

# **Federal Education Benefits for Veterans' Families**

# Primary Federal Educational Assistance Programs for Veterans' Spouses and Children

Programs	Description	Year Enacted	U.S. Code
Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance (DEA)	Monthly stipend for tuition, fees, housing, etc.	1956	Title 38, Chp. 35
Post 9-11 GI Bill <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fry Scholarship</li> <li>Transferees</li> </ul>	Portion/all of tuition and fees paid to the institution; additional stipend to individual	2008	Title 38, Chp. 33
Other <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Veterans Work Study</li> <li>Veterans Counseling, Training, and Placement Services</li> <li>Yellow Ribbon Program</li> <li>Edith Rogers STEM Scholarship</li> </ul>	Available to select recipients; work study, counseling; tuition matching funds, and nine-month scholarship for STEM fields		Title 38, §3485; Title 38, Chp. 41; Title 38, Chp. 33

- Presentation includes education programs for eligible spouses and children of veterans, and excludes:
  - Education programs solely available to service members and veterans, like the Montgomery GI Bill;
  - Non-education related benefits, such as the Death Gratuity payment available to eligible next of kin of a service member who dies on active duty; and
  - Educational benefits directed only to military spouses, such as the My Career Advancement Account Program.

# Survivors' and Dependents' Education Assistance (DEA) – Eligibility

- **Eligibility:** Children and spouses of service members who died or have a total permanent disability resulting from a service-connected disability.
  - Includes service members missing in action or prisoners of war for more than 90 days.
- **Age and time limit:** For those eligible before August 1, 2023, the time limit to use the benefit is generally before age 26 for children and either 10 or 20 years from the eligibility notification for spouses. The age/time limit was removed for those eligible on or after August 1, 2023.
  - Benefit covers 36 months of education if first used on or after August 1, 2018, and 45 months if first used before that date.
- Individuals eligible for both DEA and a GI Bill benefit based on a single qualifying service period/event (e.g., the death of one parent) must select one program.
  - If eligible due to multiple periods/events, DEA beneficiaries can receive up to 81 months of benefits.

Note: "Prisoners of war" means individuals captured in the line of duty by a hostile force or forcibly detained or interned in the line of duty by a foreign government or power.

# DEA Program – Benefits

- **Benefit:** Monthly allowance of up to \$1,488 for up to 36 months for tuition and fees, subsistence, books, supplies, and equipment, based on enrollment status.
  - Available for students at institutions of higher learning, non-college degree programs, and special restorative training. Participants in on-the-job training and apprenticeships are also eligible, but can only receive up to \$945 a month.
  - Public institutions may charge no more than in-state tuition and fees for DEA beneficiaries living in-state.
  - Rate is adjusted depending on number of courses. For those enrolled less than half-time, amount is capped at tuition and fee cost.
  - Also eligible for up to \$1,200 for tutorial assistance and up to \$2,000 per licensing/certification test.

Note: Benefit covers up to 45 months (instead of up to 36 months) if the individual first used the benefit before August 1, 2018.

# Post-9/11 GI Bill – Eligibility

- **Eligibility:**

- Fry Scholarship: Children and spouses of service members who, after September 10, 2001, died in the line of duty or from a service-connected disability while in the Selected Reserve.
- Transferee: Children or spouses of service members eligible to transfer their Post-9/11 GI Bill benefit, which includes those who have at least six years of service and commit to serving an additional four years or Purple Heart recipients.
  - Generally, unless the service member is deceased, they must be currently serving to transfer their benefits.

- **Time limit:** For those discharged/eligible after January 1, 2013, there is no time limit to using the benefit.

- Others may be subject to a time limit. For example, Fry Scholarship recipients who became eligible before January 1, 2013, must use the benefit before age 33.
- Children with a transferred benefit may begin using it once the member has served 10 years.
- Benefit generally covers 36 months.

# Post-9/11 GI Bill – Benefits

- **Benefits:** Payments to support tuition and fees, housing, books and supplies, tutorial assistance, and licensing/certification tests, generally up to 36 months, for eligible individuals pursuing GI Bill-approved programs.
- **Maximum benefits** include:
  - Tuition and fees cover: (i) in-state rate for public institutions, less certain student aid amounts; or (ii) up to \$27,120 for private or foreign institutions; paid directly to the institution.
  - Up to \$4,644 per month for housing depending on location, plus up to \$500 for relocation.
  - Up to \$1,000 each year for books and supplies, \$1,200 total for tutorial assistance, and \$2,000 per licensing/certification test.
- Individuals receive less than the maximum benefit if they:
  - Have served less than 36 months on active duty, with exceptions for Fry Scholarship recipients, Purple Heart recipients, and those discharged due to a service-connected disability;
  - Are enrolled part-time in the educational program; and/or
  - Meet other exceptions; for example, a housing allowance is not provided while on active duty.

Note: Payment rates for on-the job, apprenticeship, and vocational training differ based on the program and other factors.

# Other Education Programs for Veterans' Families

- **Veteran Work Study**
  - Available to DEA beneficiaries; must be enrolled at least three-quarters time.
  - Selected individuals work up to 25 hours/week for the greater of the state or national minimum wage.
- **Counseling, Training, and Placement Services for Veterans**
  - Certain services available to spouses of those who died or have a total permanent disability due to a service-connected disability or have been a prisoner of war for more than 90 days.
- **Yellow Ribbon GI Education Enhancement Program**
  - Available to Fry Scholarship recipients and Post-9/11 GI Bill transferees receiving the maximum benefit.
  - Matches the percentage of any tuition and fees covered by the institution of higher learning, in addition to the standard Post-9/11 GI bill benefit.
- **Edith Rogers STEM Scholarship**
  - Available to Fry Scholarship recipients; limited number of participants.
  - Extends Post-9/11 GI Bill coverage for nine months for qualifying STEM programs. Scholarship may not exceed \$30,000 for tuition and fees, housing allowance, books, and supplies.

Note: Yellow Ribbon Program not available to spouses of service members on active duty.

# Additional Resources and References

Dortch, C. (2024, May 7). *The Post-9/11 GI Bill: A Primer*. Congressional Research Service. <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/misc/R42755.pdf>

Dortch, C. (2024, June 3). *Veterans' Educational Assistance Programs and Benefits: A Primer*. Congressional Research Service. <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R42785>

*Edith Nourse Rogers STEM Scholarship*. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Retrieved June 27, 2024, from <https://www.va.gov/education/other-va-education-benefits/stem-scholarship/>

*Fry Scholarship*. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Retrieved June 27, 2024, from <https://www.va.gov/education/survivor-dependent-benefits/fry-scholarship/>.

*Survivors' and Dependent's Educational Assistance*. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Retrieved June 27, 2024, from <https://www.va.gov/education/survivor-dependent-benefits/dependents-education-assistance/>.

U.S. Code Title 38, Part III. Retrieved June 27, 2024, from <https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/38/part-III>