

Frequently Asked Questions About the Veterans Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP)

1) Question: Who can use VRAP?

Answer: To qualify, a Veteran must:

- Be at least 35 and no more than 60
- Be [unemployed](#)
- Have an other than dishonorable discharge
- Not be eligible for any other VA education benefit program (e.g., the Post-9/11 GI Bill, Montgomery GI Bill, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Assistance)
- Not be in receipt of VA compensation due to [unemployability](#)
- Not be enrolled in a federal or state job training program

2) Question: What can I use the Veterans Retraining Assistance Program for?

Answer: Participants must enroll in a program approved for VA benefits offered by a Community College or Technical School. The program must lead to an Associate Degree, Non-College Degree, or a Certificate and train you in a [high demand occupation](#).

3) Question: Can I pursue an Associate's degree or certificate program at a 4-year school?

Answer: VRAP only provides assistance for approved training offered at community colleges and technical schools. The term "community college" includes those educational institutions listed on the Department of Education's National Center for Educational Statistics' [College Navigator website](#) as 2-year institutions.

4) Question: How much does the Veterans Retraining Assistance Program pay?

Answer: You may receive up to 12 months of assistance equal to the [monthly full time payment rate under the Montgomery GI Bill-Active Duty program](#).

5) Question: Is this like the Post- 9/11 GI Bill and how VA pays for my tuition and fees?

Answer: No. The benefit will be paid directly to you and you are responsible for paying your expenses including tuition, fees, and books.

6) Question: When will I get a payment?

Answer: Training under VRAP may begin on or after July 1, 2012. Payments will be issued at the beginning of each month for training pursued the previous month. For example, VA will issue payments at the beginning of August 2012 for training pursued in July 2012.

Before you can get paid your school must submit your enrollment information to VA and you must verify your attendance. You will be notified when VA has processed the enrollment information received from your school. You may verify your enrollment online via the Web Automated Verification of Enrollment (WAVE) by clicking on the

[“Verify Attendance”](#) button on the [GI Bill website](#). You may also verify your attendance via telephone by calling 1-877 VA-ECERT (1-877-823-2378).

7) Question: What will happen when I finish my program?

Answer: DOL will provide employment assistance to every Veteran who participates upon completion of their program.

8) Question: What happens if I don’t complete the program?

Answer: VA will not take any adverse action against you if you do not complete your program. VA will pay up to 12 months of benefits for qualifying training under VRAP. DOL will offer you employment assistance when you stop training even if you do not complete your program. Additional employment resources can also be found at [My Next Move for Veterans](#) for those who don't complete their VRAP program.

9) Question: What is considered “unemployed”?

Answer: DOL defines “unemployed” as, “people who are jobless, looking for jobs, and available for work.” All three criteria must be met to be considered unemployed.

10) Question: What do I do if I need a job now?

Answer: There are extensive employment resources available for Veterans provided by the Federal Government. Visit www.fedshirevets.gov and the Department of Labor’s www.DOL.gov/vets to learn more.

11) Question: What if my program is only 3 months long? 18 months long?

Answer: VRAP provides up to 12 months of training assistance to unemployed Veterans. If your training program is three months then VA will pay you three months of benefits. If your training program is 18 months long, VA will only pay up to 12 months.

12) Question: Can I apply for benefits before I start training?

Answer: Yes, the earlier the better as applications may be received through October 1, 2013, or once we have 99,000 participants, whichever comes first.

13) Question: I was told I do not qualify. How do I appeal this decision?

Answer: You must apply for benefits to receive a formal eligibility determination. If you are determined ineligible for VRAP benefits, you will receive a notification letter that includes information regarding your appeal rights and instructions to appeal the decision.

14) Question: I don’t have an active bank account; must I have one to apply?

Answer: You do not have to have an active bank account to apply for VRAP. However, to meet the Department of Treasury mandate to issue all Federal benefit payments electronically, we encourage you to provide direct deposit information. If do not have or are not eligible for a checking or savings account may qualify for an Electronic Transfer Account (ETA). More information on the ETA account is available at <https://www.eta-find.gov>.

15) Question: I'm over the age of 60. What benefits are available for me?

Answer: There are extensive employment resources available for Veterans provided by the Federal Government. Visit www.fedshirevets.gov and the Department of Labor's www.DOL.gov/vets to learn more. We also encourage you to call us at 1(800) 827-1000 to speak with a representative and learn about the different kinds of benefits you may be eligible to receive.

16) Question: Am I eligible for VRAP if I transfer the Post-9/11 GI Bill to my dependent(s) and/or spouse?

Answer: It depends on how much Post-9/11 GI Bill entitlement you transferred. You may be eligible for VRAP if you transferred all unused Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits to a spouse or dependent child. Remember, to qualify for VRAP you cannot be eligible for an education program administered by VA.

17) Question: Why is there a restriction on the age of unemployed Veterans to take advantage of VRAP?

Answer: The Veterans Opportunity to Work Act of 2011 specifically limited VRAP participation to Veterans who are at least 35 and no older than 60. According to the Bureau of Labor Statics, about half of all unemployed Veterans fall in that age range.

18) Question: When, where and how can I apply?

Answer: We are accepting VRAP applications now. Please visit [eBenefits](#) to apply. To complete the application, you will need to know your direct deposit information (bank routing number and account number), the name and location of your school, the program you wish to pursue, and the applicable [high demand occupation](#).

19) Question: Is there a paper application anywhere? I don't have a computer – now what?

Answer: VRAP applications are only accepted electronically. If you need assistance completing and submitting the online application you may visit your Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER)/Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist or One-Stop Career Shop. You may also receive assistance by visiting the nearest VA Regional Office. Click [here](#) for a listing of VA Regional Offices.

20) Question: When and how will I find out if I've been approved?

Answer: Once an eligibility determination is made, a notification letter will be mailed to you. To obtain the status of your VRAP claim, you may send an electronic inquiry (7 days a week, 24 hours a day) on our website, www.gibill.va.gov by clicking the "Submit a Question" button. You may also call the VA Education Call Center at 1-888-442-4551 (Monday through Friday from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm, CST).

21) Question: Can I use VRAP if I am not a full-time student?

Answer: No, VRAP benefits can only be paid for training pursued on a full-time basis.

22) Question: What is advance payment and how do I get it?

Answer: Advance payment is a payment at the beginning of the term that combines your first partial month of benefits with your first full month. If your school agrees to handle advance payments, you may receive this combined payment at the beginning of your term. We send the advance payment check to your school for you to pick up, so check with your School Certifying Official to see if your school participates.

To receive an advance payment:

- You must request advance payment from your school
- You must have a break of at least 30 days before the start of the term and
- VA must receive your enrollment certification at least 30 days before your classes start.

Here's an example of how advance payment works:

If your enrollment starts on August 25th, your first payment will be for the period August 25th through September 30th. VA will mail the advance payment to your school for you to pick up. Since GI Bill benefits are paid at the end of the month, your next payment for October 1 - October 31 will be issued in early November. In this example you won't need to verify attendance until October 31.

If you reduce your enrollment or withdraw from all courses during the period covered by and advance payment, you will have an overpayment that VA is required to collect from you if you cash the check. If you think the amount of a VA check is incorrect, contact VA before cashing the check.

23.) Can I Change My Program Of Study Or My School If I'm Already Using VRAP?

Answer: If you've received any VRAP payments and want to change to a different school, all credits earned under your initial VRAP enrollment must transfer to your new school. If they don't, you won't receive further payments under VRAP. If you have received any VRAP payments, you won't be allowed to change to another program of study - even at the same school - unless all your credits transfer to your new program.

If you haven't gotten any VRAP payments and you want to train in a different program or at a different school you must submit a new "Application for VRAP Benefits" (VA Form 22-1990R) listing the new school and/or program of study.