

Forever GI Bill Details



OPNAV N127

Voluntary Education

11 September 2017



Background

This presentation is for information and training purposes only and does not establish or revise any Navy policies.

This legislation (H.R. 3218) was signed into law on 16 August 2017.

The “Forever GI Bill” is not a new benefit or program. It is a series of changes to existing education benefits for service members, veterans, and families.

Some changes will require VA to publish business rules and application procedures.

Stay tuned to <http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/> for details.



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Termination of 15-Year Time Limit

Plain Language Policy Change

Eliminates the 15-year time limit on the use of benefits.

Who is affected?

- All members discharged on or after 1 January 2013 and their dependents.
- For SELRES, this is the date of last discharge of 90 days continuous AD or greater. If no single period of 90 continuous AD days, then the last day of AD for the period of service the member reached 90 days of total qualifying active duty.

Effective Date

Immediately



Pro-Rated Benefits for Exams

Plain Language Policy Change

Benefits will be charged a pro-rated amount of monthly entitlement, vice the current full month, for any national test (e.g. GRE, GMAT, etc...) or test required for licensing/certification that is VA approved.

Who is affected?

All beneficiaries.

Effective Date

1 August 2018



Yellow Ribbon Expansion Part 1

Plain Language Policy Change

Gunnery Sergeant Fry Scholarship and Purple Heart recipients become eligible for Yellow Ribbon benefits.

Who is affected?

Fry Scholarship and Purple Heart Recipients receiving payments after September 11, 2001.

Effective Date

1 August 2018



Yellow Ribbon Expansion Part 2

Plain Language Policy Change

Active duty service members become eligible for Yellow Ribbon benefits.

Who is affected?

Active duty service members enrolled in a program of education leading to a degree on more than half-time basis.

Effective Date

1 August 2022



School Closure Eligibility Restoration

Plain Language Policy Change

- Restores benefits when schools close unexpectedly
- Continues benefit payments for vets whose term or program was interrupted due to closure
- Vets may continue receiving benefit payments through end of the term, quarter, semester in which school closes, or for up to 120 days after closure, whichever is less
- 5 days after notification of school closure, VA will notify GI Bill users, describe the impact, and provide their options

Who is affected?

Students affected by school closure.

Effective Date

14 November 2017 (90 days from passage)
Applies to closures after 1 January 2015



5th Year STEM Scholarship

Plain Language Policy Change

- **VA Scholarship to provide additional GI Bill funds to help a student veteran complete a Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics (STEM) undergraduate degree requiring >128 semester hours.**
- **Must be at least 50% through STEM degree and expect GI Bill benefits to be exhausted before completing program. Scholarship pays for 9 additional months of the Post 9/11 GI Bill benefit, \$30K max.**

Who is affected?

Veteran only and not transferrable.

Effective Date

1 August 2019



Independent Study Programs

Plain Language Policy Change

Authorizes use of Post 9/11 GI Bill benefits to pursue independent study programs. VA will publish amplifying information.

Who is affected?

All beneficiaries.

Effective Date

Immediately



High Technology Pilot Program

Plain Language Policy Change

VA authorized a 5-year pilot program to allow veterans to enroll in high technology courses, such as coding boot camp. VA will publish amplifying information as they contract with these organizations.

Who is affected?

All eligible beneficiaries.

Effective Date

No later than 1 February 2019



Reservist Eligibility Increase

Plain Language Policy Change

Active duty service of at least 90 days but less than 6 months increases benefits from 40% to 50%, and service of at least 6 months but less than 12 months increases benefits from 50% to 60%. Effective increase of \$2,300/year in tuition.

Who is affected?

Reservists and National Guard members whose service commenced on or after September 11, 2001.

Effective Date

1 August 2020



Reserve Post 9/11 GI Bill Eligibility

Plain Language Policy Change

Periods of AD performed under Title 10 U.S.C. Sections 12304, 12304(a), and 12304(b) are now qualifying AD service for Post 9/11 GI Bill benefits.

Who is affected?

All reservists activated under these authorities.

Effective Date

**Retroactive calculation for periods of service back to 30 June 2008
Payable beginning 1 August 2018**



GI Bill For Former REAP Beneficiaries

Plain Language Policy Change

Certain Reserve Component members who lost benefit eligibility with the repeal of the Reserve Education Assistance Program may be eligible for Post 9/11 GI Bill. VA will publish amplifying information.

Who is affected?

Reservists and National Guard members who lost REAP benefits when repealed on November 25, 2015.

Effective Date

Immediately



Reserve Medical Orders Equity

Plain Language Policy Change

Time spent on active duty (AD) authorized by law - 10 U.S.C. Section 12301(h) - now counts as qualifying AD service for Post 9/11 GI Bill.

Who is affected?

Reservists and National Guard members activated on or after September 11, 2001.

Effective Date

Time accrual back-dates to **9/11/01** – payments based on increased eligibility calculation begin **1 August 2018**

How do I know if this applies to me?

Check your DD214, which will indicate the change in status to 12301(h) and the effective date.



DRAFT // PRE-DECISIONAL

Pro-Rating Activated Reservist Housing Stipend

Plain Language Policy Change

VA must pro-rate GI Bill housing stipend for reservists who perform AD during “the middle” of a month. Currently, reservists using Post 9/11 benefits and who perform AD during any part of a month, lose the entire month of housing stipend.

Who is affected?

Reservists using Post 9/11 GI Bill

Effective Date

1 August 2018



Housing Stipend Adjustment Part 1

Plain Language Policy Change

Living stipend based on the location of the campus where the individual attends the majority of their classes vice the “home” location of the institution.

Who is affected?

Students initially enrolling in an educational program.

Effective Date

1 August 2018



Housing Stipend Adjustment Part 2

Plain Language Policy Change

Incorporates BAH rate change formerly excluded in FY15 NDAA. Will align housing stipend with reduced E-5 with dependents BAH. This is a reduction in housing stipend.

Who is affected?

All beneficiaries receiving housing allowance who first start using benefits on or after the Effective Date.

Effective Date

1 January 2018



Purple Heart Equity

Plain Language Policy Change

Certain Purple Heart recipients eligible for full Post 9/11 GI Bill benefits regardless of their length of active duty.

Who is affected?

Recipients awarded on or after September 11, 2001.

Effective Date

1 August 2018



Transferred Benefits For Survivors

Plain Language Policy Change

- **Allows a veteran to transfer remaining months of entitlement to another eligible dependent if the original transferee dies before they can use all of the benefits.**
- **Allows a dependent to transfer remaining entitlement to another dependent after the death of the service member or veteran.**

Who is affected?

All eligible beneficiaries, whether the transferor is still a member of the armed forces or has separated when transfer is executed.

Effective Date

**Use of entitlement under this section effective 1 August 2018
Applies to deaths retroactive to 1 August 2009**



DEA Program Changes

Plain Language Policy Change

- **Decreased benefit months from 45 to 36**
- **Increased monthly payment amounts**

Who is affected?

DEA beneficiaries.

Effective Date

- **Increased payments: 1 October 2018**
- **Reduced months: Programs that begin after 1 August 2018**



Transfer of Post 9/11 GI Bill

Best Practice

Transfer education benefits to eligible dependents listed in DEERS as soon as you are eligible.

If you have 6 years of AD or SELRES service AND obligate 4 more years on AD or SELRES, you can provide your dependents the chance of a lifetime – a funded college education!

Follow the steps in OPNAVINST 1780.4 Enclosure (2) and you can't go wrong!

Transfer as soon as you can to have maximum flexibility with your benefits. You can always reclaim them for yourself at a later date.