserve and has at least four remaining years of Service. The types of Service may vary depending on the Service member's rank.

A Service member **may not** transfer any months of eligibility to a dependent with less than four remaining years of Service or after retirement. Dependents cannot use the benefit until the Service member has served ten years. In addition, dependents must have earned a secondary school diploma (or an equivalent), or reach age 18. A dependent may not use the benefit after age 26.

### *What do the Post 9/11 G.I. Bill education and training benefits cover?*

A full G.I. Bill includes 36 months of benefits. It provides funds for in-state tuition, a textbook stipend, and a monthly housing allowance. The full tuition of a student is funded regardless of how many credits the student takes on in any given semester. Since taking more credits per semester can shorten the length of time it takes for a student to complete a degree, it is in students' best interests to take on as many courses as possible.

If students attend private or foreign colleges and universities, the dollar amount they will receive from the benefit cannot be greater than the national maximum rate, which is decided annually. Some schools participate in the Yellow Ribbon program, which makes additional funds available to make up the difference between the G.I. Bill benefit and the cost of tuition. You can find more information about the Yellow Ribbon Program at [www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/yellow\\_ribbon.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/yellow_ribbon.asp).

### *What does it mean for a student to have a partial Post 9/11 G.I. Bill?*

Since the G.I. Bill benefits can be divided among multiple dependents, a sponsor can transfer any amount of months of eligibility to each child. Often, if a sponsor has two children, he or she will split the benefit, providing each child with 18 months of eligibility. In this case, students should apply for scholarships and financial aid, as they can be used for the semesters not covered by the G.I. Bill benefits. If students are planning to start their education at a community college and transfer to a state college or university, they should save their benefits for their junior and senior years, as they will typically be more expensive. Remember, while attending a community college, students should take entry-level courses and ensure those courses can transfer appropriately to their next college or university.

***What if a student runs out of months of eligibility to receive education and training benefits from the Post 9/11 G.I. Bill?***

For a dependent to be eligible, a sponsor must transfer at least one month of eligibility to each dependent while he or she has four remaining years of Service left. The student (not the sponsor!) must complete VA Form 22-1990e, applying for a certificate of eligibility in late spring before his or her anticipated fall class start date. Students may do this online via the Veterans OnLine Applications (VONAPP) system or mail the form to the Regional Veterans Affairs office. VA Form 22-1990e can be found at <http://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-22-1990e-ARE.pdf>.

Students should register for classes as soon as they are able (i.e. typically May for fall classes), so the certifying official can notify the VA of enrollment.

***How can a Service member make changes to the number of months of Post 9/11 G.I. Bill that he or she has shared with his or her dependents?***

A Service member may not add dependents to the G.I. Bill with less than four remaining years of Service or after they retire, or leave Service. However, Service members may adjust amounts of months transferred to/from dependents or themselves at any time once they are in the eBenefits website. When calculating months of eligibility, as long as one day remains at the end of the 36 months used, a student is entitled to be funded for the entire next semester.

***How can a military-connected student receiving benefits from the Post 9/11 G.I. Bill qualify for in-state tuition?***

The Choice Act entitles students receiving G.I. Bill benefits to in-state tuition in any state, **within 3 years of the Service member retiring or leaving the military.** As long as students use the G.I. Bill, they qualify for in-state tuition. However, if the G.I. Bill benefits are exhausted, the student must meet the residency requirements of the college or state.

However, if a student is not receiving G.I. Bill benefits, military dependents are eligible for in-state tuition in several states through the Higher Education Opportunity Act. They are eligible in the state of their sponsor's current orders, in the state of their home of record on their sponsor's Leave and Earning Statement, or in the state of their sponsor's follow-on orders. Once enrolled as an in-state student at an institution, a student is entitled to receive in-state tuition for as long as he or she is continuously enrolled.

***Who do students need to connect with at their institution to help apply the education and training benefits of the Post 9/11 G.I. Bill?***

Students should contact the VA Certifying Official at their higher education institution. Every institution houses these officials in different departments, with

some housing them in the Registrar office and others housing them in a military or veteran assistance part of the college or university. Many institutions have a local chapter of the Student Veterans of America, which can help direct you to the appropriate organization or department.

***Where can I find more information about this?***

Visit your regional VA office or [www.benefits.va.gov/gibill](http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill).

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<sup>1</sup> Information obtained from Amanda Yoder, M.S.Ed., NCC, Professional School Counselor