

# **Post 9/11 GI Bill, transferability to family**

## **Post 9/11 GI Bill, transferability to family members**

Oct. 19, 2009 -- The purpose of this message is to emphasize the basic procedures for establishing eligibility for the Post 9/11 GI Bill as well as the Transferability of Education Benefits (TEB) to certain Family Members.

Spouses and family members must be enrolled under their servicemember sponsor in the Defense Eligibility Enrollment Reporting System, also known as DEERS, to be eligible for the transfer benefit. Military members also can link to the site through <http://www.defenselink.mil/gibill>.

With the Post-9/11 GI Bill, servicemembers are eligible for 36 months of educational benefits -- the equivalent of four nine-month academic years. To qualify for the transfer benefit, servicemembers must have six years of service on active duty or in the Selected Reserve on or after Aug. 1 and commit to an additional four years of service.

Servicemembers have the option to use or transfer as much of their benefits as they want to, and they can revoke or redesignate who receives the benefit at any time.

Servicemembers can add names only while on active duty, and not after separating or retiring from active-duty service.

The unused benefits can be transferred to a spouse, two children or any combination. But children cannot start using the benefit until they're 18 or have a high school diploma or equivalent. Children enrolled in DEERS lose their military benefits at age 21 unless they are full-time students.

Only eligible dependents' names will appear on the registration Web site. Once servicemembers register on the site and designate who the benefits will be transferred to, the application will be processed through their appropriate service branch.

After the service verifies eligibility to transfer the benefits, the application will be forwarded and processed again through VA. And finally, when the selected dependent decides to use the benefit, he or she must go to the Department of Veterans Affairs Web site and fill out an online application to request a certificate of eligibility.

The certificate then can be taken to the school to be processed by its Veterans Affairs representative and used to request tuition, payment for books and the living stipend, which varies by institution and location.

Most servicemembers who have at least six years of military service as of Aug. 1, and agree to serve an additional four years qualify, he said. Department officials have proposed measures to support servicemembers who have at least 10 years of active service but can't serve the additional four because of service or department policy. They would, however, have to serve the maximum time allowed before separating from the military, he said.

Another provision will cover servicemembers who will reach the 20-year service mark, making them retirement-eligible, between Aug. 1, 2009, and Aug. 1, 2013.

Clark explained how servicemembers who complete 20 years of service will be able to transfer the benefits:

-- Those eligible for retirement on Aug. 1, 2009, will be eligible to transfer their benefits with no additional service requirement.

-- Those with an approved retirement date after Aug. 1, 2009, and before July 1, 2010, will qualify with no additional service.

-- Those eligible for retirement after Aug. 1, 2009, but before Aug. 1, 2010, will qualify with one additional year of service after approval to transfer their Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits.

-- Those eligible for retirement between Aug. 1, 2010, and July 31, 2011, will qualify with two additional years of service after approval to transfer.

-- Those eligible to retire between Aug. 1, 2011, and July 31, 2012, will qualify with three additional years of service after approval to transfer.