

TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT NOTICE	NO. 29-11
	DATE February 16, 2012

TO: STATE WORKFORCE AGENCIES
STATE APPRENTICESHIP AGENCIES
STATE WORKFORCE ADMINISTRATORS
STATE WORKFORCE LIAISONS
STATE AND LOCAL WORKFORCE BOARD CHAIRS AND DIRECTORS
STATE LABOR COMMISSIONERS
ONE-STOP CAREER CENTERS
WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT SECTION 166 INDIAN AND NATIVE AMERICAN GRANTEEES
WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT SECTION 167 MIGRANT AND NATIONAL FARMWORKER JOBS PROGRAM GRANTEEES
EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION REGIONAL ADMINISTRATORS
SUB-RECIPIENTS OF DEPARTMENT OF LABOR FUNDS

FROM: JANE OATES /s/
Assistant Secretary

SUBJECT: Changes to The Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008 (Post-9/11 GI Bill)

1. **Purpose.** To enhance the public workforce system's awareness of changes to the Post-9/11 GI Bill that went into effect on October 1, 2011, which may provide additional employment and training opportunities to veterans who served on active duty on or after September 11, 2001.

2. **References.**

- Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Improvements Act of 2010 (Pub. L. 111-377);
- Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008, Title V of the Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2008 (Pub. L. 110-52);
- Training and Employment Guidance Letter, No. 10-09, *Implementing Priority of Service for Veterans and Eligible Spouses in all Qualified Job Training Programs Funded in whole or in part by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL)*;
- Training and Employment Notice, No. 15-11, *Gold Card Initiative*;
- Training and Employment Notice, No. 15-10, *Protocol for Implementing Priority of Service for Veterans and Eligible Spouses in all Qualified Job Training Programs Funded in whole or in part by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL)*;

- Training and Employment and Guidance Letter, No. 02-07, *Leveraging Registered Apprenticeship as a Workforce Development Strategy for the Workforce Investment System*;
- 38 United States Code (U.S.C.) Section 3687.

3. **Background.** The Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008, commonly referred to as the “Post-9/11 GI Bill”, is administered by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and provides financial support for education and housing to individuals with at least 90 days of aggregate military service, or 30 days continuous service, after September 10, 2001, who receive an honorable discharge.

On January 4, 2011, the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Improvements Act of 2010 was signed into law. The legislation amended the Post-9/11 GI Bill, and includes provisions for new training and education opportunities for veterans that will support their transition to non-military jobs.

These changes are part of President Obama’s comprehensive plan to address veterans’ unemployment and ensure separating service members leave the military career-ready. As of November 2011, over 220,000 – 11.1 percent – post-9/11 era veterans were unemployed. With over one million service members projected to leave the military between 2011 and 2016, we have an obligation as a nation to ensure our veterans are able to navigate this difficult labor market and succeed in the civilian workforce.

The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) provides employment and training services to all jobseekers, including veterans, through a nationwide network of nearly 3,000 One-Stop Career Centers. Recipients of DOL funds for qualified job training programs have been required to provide priority of service to veterans and eligible spouses since 2002, and DOL implemented the Priority of Service regulations in 2009 along with the publication of the Final Rule. At that time, the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) and the Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS) jointly issued guidance to the workforce system, encouraging them to review and enhance, if necessary, their policies and procedures to ensure priority of service protocols were in place. ETA and VETS also issued Training and Employment Notice (TEN) 15-10, further assisting the system in developing and implementing protocol for priority of service regulations for veterans and eligible spouses.

Additionally, DOL has launched several other initiatives that support the President’s plan to return veterans to the civilian labor force. For example, My Next Move for Veterans (<http://www.mynextmove.org/vets/>) is an electronic tool that helps veterans learn how to transfer their skills to new jobs, find careers related to their military jobs, and link to local training and job opportunities. The Gold Card Initiative (<http://www.dol.gov/vets/goldcard/revisegoldcard5.pdf>) entitles eligible veterans to enhanced intensive services, including skills assessment, career coaching, and job search assistance over a six-month period to jump-start their job search process and reconnect them to the civilian labor force in high-demand sectors.

It is important that the workforce system become aware of changes to the Post-9/11 GI Bill so that veterans may continue to be directed to and receive the most appropriate employment and

training programs available to them. Though the effective dates of the new provisions vary, this TEN specifically addresses those taking effect on October 1, 2011.

- 4. Post-9/11 GI Bill, October 1, 2011 Changes.** Since August 1, 2009, the Post-9/11 GI Bill has provided educational assistance to eligible individuals training at degree-granting institutions. Eligible individuals may receive a tuition and fees payment (paid to the school), a monthly housing allowance equal to the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) payable to an E-5 with dependents, and a books and supplies stipend of up to \$1,000 an academic year. New provisions also may provide eligible individuals with a one-time rural benefit payment and reimbursement of fees paid to take licensing or certification tests. Individuals generally receive 36 months of full-time benefits and remain eligible for 15 years following their last release from active duty.

The Post-9/11 GI Bill also allows service members to transfer their educational benefits to their dependents. The service member must have at least six years of service, and commit to an additional four years of service in order to transfer benefits to a spouse or child. Because of the potential impact of this benefit on recruiting and retention, the transferability policy is determined by the Department of Defense (DoD) and military services.

Recent changes to the Post-9/11 GI Bill, which went into effect on October 1, 2011, provide additional access to training for veterans who served on active duty after September 10, 2001. Students can now use their benefits for a wider range of educational options, including non-college degree (NCD) programs, on-the-job training and registered apprenticeship, flight programs, and correspondence training.

Non-college degree (NCD) programs: Veterans now can utilize the Post-9/11 GI Bill for non-college degree programs offered at “non-degree granting institutions”, whereas previously, students who wanted to use their Post-9/11 GI Bill for non-degree programs could do so only at “degree granting institutions”. This change offers veterans more choices when seeking to utilize their educational benefits under the Post-9/11 GI Bill, allowing them to receive reimbursement of fees paid for more than one licensure or certification test, vocational-technical training, and other non-degree type training programs. Examples of programs that may be pursued at non-degree granting institutions include Heating Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) certification, truck driving, and Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) certification.

The Post-9/11 GI Bill pays the actual net cost for in-state tuition and fees at public “degree-granting institutions.” At private, foreign, and non-degree granting institutions, the actual net costs for in-state tuition and fees or \$17,500 may be paid, whichever is less. Veterans may also be eligible for a book and supplies payment of up to \$83 per month.

On-the-job training (OJT) and registered apprenticeship: Eligible veterans can also now use their Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits to learn a skilled occupation through participation in an OJT program or a registered apprenticeship program. OJT, as funded under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), is typically distinguished from other types of workplace training, including customized training, by several factors: (1) it is based on the principle of, “hire first,” then train the participant; (2) individualized training plans that reflect the results of

individual skills assessments and an analyses of job requirements; (3) training is conducted in the work setting under the direction of one or more of the employer's supervisory personnel; and (4) the employer is paid a reimbursement to partially cover the extraordinary costs of the training. The OJT generally continues until knowledge of skills are acquired to fully perform the job. While registered apprenticeship is another form of work-place training, it too has some distinguishing features. In a registered apprenticeship, participants progress through a combination of paid on-the-job learning and related technical instruction, working toward completion of the apprenticeship program and ultimately achieving journey worker status, recognized by industry nationally and internationally. Participants also may earn progressively increasing wages in the apprenticeship program as they gain more skills and experience and need less supervision.

In addition, the Post-9/11 GI Bill may pay a monthly benefit amount to veterans participating in either type of program, prorated according to the individual's time in the program, once the VA receives certification of the hours worked from the employer. The VA also may pay up to \$83 per month for books and supplies. The full VA regulations for both eligible OJT and registered apprenticeship programs can be found at 38 U.S.C. Section 3687.

Flight programs: Vocational flight training is now payable under the Post-9/11 GI Bill. It now will pay the actual net costs for in-state tuition and fees assessed by the school or \$10,000, whichever is less, per academic year. Individuals must have a private pilot's license and valid medical certification to pursue training in allowable flight programs. Individuals will want to make sure the flight school is approved by the VA prior to enrolling for classes.

Correspondence training: Eligible Veterans' now have the opportunity to utilize Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits for correspondence training. This type of training is different from Distance Learning based on the means of delivery. Correspondence training generally involves receiving lessons (mail, email, etc.) and having a certain amount of time to complete and return them for a grade. The Post-9/11 GI Bill pays the actual net costs for in-state tuition and fees assessed by the school or \$8,500, whichever is less, per academic year.

Other changes include:

- Allowing a student on active duty to receive a books and supplies stipend.
- Providing a housing allowance is now payable to students (other than those on active duty) enrolled *solely* in distance learning. The housing allowance payable to individuals enrolled solely in distance learning is equal to half the national average of the monthly basic (BAH) for an E-5 with dependents.

5. Additional Information. Because of the persistent high unemployment rates among veterans, it is essential that One-Stop Career Center staff understand and communicate all opportunities available to eligible veterans.

The VA has a number of additional resources to assist the workforce system in serving veterans. Those specific to the Post-9/11 GI Bill are as follows:

- VA's education information phone number is: 1-888-GIBILL-1

- For more information on all the changes to the Post-9/11 GI Bill, visit: http://www.gibill.va.gov/benefits/post_911_gibill/Post911_changes.html
- A searchable database of approved education and job training programs covered under the Post-9/11 GI Bill may be found on the WEAMS Institution search page at: <http://inquiry.vba.va.gov/weamspub/buildSearchInstitutionCriteria.do>
- For more information on the Post-9/11 GI Bill and other VA education benefit programs, visit: <http://gibill.va.gov/benefits/index.html>

Additional VA resources that One-Stop staff may find helpful, but that are not directly related to the Post-9/11 GI Bill, are below:

- The VA's Q&A website may be found at: <https://gibill.custhelp.com/app/answers/list>
 - The VA maintains a searchable website with information on the more than 1700 VA facilities (such as the Veterans Health Administration, Veterans Benefits Administration, and National Cemetery Association) found throughout the country at: <http://www2.va.gov/directory/guide/home.asp?isflash=1>
 - Veterans and service members may log in to the VA eBenefit website to access ongoing benefit information at: <https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits-portal/ebenefits.portal>
 - A Veteran's Job Bank may be found at the National Resource Directory: <https://www.nationalresourcedirectory.gov/jobSearch/>
6. **Action Requested.** State Workforce Agencies should ensure that state and local staffs, particularly One-Stop Career Center staff, are familiar with the changes to the Post-9/11 GI Bill, most notably those that took effect on October 1, 2011. While these changes target post-9/11 era veterans, all staff working with veterans should be aware of these new provisions.
7. **Inquiries.** Questions should be directed to your ETA or VETS Regional Offices or State VETS staff.