

# **Atlanta RPO Update**



**U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
Atlanta Regional Processing Office**

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# Post 9/11 GIBILL Status Since Aug 1, 2009

- Over 446,000 students have applied for a
- Certificate of Eligibility (C of E).
  - over 431,000 of those have received decisions
  - They will be paid when enrolled in school
  - 215,145 total beneficiaries paid to date
  - \$1.9 billion in benefit payments
  - \$924 million to schools
  - \$1 billion to students
  - 79,455 additional payments via advance payment process



# VA Actions in response to backlog

- Increased claims processors from 800 in August 2009 to 1200 FTE in January 2010.
- Established mandatory overtime of 3 days per pay period for RPO claims processing staff
- Redirected 70 RPO staff to claims processing duties
- Redirected customer service support to claims processing 2 days per week - Ended in February
- Established use of headquarters staff to process claims and fiscal transactions during overtime
- Implemented Advance Payment initiative



# Status for Spring 2010

As of Feb 17, 2010

- 184,200 enrollment certificates received from schools
  - 165,228 have been processed
  - Average 20 days to process



# Post 9/11 GIBILL Challenges

- Confusion over housing payment schedule
  - Students expected housing payments at beginning of month or full payment for partial month of attendance
- Complexities in program
  - Significant modifications to IT systems
  - Lack of a set payment “rate”
- Differences in eligibility criteria
  - Transfer of Entitlement required procedural changes
  - Different eligibility criteria for CH 33 programs



# Long Term Solution Milestones

- Interactive development began – October 2009
- Solution Release Schedule
- Long Term Solution Release 1 – Mar 2010
- Long Term Solution Release 2 – June 2010
- Long Term Solution Release 3 – Sep 2010
- Long Term Solution Release 4 – Dec 2010



# Improvements

- Release 1 – April 2010 – FET & job aids web-based
- Release 2 – Jun 2010 – Connect interfaces between IT systems
- Release 3 – October 2010 – Payment back & forth problems resolved
- Release 4 – December 2010 – Rules-based engine that allows full automation (SPAWAR)



# CERTIFICATION TIPS FOR CH 33





# Certify Enrollment

- Change BIO screen to CH 33 *before* inputting a new cert
- Include tuition & fees on all certs (except CH 35)
- Do **not** Amend a cert after you have changed the BIO screen
- Certs submitted as non-33 will not reflect tuition & fees separately
- Do not send a termination when submitting a new Ch 33 cert



# Transfer of Entitlement

- Use social security number of dependent – not sponsor
- Do not include sponsor's SSN on 1999
- Use Payee "00"
- Sponsor does not need to apply for CH 33

*(Latest VAONCE changes – P029 – can be found at [www.gibill.va.gov](http://www.gibill.va.gov))*



# Certify Enrollment

- Distinguish between “Residence” and “Distance Learning”
- Do not add Residence and Distance courses together



# Definition of Residence Courses

- Regularly scheduled class sessions
  - At least once every two weeks
- Total number of sessions must equal the number of credit hours times the weeks in the term
  - EX: 3 credit hour course in 15 week term
  - $3 \times 15 = 45$  – class must meet 45 times during the term (at least every other week)
- *Closed circuit telecast. Instruction offered through closed circuit telecast which requires regular classroom attendance is recognized to the same extent as regular classroom and/or laboratory instruction, provided there is live interaction with the instructor.*



# Residence Graduate Classes

- Regularly scheduled class sessions
  - (two during the enrollment period)
  - Or
- Research for Master's Thesis, Doctoral dissertation, etc.
  - Or
- Combination of both



# Definition of Distance Learning

- Interaction between student & instructors through use of communications technology instead of regularly scheduled class sessions
  - Open circuit television or computer technology
- Hybrid Courses – Must meet the definition of residence training or should be considered distance learning



# Tuition & Fees

- Schools report tuition and fees charged  
*(do not adjust for benefit rate)*
- Deduct any amount paid with Federal Funds (excluding Title IV funds)
- For Example:
  - ROTC
  - MyCAA
  - Health Professionals Scholarship
  - Government Employees' Training Act (GETA)



# Financial Aid/Scholarships

- Title IV Funds include the following
  - FFEL
  - Stafford Loans
  - Federal Perkins Loans
  - FFEL Parent (Plus) Loans
  - Federal Pell Grants
  - Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant

*Do not deduct these amounts from tuition reported to VA*





# Financial Aid/Scholarships

- VA should always be considered first payer
- School should return any additional funds to other sources in accordance with state law or established policies.
- Eligibility and/or continued eligibility to non-federal financial aid should be coordinated between the recipient and the provider.



# Tuition Waivers

- What if my school “waives” tuition for a student?
- Tuition that is waived should *not* be reported to VA as charged tuition & fees



# Flat Rate Tuition

- Divide the total tuition charged by the minimum hours considered full-time
- Certify that amount for each hour certified up to the minimum number of hours required for full-time
- No tuition should be certified for subsequent hours pursued



# Example

- \$7200 for pursuing 12-18 hours
- $\$7200 / 12 = \$600$  per credit hour
- Student enrolled as follows:
  - Term 1 = 6 Credit Hours
  - Term 2 = 6 Credit Hours
  - Term 3 = 3 Credit Hours

Report Tuition as follows:

- Term 1 = \$3600.00
- Term 2 = \$3600.00
- Term 3 = \$0



# Refunding money to VA

- Schools should only refund to VA as follows:
  - Student died during the term & would have been due a refund
  - Student never attended
  - School received payment for an individual that is not a student at your school
  - School received a duplicate payment
  - School received an erroneous payment amount\*\*

*(All other over-ages should be refunded in accordance with institution's established refund policies)*



# Erroneous Payment (VA error)

- Send an email through the [www.gibill.va.gov](http://www.gibill.va.gov) “Ask a question” feature
- Indicate “SCO” in Subject line
- Include student’s name, SSN, and amount of incorrect payment
- VA will confirm amount to be returned in response
- School should return that amount to VA



# Refunding money to VA

- Send a check to Agent Cashier of the RO of jurisdiction – include student's name and VA file number or
- Return uncashed check to:
  - US Department of the Treasury, Financial Management Service, PO Box 51318, Philadelphia, PA 19115-6316

*(These funds are not being applied to any over-payment created on the student)*



# Returning EFT Payments

- Return only a full payment by EFT
- Use ACH return code R31
- VA Tax ID Number is:
  - 741612229





# Over-Payments (O/P)

- No O/P on student when duplicate or erroneous payments made to schools
- O/P for BAH & tuition/fees on student when:
  - School reports change in tuition & fees
  - Student reduces/terminates after beginning of term
- *School must refund tuition to student so that over-payment can be resolved by student*
- *O/P created on student will NOT be recouped from tuition payments*



# Advance Pay Over-Payments

- Created in student's account
- \$750 per month deducted from BAH
- Student can set up payment plan for lesser amount.
  - Call DMC at 1-800-827-0648
  - Submit electronic request through [www.gibill.va.gov](http://www.gibill.va.gov)



# Transfer of Entitlement

- **IMPORTANT !!**
  - Transferor and individual using transferred entitlement are jointly liable for any overpayment of chapter 33 benefits



# Yellow Ribbon 2010-2011

- Yellow Ribbon Enrollment period  
March 15, 2010 - May 21, 2010
- See [www.gibill.va.gov](http://www.gibill.va.gov) for agreement form and instructions



# Federal Tuition Assistance (CH 33)

- VA may pay tuition not covered by TA (like Top-up)
- There is no maximum amount
- Not necessary for school to certify
- If VA can identify specific school, payment will go to school
- If VA can not identify school, payment will go to student.



# FRY SCHOLARSHIP

- Children of active duty members who have died in the line of duty on/after September 11, 2001.
- Benefit is effective August 1, 2009
- Receive up to the highest public, in-state undergraduate tuition and fees, plus a monthly living stipend and book allowance



# Eligible Children

- Are entitled to 36 months of benefits at the 100% level
- Have 15 years to use the benefit beginning on his/her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday
- May use the benefit until 33<sup>rd</sup> birthday
- Cannot use before age 18
- Are not eligible for the Yellow Ribbon Program



# When will benefits be paid?

- No later than August 1, 2010
- VA will begin accepting applications on May 1, 2010
- Payments issued by 8/1/10
- Children enrolled from 8/1/09 to 7/31/10 may receive retroactive payments.
- Children current enrolled use Ch 35





# Transfer of Entitlement

- An individual approved to transfer may—
  - Transfer up to 36 months of benefits (unless DoD/DHS restricts number of months an individual may transfer).
  - Transfer to spouse, child, or children in any amount up to amount transferor has available or amount approved by DoD/DHS.
  - Revoke or modify a transfer request for any unused benefits unless the transferor's 15-year eligibility period is ended.
  - Not transfer benefits to a new dependent once the transferor is no longer a member of Armed Forces.



# Transfer of Entitlement

## Spouses—

- May use after transferor completes 6 years in Armed Forces
- Paid at transferor's rate - Cannot be paid housing allowance or books and supplies stipend if the transferor is on active duty when the spouse is receiving benefits
- Can, unless the transferor revokes transfer, continue to use benefits if divorced after the transfer
- Can use benefits up to transferor's 15-year eligibility period expires unless transferor specifies an earlier ending date
- ***Under law, benefits are not marital property and are not subject to division in a divorce or other civil proceedings***



# Transfer of Entitlement

## Children—

- Must be transferred to an unmarried child who has not reached the age of 18 or, if in school, before child is 23 years of age
- May use after transferor completes 10 years in Armed Forces
- To commence training, child must have—
  - attained age 18; *or*
  - completed requirements of secondary school diploma (or equivalency certificate)
- Receives veteran rate, including housing allowance & book stipend, even if transferor is on active duty
- May use until age 26 – even if transferor’s 15-year eligibility period ended
- May continue to use benefits after marriage (unless transferor revokes)



# Transfer of Entitlement

- Servicemember should visit:

[http://www.defenselink.mil/home/features/2009/0409\\_gibill/](http://www.defenselink.mil/home/features/2009/0409_gibill/)

for information and application

- After the TOE request is approved, family member should submit a VA Form 22-1990E through the GIBILL web-site



# Applying for TOE

- Transferor should apply and receive eligibility notice on DOD TEB web-site
- <https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/TEB/>
- Then child/spouse should complete VA Form 22-1990E



# Work-Study

- Questions / Inquiries
- Applications / contracts:
  - Linda Wiggins – 404-929-3117
  - [Linda.Wiggins@va.gov](mailto:Linda.Wiggins@va.gov)
- Time Records / Payments
  - James Smedley – 404-929-3010
  - [James.Smedley@va.gov](mailto:James.Smedley@va.gov)
- Problems: Jerome Marshall
  - Jerome.Marshall@va.gov



Questions?







