



March 29, 2011

UPDATES from Department of Veterans Affairs

Hello Veterans:

The Department of Veterans Affairs mailed letters to all veterans late February 2011. This is that information, just-in-case you have a question and cannot locate the letter that was mailed to you. Please feel free to contact me –Anitra King (847) 214-7531 or by email: aking@elgin.edu if you have any questions regarding the following information.

As you may be aware, President Obama signed the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-377) on January 4, 2011. **These changes have a significant impact on how you may use your educational benefits, including Montgomery G.I.Bill, Post-9/11, REAP, etc. Please review 11 of the many updates carefully to see how they may affect you.**

Some of the most significant changes in the law include the following:

Effective March 5, 2011:

1. Individuals utilizing benefits while on active duty will be subject to the same benefit level determinations as veterans, based upon the amount of aggregate active duty service accrued.

Effective August 1, 2011:

- 2.** Monthly housing allowance benefits are prorated based upon rate of pursuit, rounded to the nearest multiple of 10. For example:
- If you are enrolled in 9 credit when 12 credits is full time, your rate of pursuit is .75 and you will receive 80% of the applicable Basic Allowance of Housing (BAH) rate
 - If you are enrolled in 10 credits when 12 credits is full time, your rate of pursuit is .83 and you will also receive 80% of the applicable BAH rate
- 3.** Break or interval pay is no longer payable under any VA education benefit program unless under an Executive Order of the President or due to an emergency situation such as a natural disaster or strike.
- Here's an example: Your semester ends December 15th. Your housing allowance is paid for the first 15 days of December only. Your next semester begins January 10th. Your payment for January, received in February, will be for January 10th and the rest of January.

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Effective August 1, 2011:

3. continues....
 - Entitlement that previously would have been used for break pay will be available for use during a future enrollment.
4. Tuition and fee payments are simplified for those attending public schools, and a national yearly maximum is created for those enrolled in private or foreign schools.
 - Individual state caps are removed; all net public in-state charges are covered
 - Private and foreign school costs are capped at \$17,500 annually
 - The Yellow Ribbon Program may be used for costs in excess of the cap
5. Students can be reimbursed for more than one “licensing and certification” test, and can also be reimbursed for fees paid to take national exams used for admission to an institution of higher learning such as the SAT, ACT, GMAT, LSAT, etc.
6. VA will pay Montgomery GI Bill and Montgomery GI Bill-Selected Reserve kickers on a monthly basis instead of a lump sum basis at the beginning of the term.
7. Allows individuals who are eligible for both Chapter 31-Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment benefits and Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits to choose the Post-9/11 GI Bill’s monthly housing allowance instead of the Chapter 31 subsistence allowance.

Effective October 1, 2011:

8. Expanding the Post-9/11 GI Bill to include Active Service performed by National Guard members under title 32 U.S.C. for the purpose of organizing, administering, recruiting, instructing, or training the National Guard; or under section 502(f) for the purpose of responding to a national emergency (*VA will begin paying benefits on October 1, 2011; you may be paid retroactively for enrollments beginning on August 1, 2009*)

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Effective October 1, 2011:

9. Students can use Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits for non-college degree programs such as on-the-job training, flight school programs (other than a private pilot license), apprenticeship training, correspondence courses, and other programs offered at non-degree schools.

10. Monthly housing allowance benefits are payable to students (other than those on active duty) enrolled solely in distance learning, at one-half the national average BAH for an E-5 with dependents.

11. The books and supplies stipend can be paid to students attending school while on active duty.

I hope that this information will assist you in planning for your future. For a complete listing of all the changes to VA education programs, as well as the latest information, please visit the Department of Veterans Affairs website at www.gibill.va.gov.