

Dependents' Educational Assistance Program (DEA) Chapter 35

Eligibility Criteria for Chapter 35 (DEA)

Dependents' Educational Assistance provides education and training opportunities to eligible dependents of certain veterans. The program offers up to 45 months of education benefits. These benefits may be used for degree and certificate programs, apprenticeship, and on-the-job training. If you are a spouse, you may take a correspondence course. Remedial, deficiency, and refresher courses may be approved under certain circumstances.

Eligibility

You must be the son, daughter, or spouse of:

- A veteran who died or is permanently and totally disabled as the result of a service-connected disability. The disability must arise out of active service in the Armed Forces.
- A veteran who died from any cause while such permanent and total service-connected disability was in existence.
- A service member missing in action or captured in line of duty by a hostile force.
- A service member forcibly detained or interned in line of duty by a foreign government or power.
- A service member who is hospitalized or receiving outpatient treatment for a service connected permanent and total disability and is likely to be discharged for that disability. This change is effective December 23, 2006.

You may be entitled to receive up to 45 months of DEA benefits. You may receive a maximum of 48 months of benefits combined if you're eligible under more than one VA education program. **For example**, let's say you're eligible as a veteran yourself and also as a veteran's dependent. As a veteran, you had already used 30 months of benefits under the Montgomery GI Bill - Active Duty program. You could then have 18 months of benefits remaining under the DEA program.

Payment Rates

For the current payment rates under Chapter 35 (DEA) please follow the link below.

http://www.gibill.va.gov/resources/benefits_resources/rate_tables.html#Ch35

Your Responsibilities to the VA and RMCC

Notify the VA and RMCC if you:

- Change your enrollment
- Change your address

How to Apply

You should make sure that your selected program is approved for VA training. If you are not clear on this point, VA will inform you and RMCC about the requirements.

Obtain and complete **VA Form 22-5490**, Application for Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance. Send it to the VA regional office with jurisdiction over the State where you will train. If you are a son or daughter, under legal age, a parent or guardian must sign the application.

If you're eligible, you'll receive a **Certificate of Eligibility** showing how long you're eligible and how many months of benefits you can receive.

If you have started training, take your application to RMCC. Ask RMCC to complete **VA Form 22-1999**, Enrollment Certification, and send both forms to VA.

Section 301 of Public Law 109-461 adds a new category to the definition of "eligible person" for DEA benefits. The new category includes the spouse or child of a person who:

VA determines has a service-connected permanent and total disability; and at the time of VA's determination is a member of the Armed Forces who is hospitalized or receiving outpatient medical care, services, or treatment; and is likely to be discharged or released from service for this service-connected disability.

Persons eligible under this new provision may be eligible for DEA benefits effective December 23, 2006, the effective date of the law.

DEA provides education and training opportunities to eligible dependents of veterans who are permanently and totally disabled due to a service-related condition, or who died while on active duty or as a result of a service related condition. The program offers up to 45 months of education benefits. These benefits may be used for degree and certificate programs, apprenticeship, and on-the-job training. If you are a spouse, you may take a correspondence course. Remedial, deficiency, and refresher courses may be approved under certain circumstances.

Steps to Follow

- Apply for VA benefits on-line at www.gibill.va.gov or go to RMCC, remember to follow the steps above on how to apply.
- Compare all benefit chapters to decide if Chapter 35 (DEA) is right for you. To do this, please follow the link below.
http://www.gibill.va.gov/resources/benefits_resources/benefit_comparison_tools.html
- Register with RMCC as early as possible to ensure eligibility and timeliness of payments.
- Get to know the VA Certifying Officials for RMCC

- Visit The VA Academic Advisor often to ensure that you are staying on the correct degree plan.
- **Important: If you Drop one or more classes you should notify the VA certifying official as soon as possible. If you do not it could cause an over payment that you as the student will be responsible for paying back!**
- If you drop one or more of your courses, you should always notify VA and RMCC's certifying official as soon as possible. If you drop after the end of the RMCC's drop period, you'll need to let us know the reasons for the change. Unless you can show that the change was due to mitigating circumstances, the VA must reduce or stop your benefits from the beginning date of the term. You may have to repay all benefits for the course or courses.
- **"Mitigating circumstances"** are unavoidable and unexpected events that directly interfere with your pursuit of a course and are beyond your control. If you can show mitigating circumstances, VA can usually pay benefits up to the last date of your attendance. Examples of reasons we may accept are extended illness and unscheduled changes in your employment. Examples of reasons VA may not accept are dropping a course to avoid a failing grade or dislike of the instructor. VA may ask you to furnish evidence to support your reasons for dropping one or more courses. If a serious illness or injury caused the drop, obtain a statement from your doctor. If a change in employment caused the drop, obtain a statement from your employer. The first time you drop up to six credit hours, VA may "excuse" the drop and pay benefits for the period you attended. You won't have to explain the reasons for dropping the course or courses. Remember, this only applies to the first drop.
- **If you need further information on Chapter 35 (DEA) please refer to this pamphlet [http://www.gibill.va.gov/documents/pamphlets/ch35_pamphlet\(2\).pdf](http://www.gibill.va.gov/documents/pamphlets/ch35_pamphlet(2).pdf)**
- Please take advantage of the Veteran Resource Center located in the Student Center of RMCC.
- Interested in joining a school organization talk with Professor Larry Kropp about the Student Veterans of America organization on campus.

All information above obtained at www.gibill.va.gov. For a complete list of Chapter 35 benefits and information please log on to the link above.

RMCC VA Official's Contact Info:

School Certifying Official (SCO)	479-394-7622 ext. 1420
Academic Advisor (AA)	479-394-7622 ext. 1460