



**Veterans' Guide to
Use of Educational Benefits at
Trinity Valley Community College**

Established in 1946, Trinity Valley Community College is a comprehensive, public post-secondary institution that provides high quality academic instruction, workforce development and continuing education to the citizens of the Trinity Valley area. The College awards Associate degrees, and Program Certificates. Trinity Valley Community College is accredited by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

Mission

Trinity Valley Community College is a *learning-centered college* that provides quality academic, workforce, college preparatory, student support, and community service programs that prepare and empower students for success and promote and enhance life-long learning for all communities served.

Vision

Trinity Valley Community College will excel as a national leader, recognized for the quality of its programs and students in an intellectually vibrant, technologically enhanced, learning-centered environment that is responsive to community and workforce needs.

Purpose

This brochure is intended to help you take advantage of your VA educational benefits. We urge you to read it carefully. The college takes pride in the fact that all certifications are sent to the VA Regional Office electronically, in order to assure their receipt and to reduce the processing time of your claim.

Veterans Affairs is located within the Office of Financial Aid. In support of the Department of Veterans Affairs, (DVA) we provide information about college services, referral information and enrollment certification. If you have questions regarding your veterans educational benefits or college services, call the college's Veterans Affairs desk at (903) 675-6228, Fax (903) 675-6345 or email veterans@tvcc.edu. We are available Monday – Friday, from 8am to 4:30 pm, providing assistance to Veterans and their dependents on a walk-in basis.



VA Contact Information

DVA Regional Office –Muskogee
125 South Main St
Muskogee, OK 74401-7004

GI Bill Website:
Education Inquiries:
Enrollment Verification:
Address/Direct Deposit Change
Other Benefits:
TTY:

DVA Regional Office-Waco
OneVeterans Way/701 Clay Ave
Waco, TX 76799

<http://www.gibill.va.gov>
1-888-442-4551
1-877-823-2378
1-877-838-2778
1-800-827-1000
1-800-829-4833

Your VA Chapter

Here are brief descriptions of current DVA benefit programs, known as chapters. Your VA benefits are likely to fall under one of these chapters; always call the VA at 1-888-442-4551 or visit www.gibill.va.gov to determine your status. Since these Chapters differ in some important ways, you need to be familiar with your chapters regulations.

Chapter 30: Montgomery GI Bill—Active Duty (MGIB)

- Must have entered active duty after June 30, 1985.
- A contributory program--\$1200 through payroll deduction.
- No allowance for dependents.
- 36 months of full-time entitlement; 10 years from date of discharge to use it.
- Discharge must be Honorable.
- You must have completed your initial contractual active duty obligation or separated early with a qualifying reason.

Chapter 31: Vocational Rehabilitation for Disabled Veterans

- VA must determine whether you qualify and they will notify the college.
- Pays a monthly benefit plus: tuition, fees, books and supplies.
- Pays an additional subsistence allowance for dependents.
- 48 months of full-time entitlement to be used over a maximum of 12 years.
- You must be enrolled at least half-time to participate.
- Deviations from your rehabilitation plan should be approved by your case manager prior to registration.

Chapter 33: Post 9/11 GI Bill

The Post 9/11 GI Bill is for individuals with a minimum of 90 days of aggregate military service on or after September 11, 2001, as well as those discharged with a service-connected disability after 30 days of service after that date. This program pays the following:

- Up to 36 months of educational benefits, with up to 15 years from date of discharge to use them.
- A percentage of tuition and fees, paid directly to the College. The amount paid is determined by your percent of eligibility as determined by the VA and is limited to either your actual charges or to the highest rates charged for the same credits by any public institution in Texas, whichever is lower.
- A monthly housing allowance based on the Basic Allowance for an E-5 with dependents living in the college's geographic area. NOTE: Not payable to those on Active Duty. Not payable to those taking fewer than 7 credits. Not payable to those who are taking all courses via distance learning. These payments are sent directly to you.
- An annual books and supplies stipend of up to \$1,000 paid proportionately, based on enrollment. NOTE: not available to active duty personnel. This payment is also sent directly to you.
- **Transfer of entitlement:** Active duty members serving on or after August 1, 2009 may be able to transfer benefits to your spouse or dependent children. You must be on active duty when you apply for this benefit. For eligibility criteria and application procedures please go to the VA website, www.gibill.va.gov.
- **NOTE:** To receive this benefit, whether you are transferring from another VA education benefit program or applying to this one for the first time, you MUST complete a VA form 22-1990, Application for Benefits, and receive a Certificate of Eligibility which indicates the per cent of eligibility you are qualified to receive. The college must have a copy of the Certificate in your file to continue to process your benefits after your first semester here. Go to www.gibill.va.gov to access the application form.

Chapter 35: Dependents' Educational Assistance Program

- For qualified dependents of a veteran who is permanently and totally disabled as the result of, or dies of, a service-connected disability.
- You may receive benefits until your eligibility period ends or you use all of your entitlement, whichever comes first.
- Requires a special file number from VA which you must record on all VA paper-work.

Chapter 1606: Montgomery GI Bill Selected Reserve

- This Program is for members of the reserve components of the Armed Forces who agreed to serve 6 years in the Selected Reserve beginning after June 30, 1985.
- Reserve components decide who's eligible for the program, not [VA](#). [VA](#) makes the payments for the program.
- Must complete your Initial Active Duty for Training (IADT) and maintain Selected Reserve Status.
- Must complete High School or have a G.E.D.
- No restriction against service academy graduates.
- Entitlement ends the date you separate from the Selected Reserve or 10 years from the date your eligibility began, whichever is earlier.

Chapter 1607: Reserve Educational Assistance Program (REAP)

- For members of the reserve components-Selected Reserve and Individual Ready Reserve who are called or ordered to active duty on or after September 11, 2001, for at least 90 consecutive days under a contingency operation, in response to a war or national emergency, as declared by the President or Congress.
- Eligibility will be determined by the Department of Defense or the Department of Homeland Security as appropriate.
- The allowance payable under REAP is a percentage of the MGIB Active Duty rate based on the number of continuous days served on active duty. Members receive 36 months of entitlement after serving the minimum 90 days.
- Selected Reserve and Ready Reserve members must remain eligible for this benefit by continuing to serve in the Selected Reserve.

College vs. Veterans Administration

Always remember that you are, first of all, a student at Trinity Valley Community College. All college policies, procedures, rules and regulations apply to you. Using Veterans benefits to help pay for your education will add to the steps you must take to register for or withdraw from classes. It will add another level of paperwork for you to fill out and a more restrictive set of guidelines for you to follow. VA paperwork does not replace college paperwork and vice versa. You must always do both, even if you simply report the same information twice.

Forms, Forms, and more Forms

It should come as no surprise that everything you do with regard to your VA educational benefits requires a form! To put it simply, you must complete one or more forms for the following circumstances:

Chapter Number	Initial Application For Benefits	Additional Forms Required
30,,33	VAForm 22-1990	DDForm 214 (Mbr 4)
31	Completed at the VA Regional Office where your Counselor is located.	VAForm 28-1905
35	VA Form 22-5490	Sponsor's DD214 (Mbr 4)
1606	VA Form 22-1990	DD Form 2384-1 Notice of Basic Eligibility (NOBE) Available at your unit DD214 (Mbr 4)
1607	VA Form 1990 DD Form 214 (Mbr 4)	Military Orders and other documented evidence of qualifying service.

Chapter Number	Change of Program Or Place of Training	Change of Name Or Address
30, 31, 33,1606, 1607	VA Form 22-1995	Complete VA Form 20-572
35	VAForm 22-5495	Complete VA Form 20-572

ALL CHAPTERS		
All Chapters	Complete TVCC Veterans Benefits Application (VBA) form every semester	This form gives us permission to notify VA of your enrollment. Early Registration and submission of your VBA is one key to timely processing of VA benefit requests
All Chapters	Changes in Enrollment (Add/Drop)	Complete TVCC Schedule Change Form
All Chapters	Semester Withdrawals	Complete Semester Withdrawal Form

NOTE: Students should immediately notify the VA desk of all changes to enrollment. Education forms are available at the VA desk and/or the VA website.

When will the College Notify the VA of your Enrollment?

At TVCC, your certification for benefits will occur shortly after you have settled your tuition bill. You can do this in several ways:

- Sign up for the college’s payment plan.
- Apply available financial aid, tuition assistance or other forms of third-party payment.
- Submit paperwork (form 28-1905) verifying that the VA will pay your bill (CH 31 only)
- Submit a copy of your Certificate of Eligibility for Post 9/11 GI Bill (CH 33 only) .
- Pay the bill yourself.

**THE COLLEGE DOES NOT DEFER PAYMENTS PENDING RECEIPT OF FUTURE BENEFITS.
THE COLLEGE DOES NOT PROCESS ADVANCE PAYMENTS.**

When Will You Get Your Money?

That depends...and it depends on so many things that it’s hard to answer the question directly. The best answers will come from VA directly, after the school verifies your enrollment.

Generally, first-time users will have to wait at least 12 weeks, while continuing and returning students may have to wait from 8 to 12 weeks after the VA receives your request for payment. If over 8 weeks have passed since the first day of classes for the term in which you have applied for benefits and you have not received anything in writing from the VA, please contact the VA directly to determine the status of your request.

How do you Receive Payments?

VA education benefits follow a post-payment plan. In other words, you are paid around the first of a given month for your period of enrollment in the **previous month**. To receive payment, Chapter 30, 1606 and 1607 recipients must verify enrollment monthly, on the **last day of each month**, by calling 1-888-823-2378 or logging on to the GI Bill website, going to “Information for Benefit Recipients” and then to WAVE. Payments are normally deposited in your bank account using direct deposit. Chapter 31, 33 and 35 does not require monthly enrollment verification and payments are delivered via regular mail. **If you have questions about the status of your benefits request, first call the college VA Services Desk, then call the VA, if necessary.**

How Much Will You Receive?

This is another “that depends” area. Active duty personnel receive tuition and fees. Veterans are paid according to their enrollment status—full time, $\frac{3}{4}$ time, halftime or less-than halftime. **The amounts for each category vary considerably, according to your Chapter, number of dependents (CH 31), applicable bonuses and kickers.** Base payment rates for your chapter can be found at the GI Bill website.

Active Duty Tuition Assistance

This benefit is paid directly to the college through paperwork you submit at the time you register. There are no monthly benefits associated with this option. **Use of Tuition Assistance does not preclude use of VA benefits.**

National Guard and Reserve Tuition Assistance

It is recommended that you see your unit retention or Education officer early for advice on eligibility, unit processes, and timeframes for requesting tuition assistance so that after registration, you can be prepared to present all payment related documents i.e., tuition assistance form, state waiver letter, and school bill to the Financial Aid Office at the same time. **If you submit any of these documents to the Financial Aid Office after you have paid your bill, or signed up for the college payment plan, the paperwork will not be accepted.**

Interval Payment:

Interval payment is no longer authorized.

Overpayment Status:

Overpayments occur whenever you receive a non-punitive grade (W, H, Q, F*) in a course claimed for payment of benefits. If VA has charged you with an overpayment of benefits at some point in the past, you will not be paid again until they have recovered that debt. Be aware that the VA allows one instance of withdrawal from up to six credits without creating an overpayment in your file.

Other Financial Resources:

Hazlewood Act: Veterans who have exhausted their federal education benefits or whose benefits have expired may be eligible for the Hazlewood Exemption for Texas veterans. The Hazlewood Act (Section 54.203, Texas Education Code) exempts eligible Texas veterans from payment of tuition and certain fees at Texas public institutions of higher education. All documentation must be on file prior to the census date of the term for which the student is applying for the Hazlewood Act Exemption. In order to be eligible to receive a Hazlewood Act Exemption, a veteran shall demonstrate that he or she:

1. at the time of entry into the U.S. Armed Forces, was a citizen of the United States and a resident of Texas;
2. has received an honorable discharge from active service, general discharge under honorable conditions, or an honorable separation from service;
3. has served at least 181 days of active military duty, excluding training ("net active service" on DD Form 214);
4. has exhausted all federal veterans' education benefits, including such benefits as those issued under Title 38, US Code, Chapters 30, 32, and 35, and Title 10, US Code, Chapters 1606 and 1607 (federal Pell and SEOG are now excluded);
5. has resided in Texas at least 12 months or otherwise been classified as a Texas resident by the institution for the term or semester for which the veteran applies for the Hazlewood Act Exemption;
6. is not in default on an education loan that was made or guaranteed by the U.S. federal government or by the State of Texas;
7. has attempted fewer than 150 credit hours of college courses using the Hazlewood Act Exemption beginning with fall of 1995, and
8. is enrolled in an eligible program of study.

When applying for the first time for the Hazlewood Act Exemption, a veteran shall provide to the institution, along with the Hazlewood Act Exemption Application, the following supporting documentation:

1. a copy of the veteran's Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty (DD Form 214);
2. proof of the veteran's or reservist's current status regarding eligibility for federal veterans education benefits (call VA Office, Muskogee, OK, 1-888-442-4551, to request a benefit letter), and

3. documentation of Texas residency at the time the veteran entered the service.

The Hazlewood Act Exemption is also available to the dependent children of eligible Texas armed services members who died in the line of duty or as a result of injury or illness directly related to military service and to the dependent children of members of the Texas National Guard or the Texas Air National Guard killed since January 1, 1946, while on active duty either in the service of Texas or the United States. In order to receive a Hazlewood Act Exemption, all federal survivor's benefits (Chapter 35) must be exhausted. All documentation must be on file prior to the census date of the term for which the student is applying for the Hazlewood Act Exemption. For additional information, contact the TVCC financial aid office or the TVCC website at www.tvcc.edu/finserv; www.collegefortexans.com; or the Texas Veterans Commission website at www.tvc.state.tx.us/Hazlewood.

Do it by Degrees

VA expects you to work toward a degree approved by them. Fortunately, they have approved all our Associate Degrees, Certificate programs. Currently, no additional non-credit classes have been approved for VA benefits. VA does not permit enrollment as a non-degree seeking student.

Carefully select your academic program at the time you apply for admission. The program you select on your application will determine the courses you will need to take in order to complete your program. **Every course for which you register will be approved or denied for payment of VA benefits based on whether or not it is required by that program according to the catalog under which you were admitted.** Electives are allowed, but only up to the number of elective credits allowed in the published curriculum.

Academic Pursuit, VA Style

VA has some firm regulations governing college enrollment and how it will be counted for payment. These regulations place some limits on you which are unique to recipients of VA benefits. Following are descriptions of how VA treats some rather common experiences.

Co-op Courses

Co-op courses may be certified for payment so long as you are also enrolled in 6 or more regular credits (3 in the summer). Benefits are paid at the co-op rate of 80% for the semester for all courses, not just the co-op course. (Note: Chapter 1606 participants may be paid for co-op courses only if you enlisted or extended an enlistment to a 6 year period on or after Oct. 1, 1990). No student will be certified for a co-op course that is not in 6 or more credits of regular coursework in the same semester.

Credit for Prior Training

VA absolutely requires that you submit to the College, transcripts of all prior college work, as well as your military transcripts, for transfer evaluation. **You must submit all transcripts even if you think no credit will be awarded, since the law says the College must officially determine that fact. You have two semesters in which to get all prior training evaluated. Otherwise, benefits will be withheld.**

Developmental Courses

Developmental Courses are fully certifiable as long as it is on your degree plan that you need these particular classes.

NOTE: Chapter 1606 participants may be paid for Developmental courses if you enlisted or extended your enlistment to a 6 year period beginning on or after Oct. 1, 1990.

Online Courses

Online Courses are completely certifiable with the VA under Chapter 30, 31, 35, 1606, and 1607. Chapter 33 participants will have tuition paid for online courses but will NOT receive the full housing allowance unless at least one course in their schedule is taught on campus, in the traditional format. If the student is enrolled in all online courses they will receive half of the national average of BAH.

Dropping a Course or Courses

VA must be notified immediately when you withdraw from a course or courses, so it is important that students report changes to their enrollment to the TVCC VA desk as soon as possible. Unless you can successfully prove that mitigating circumstances caused this action, you will be required to pay back to the VA, all money you received as a result of that course or courses starting from the first day of the semester. (Examples of acceptable mitigating circumstances are illness, family or financial emergencies, job transfer and child care problems). One further thing to note: VA will allow one instance of withdrawal involving up to six credits without requiring proof of mitigating circumstances. For this one time, your benefits are terminated for the course (s) dropped as of the date of withdrawal, rather than the date the course (s) began. But that is the only time this treatment will apply.

NOTE: VA considers auditing a course the same as a withdrawal—no benefits can be paid!

Non-punitive Grades (W, I)

VA will charge you with an overpayment if you claim a course for benefits and then receive one of these non-punitive grades. The college is required to report such grades to the VA within 30 days of the time the grade is recorded.

If you receive an administrative withdrawal for non-attendance the college reports the course as withdrawn as of the end of the third week of the semester. This is the published deadline for awarding this grade.

The college also reports an F* grade, which is given for academic dishonesty.

Repeating a Course

VA will pay for you to take the same course twice if:

- a. You failed it the first time
- b. You passed, but the school catalog states you need a higher grade in order to complete your program or to progress to a higher-level course.

While you personally may want to repeat a course you took many years ago or one in which you received a “D” grade, VA generally will not pay benefits for this choice, no matter how wise your decision may be academically.

Required vs. Elective Courses

It is the college’s responsibility to certify to the VA every semester that the courses you are taking actually count toward the program you are following at this college. You may take electives only to the extent they are allowed in your program. The college cannot certify payment for courses which might count toward an eventual 4-year degree, for example, because we don’t offer those degrees. Nor can we certify courses you take for fun or personal enrichment unless they also count in your degree program. Use your catalog to help you identify required courses.

Supplemental Certifications

If you are a student at another school, where you have been using your VA benefits, and just want to take a few classes to transfer back to that institution for their degree, you must report to us the name and full mailing address of that school. You must also give us written approval (Parent Institution Letter (PIL)) from your primary school to take our courses before we can process your paperwork.

Tutorial Assistance

The VA will provide money to help defray the cost of a tutor, with certain limitations. The maximum amount payable per month is \$100 with a maximum total amount for any one student of \$1200 per year.

There are personal counselors available for non-academic issues.

Extension Centers

For those unable to travel to the Athens Campus, the college provides three additional locations. They offer a wide range of credit courses and opportunities for degree attainment. Courses at these three locations are identical in title, number, course content and credit to those available at the Athens campus. In most cases, these locations are open the same hours as the student services office on Athens campus (8:00 a.m. – 4:30p.m. Monday-Friday).

All college policies and academic regulations in effect on the Athens campus also apply at the other locations. While the college makes every effort to provide a full range of services at each location, some services, due to their specialized or complex nature, are available only at the main campus in Athens. This includes the certification of enrollment for those with VA educational benefits.

Chapter 33 Post 9/11 recipients will receive the BAH rates at the Athens campus no matter what campus they attend. The VA uses the address of the school to determine the BAH and the only address the VA has for TVCC is the Athens campus.

Extension Center Locations

TVCC-Palestine

2970 North State Highway 19
PO Box 2530
Palestine, TX 75802
903-729-0256
Fax: 903-729-2325

TVCC-Terrell

1200 East I-20
PO Box 668
Terrell, TX 75160
972-563-9573
Fax: 972-563-1667

TVCC-Health Science Center

800 Ed Hall Drive
Kaufman, TX 75142
972-932-4309
Fax: 972-932-5010

Summary

VA expects you to be serious about your pursuit of a degree objective. They expect consistent progress toward that objective, as defined by the college's curriculum and its academic standards. So long as you realize that your entitlement to benefits carries with it some restrictions and reporting obligations, both on your part and the college's, then you should be able to successfully use your benefits for many semesters.

Veterans Affairs Office
veterans@tvcc.edu

Trinity Valley Community College
Financial Aid Office
100 Cardinal Drive
Athens, Texas 75751

www.tvcc.edu

Registrar's Office	1-903-675-6217
Advising	1-903-675-6350
Financial Aid	1-903-675-6233
Cashier	1-903-675-6269
Bookstore	1-903-675-6223
Campus Police	1-903-675-6235
School Relations	1-903-675-6357