

SUPPORTING STUDENT VETERANS: BENEFITS, INSIGHTS, AND BEST PRACTICES

Cory Shay

Director of Military and Veteran Success

Penn West University

Carrie Wilson

Financial Aid Administrator, VA School Certifying Official

Pennsylvania Gunsmith School

TODAY'S TOPICS

- ❖ The Basics
- ❖ 5 Things Veterans Want You to Know
- ❖ Best Practices
- ❖ Insight From The Trenches
- ❖ Resources

THE BASICS

TYPES OF VA EDUCATION BENEFITS

CH. 33 – POST 9/11

- 36 months active duty = 100% eligible for 36 months of school
- Typically covers tuition
- Book & Supply Stipend
- Monthly Housing Allowance

CH. 31 – VETERANS READINESS & EDUCATION (FORMERLY VOC REHAB & EMPLOYMENT)

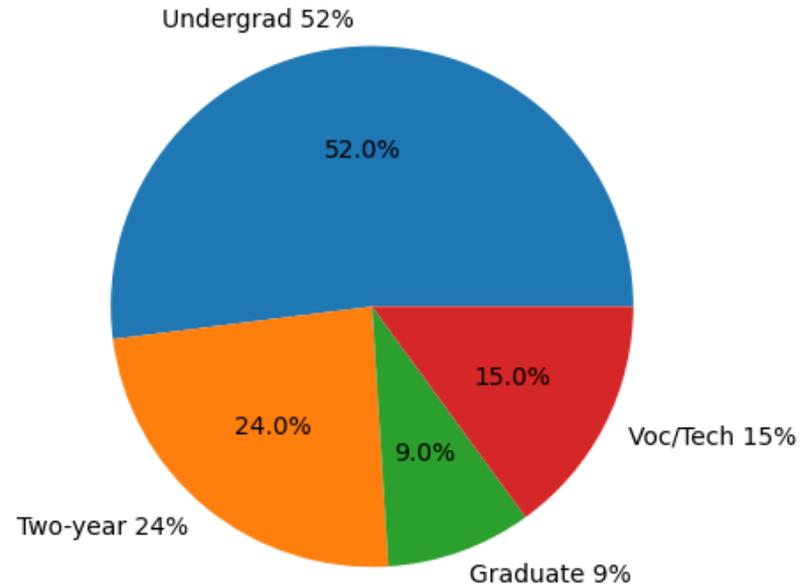
- Minimum 10% disability rating
- Must be approved by a counselor for specific training
- Typically covers tuition and supplies, books, etc.
- Monthly Housing Allowance
- Career counseling and support during training

TYPES OF VA EDUCATION BENEFITS

- Additional GI Bill Chapters
 - Ch. 30 (Montgomery GI Bill)
 - Chapter 1606 (Reserve and National Guard Gi Bill)
 - Chapter 35 (Dependent GI Bill)
 - Fry Scholarship Under Chapter 33
 - Transferred Benefits Under Chapter 33
- Yellow Ribbon
- EAP
- FTA
- Rudisill Supreme Court ruling allows veterans to combine multiple service periods for up to 48 months of benefits.

CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDENT VETERANS

- Most are ages 24–40.
- 47% have children.
- 47% are married.
- 62% are first-generation college students.
- 75% of student Veterans are attending school full time.



THE BASICS

VA Benefits and Financial Aid

- ❖ The FAFSA has a different definition of a veteran.
- ❖ Federal veterans' education benefits are not considered when packaging financial aid.
- ❖ PA Veterans in eligible programs who meet residency and other requirements and meet the FAFSA deadline receive a full PHEAA State Grant regardless of financial need.

UNIQUE STRENGTHS



- Veterans are different from traditional college students: older, more mature, more practical
- They have real world experience
- Veterans bring many strengths to campus including:
 - Organization
 - Leadership
 - Discipline
 - Follow through
 - Teamwork
 - Sense of duty
 - Problem solving
 - Resiliency

UNIQUE CHALLENGES



- Many think that typical college students are naïve, opinionated and have no life experience.
- Hard to re-adjust to real world when you perceive those around you as immature and disrespectful.
- Multiple roles, such as parent, spouse, employee, or Reservist/Guardsman.
- Some student Veterans are dealing with physical and/or emotional disabilities.
 - **Musculoskeletal problems**
 - **Hearing problems**
 - **Sleep disorders**
 - **"Invisible wounds"** of war such as traumatic brain injury, posttraumatic stress disorder, major depression, or anxiety.

5 THINGS VETERANS WANT YOU TO KNOW

15 THINGS VETERANS WANT YOU TO KNOW



Educating a Nation

- Our Mission: Educating a Nation
- PsychArmor® Institute provides critical resources to Americans so they can effectively engage with and better support military service members, Veterans and their families across our nation.

#1

WE ARE NOT
ALL SOLDIERS.

Question #1:

What branch??



#2

**NOT EVERYONE IS
INFANTRY**

Question #2

What was your job?





#3
IT IS
REALLY
HARD FOR
US TO
ASK FOR
HELP.

Offer to help.

#4

Not every veteran
and service member
had the same
experiences.



#5

Not every veteran has PTSD.



STRATEGIES FOR BUILDING
TRUST & COLLABORATIONS

- ❖ **Let veterans know that you are on their side.**
- ❖ **Show your appreciation for their service by helping them access all benefits for which they are eligible**

ACTIONABLE STEPS



Know the benefits that may be available



Encourage responsible borrowing if a student needs or chooses to take out a student loan



Help navigate through financial aid world and translate “financial aid-ese”



Refer student veterans to available resources (on-campus and off)

ACTIONABLE STEPS

- ❖ **Know the current MHA for your area**
- ❖ **Make sure Vets realize MHA is paid in arrears**
- ❖ **Celebrate Veteran's Day**

INSIGHTS FROM THE TRENCHES

INSIGHTS



Keep veterans certified to prevent MHA disruptions.



Be a nag. Keep pestering.



Learn not to take things personally.



Use the SCO hotline and Ask a Question.

INSIGHTS

- ❖ **Get veterans to meet the PHEAA deadlines!!!**
- ❖ **Calculate the payoff for paperwork effort**
- ❖ **When needed, use your authoritative voice**

RESOURCES

RESOURCES

- **Electronic Announcements about Veterans Education Benefits and FA:**
 - <https://ifap.ed.gov/eannouncements/081309GuidFedVeteransEdBenefits.html>
 - <https://ifap.ed.gov/eannouncements/070209FederalVeteransEducationBenefits.html>
- **Ask a Question:** <https://www.va.gov/contact-us/ask-va/introduction>
- **SCO Handbook:**
https://www.knowva.ebenefits.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_ssnew/help/customer/locale/en-US/portal/55440000001018/content/554400000149088/School-Certifying-Official-Handbook-On-line
- **SCO Hotline:** (855) 225-1159

RESOURCES

- **PyschArmor:** <https://psycharmor.org>
- **Direct Deposit for education benefits:** (888)442-4551
- **Vet Centers:** <https://www.vetcenter.va.gov>
- **Veterans Crisis Line:** (800) 273-8255

RESOURCES

- **BAH Calculator:** <https://www.travel.dod.mil/Allowances/Basic-Allowance-for-Housing/BAH-Rate-Lookup/>
- **VA College Toolkit:** <https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/student-veteran/>

QUESTIONS?

CONTACT US

Cory Shay

Director of Military and Veteran Success

Penn West University

shay_c@pennwest.edu

Carrie Wilson

Financial Aid Director / VA SCO

Pennsylvania Gunsmith School

c.wilson@pagunsmith.edu