2026 Alabama Veterans Affairs Association Conference

U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs Education Service (EDU)

October 21, 2026

EDUCATION SERVICE
GI BILL PROGRAMS

Program Overview

Commitment to Veterans

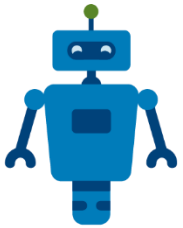
*VA Education Service (EDU) will continue to transform the GI Bill ® experience through a **customer centric** approach that supports its Veterans/beneficiaries, a **continuous improvement** mindset, **leveraging technology** as a force multiplier, and always with a **people-first culture** in mind.*



Customer Experience



Continuous Improvement



Leverage Technology



People-First Culture

Program Overview

Better Veteran Outcomes

Since March 2021, the Digital GI Bill (DGIB) Modernization effort has helped deliver benefits easier, faster and more accurately than ever before. Every dollar put into GI Bill® benefits directly feeds back into the American economy. Research proves that a ***1% increase in GI Bill usage is associated with a $2.82B increase in Real GDP, contributing to positive socioeconomic outcomes nationwide****.*



$13.6B

GI Bill beneficiaries received an estimated 13.6 billion dollars in education benefits in FY25. (+$1.6B from FY24.



3.6%

Increase in education benefits utilization (FY24 to FY25)



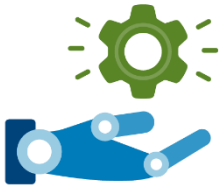
16M+

Claims processed through DGIB systems[1]



98%

Maintained 98% payment accuracy through FY24 and FY25



1.6M+

1,663,376 GI Bill beneficiaries received a one-day experience FY25.

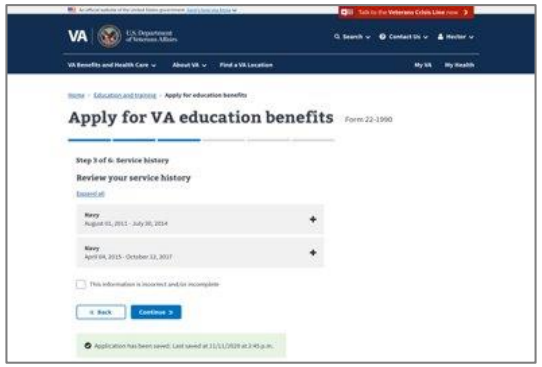


933,000

Unique beneficiaries served

Program Overview

Simplified GI Bill® Experience



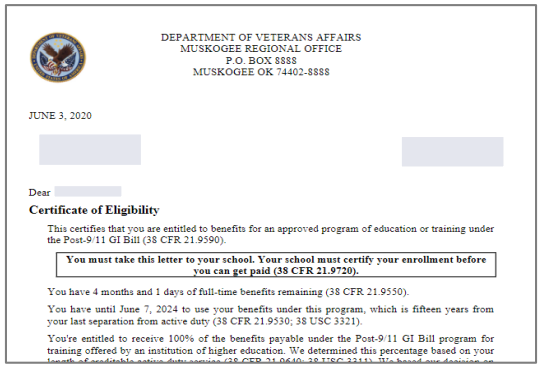
Pre-Filled Service History

Applicants can **review and confirm their pre-filled service history** when completing their application.



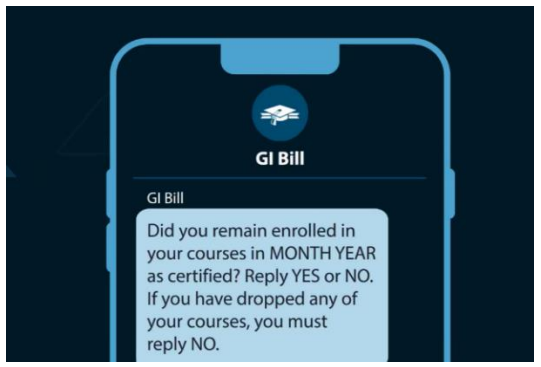
Same-Day Eligibility Determination

Some applicants can now receive a **same-day eligibility decision** after submitting an application.



Digital Decision Letter (Future State)

A digital copy of the Certificate of Eligibility is available for some applicants to **download and view.**



Improved Enrollment Verification Experience

All applicants experience an improved enrollment verification process with **text and email verification options.**

DGIB Updates

Digital GI Bill Program Updates

Through continuous improvements to GI Bill® systems, increased automation, and updated beneficiary resources, the Digital GI Bill (DGIB) program is making it easier for Veterans and their families to receive the education benefits they deserve.



Successfully deployed Release 9.2 which includes updates to VET TEC 2.0 capabilities, Supplemental Certification of Eligibility (COE) automation, and continued restoration of CH33 Transfer of Entitlement (TOE) automation capabilities.



Implemented Dole Act 208 with Release 9.1 and included Enrollment Manager improvements for easy confirmation by SCOs when Section 208 applies to a student. Additional updates allow for most Section 208 certifications to be processed automatically.



EDU reached its America250 goal of enabling automated processing for all active GI Bill chapters and claim types by July 4, 2026. Enhancements delivered in June 2026 were critical to achieving this milestone, including automation of first-time Montgomery GI Bill Active Duty and Selected Reserve claims, ultimately providing faster decisions for those populations.



Further Defined the Scope for November Release which will bring the automation of non-complex Rudisill and Perkins entitlement adjustments and system updates in accordance with Dole Act Section 210 to expand electronic notifications for Veterans. Additionally, Approval Manager phase 1 modernization will kick-off in the near future with data accelerator activities.

Recent & Upcoming Iterative Agile Deployments

Release 8.7 ✓

May 9, 2026

Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance (DEA) originals automation and updates to DEA decision letters

Release 9.0 ✓

June 13, 2026

VET TEC 2.0 launch, enrollment validation updates, and milestone claim automation improvements

Release 9.1 ✓

August 15, 2026

Dole Act Section 208 updates, increased access to benefit information online, and automated transferred Post-9/11 GI Bill claim-creation

Release 9.2 ✓

September 2026

Automation and VET TEC 2.0 improvements, Enrollment Manager enhancements

Release 9.3

November 2026

Rudisill/Perkins and Dole Act Section 210 updates, Approval Manager modernization

DGIB Updates

Approval Manager (AM) Overview

To reduce VA labor costs, promote claim processing automation, and improve fraud, waste, and abuse controls, Approval Manager continues the momentum of ongoing EDU data validation efforts [e.g., Enrollment Validation & Traceability (EVT) system changes). The system will require School Certifying Officials (SCOs) and Veteran Claim Examiners (VCEs) to use school and program data approved by State Approving Agencies (SAAs) and Education Approval Specialists (EASs) when processing enrollments and supplemental claims.



Integrated school and program data with downstream processing systems, supporting smoother workflows and improved automation across VBA processes.



Improves VCE claim processing experience by improving enrollment data quality and reducing data verification steps.



Streamlines approval & compliance operations through strengthened data integrity, increased consistency, and added submission validations that drive compliance and automation.

Approval Manager provides SAAs and EASs with their first system contact with a modernized DGIB platform

DGIB Updates

Faster Decision Times, by The Numbers

VA's commitment to improving the GI Bill experience has increased the number of automated decisions each year.



Automated Decisions Continue to Increase Year Over Year

60% of decisions have been automated to date in Fiscal Year 2026, up from 28% in Fiscal Year 2021

Fiscal Year	Decisions	Automated	% Automated
2021	3,719,856	1,051,310	28%
2022	3,985,588	1,544,483	39%
2023	4,145,113	1,679,087	41%
2024	4,455,429	1,993,880	45%
2025	5,112,544	2,597,001	51%
FYTD 2026	6,289,233	3,902,335	62%

DGIB Updates

Fiscal Year 2026 Automation Progress

VA's commitment to improving the GI Bill experience has increased the number of automated decisions each year.

Measure	FY26 Target	Actual Data (through September 22, 2026)
Average Days to Complete Education Claims	15.0	5.5
Education Claim Quality (Based on QA)	95%	98.8%
Completed Claims	2,985,000	6,289,233
Completed Program Approvals – New Program Approvals at Education and Training Institutes	N/A	20,163
Completed Compliance Actions*	2,500	2,436

*The target for compliance actions are based on estimates stemming from statutory requirements (U.S. Code 3693). Completed counts fluctuate monthly based on multiple factors: priority risk-based survey efforts, expansion of surveys at flight schools, school closures, etc.

Legislative Updates

Dole Act

Public Law 118-210, "Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act" was signed into law on January 2, 2025. VA has fully implemented 13 of the 15 provisions impacting education benefits. The 2 remaining sections are on track for 2026 delivery!

To Do

210: Electronic Notification

Requirements finalized and development sequenced into DGIB roadmap

215: GI Bill Comparison Tool

VA is collaborating with Department of Education (ED) to make Veteran centric enhancement to ED College Scorecard and link the GI Bill Comparison Tool to Scorecard.

Complete

- ☑ 201-209
- ☑ 211-214

Legislative Updates

VET TEC 2.0 Education Benefit

What is VET TEC 2.0?

Beginning June 16, Veterans can apply to participate in Veteran Employment Through Technology Education Courses (VET TEC) 2.0. This is a new Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) education benefit that is funded through September 30, 2027, which seeks to match Veterans with leading training providers to help them develop skills to start or advance their careers in high-tech industries.

Training Program

To be approved, programs must be 6- to 28-weeks, not lead to a degree, and provide instruction in computer programming, computer software, media application, data processing, or information sciences. If you are interested in becoming an approved training program provider, you can contact the VET TEC 2.0 Education Liaison Representative to request an application.

Tuition and Fee Payment Milestones



Phase 1 (25%)
Approved and Enrolled

Veteran is approved for VET TEC 2.0 and begins training.



Phase 2 (25%)
Attend Program

Veteran attends classes and completes their 6- to 28-week program.



Phase 3 (50%)
Employment or Continued Education in Field of Study*

Veteran finds employment or continues learning in their field of study.

QUALIFICATIONS

To be eligible for VET TEC 2.0, individuals must meet these requirements:

- Be under age 62.
- Have a character of service other than dishonorable.
- Be a Veteran or a transitioning service member within 180 days of separation when applying.
- Have served a minimum of 36 months of active-duty service at time of application.

**Please visit the VET TEC 2.0 webpage for full program information and to apply for the benefit.*

***Please note that the conditions outlined in the Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act apply for training providers to receive all tuition and fees payments.*

Legislative Updates

VET TEC 2.0 - Implementation

The Digital GI Bill (DGIB) program implemented Veteran Employment Through Technology Education Courses (VET TEC 2.0) on June 16, 2026. A new Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) education benefit that is funded through September 2027 and seeks to match Veterans with leading training providers to help them develop skills to start of advance their careers in high-tech industries.

Program Readiness

The VET TEC 2.0 solution launched successfully in June delivering initial MVP, GIBCT update, & eMPWR release. Parallel program efforts to improve automation and quality supported the successful launch of VET TEC 2.0.



Full transition to operational management of congressionally mandated program took effect in July – policy, training, outreach, and staffing are in place.



Key development activities are in progress for deployment of DGIB Release 9.2- that will support VET TEC 2.0 system enhancements and continued operational support.

Recent Milestones

April 2026
Training Provider Application Launch

June 2026
VET TEC 2.0 Initial MVP & Student Application Launch

July 2026
First Term Start Date

August 2026
DGIB Release 9.1: System Enhancements

September 2026
DGIB Release 9.2: Successful Employment

Legislative Updates

VET TEC 2.0 Program Participation

*Data Updated SEPT 23, 2026

Training Provider Applications

Total Receipts	Approved	Pending	Denied
36	14	06	16

Student Applications

Total Receipts	Pending	Completed	Eligible	Denied
26,391	411	25,890	22,965	1,974

Enrollments & Graduates

Enrollments
2,268 *Max 4K/year

Graduates
2

- First Term Start Date: July 1, 2026
- Program length: 6 to 28 weeks
- First Graduates: October 2026

Successful Performance-Based Outcomes

Successful Employment
0

Continued Education
0

Legislative Updates

Chapter 35 High School Sunset

Sunset of High School programs from Dependents Educational Assistance (DEA)



Effective Date of Change

The law, effective on August 1, 2026, specifically states the limitation only applies to academic periods that begin *on or after August 1, 2026*.

The law allows students to continue to receive DEA benefits through the completion of the “academic period." However, it does not allow students to continue to receive benefits through the completion of their entire program of education.

“Academic period” is determined by the school and is stated in their program approval.



Stakeholder Engagement - VA sent communications targeted to stakeholders starting in **May 2026 through August 2026** to impacted DEA beneficiaries, State Approving Agencies, and School Certifying Officials of high schools.

Legislative Updates

Dole Act Section 208

DGIB implemented system updates in accordance with Section 208 of the Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act.



What is Dole Act Section 208?

Dole Act Section 208 allows Post-9/11 GI Bill and STEM Scholarship students who are enrolled less than full-time but greater than half-time in the last term of their program to receive housing payments at the full-time rate.

In August 2026, the DGIB program implemented system changes in accordance with Dole Act Section 208:

Improved System Validations

Improved front-end system validations in Enrollment Manager allow School Certifying Officials to easily confirm when Section 208 applies to a student, preventing avoidable delays and making final-term certifications smoother.

Greater Automation

Improved front-end validations now allow for most Section 208 certifications to be processed automatically, reducing manual workload for processors and allowing for faster processing of common claims scenarios.

Easier Access to Housing Benefits

Together, these system enhancements will ensure seamless alignment with legislative requirements, supporting easy benefit access for students covered under Section 208.

Legislative Updates

Rudisill and Perkins

Veterans now have expanded access to combined education benefits due to the Rudisill and Perkins rulings. The Digital GI Bill program is making updates to optimize the application process

What's Changing?

VA no longer limits time in service based on "periods of service." Therefore, you may qualify for additional Chapter 30 or Chapter 33 benefits if you have sufficient **time in service** (and satisfy all other eligibility criteria) regardless of whether its part of a single or multiple periods of service.



DGIB System Updates

- Beneficiaries who have less than three months of benefits and are currently enrolled are prioritized for manual re-adjudication and adjustment
- Working towards automatic decisions on additional benefits **TBD.**
- New digital election/benefit selection experience for all Veteran beneficiaries **TBD.**



Questions?