

GovDelivery, EDU Webpage, VR&E Webpage, & Social Media Response (once we have the correct message, we can flip to SCO and VSO specific)

Dear GI Bill or Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) Student (School Certifying Official / VSO Partners),

Since the passage of Public Law 116-128 on March 21, 2020, VA has continued to work with Congress to preserve education benefits for impacted students during this difficult time. On April 21, 2020, Congress passed the *Student Veteran Coronavirus Response Act of 2020*. This new law will give the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) additional authorities to continue GI Bill and VR&E payments for the period beginning on March 1, 2020 and ending on December 31, 2020. First, it will allow for the continuation of payments to students participating in the Work Study Program who are furloughed or have to stop working. It will also allow VA to continue to pay benefits for up to 4 weeks to GI Bill and VR&E students whose classes are suspended, even if school is still open. Also, there is a provision for restoration of entitlement for GI Bill and VR&E students who lose credit due to school closure or schools' suspension of training. Finally, the new law will allow VA to extend the delimiting date for Montgomery GI Bill, Post-9/11 G Bill, and VR&E students if they are unable to attend training due to COVID-19. VA already has the authority to extend delimiting dates for Survivors and Dependent Educational Assistance Program (DEA) beneficiaries. VA is working to immediately implement the new changes upon enactment to ensure students continue to receive their education benefits.

In addition, this bill will allow VR&E students to continue to receive payments if a school permanently closes or a course of study is disapproved for up to 120 days or the end of the term, whichever occurs first. GI Bill students already have access to this benefit. It will also permit VR&E to extend payments for an additional two months while VR&E participants are seeking employment. Furthermore, it will allow VR&E to extend the 18-month limitation on employment services.

What should GI Bill and VR&E Students know?

At this time, there is no action required from a GI Bill or VR&E student. VA will provide new guidance and schedule training sessions with all VA approved schools and training facilities soon. We will work closely with work site managers and schools to ensure enrollments are accurately certified and processed timely.

We are committed to providing regular updates to you through direct email campaigns and social media about VA's effort to implement these new changes.

If you have questions about your GI Bill benefits, please contact the Education Call Center at 1-888-442-4551 between 8 AM and 7 PM Eastern Time, Monday-Friday. GI Bill students may also learn more from the Student COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions webpage at:

<https://benefits.va.gov/GIBILL/index.asp>

VR&E students may contact their assigned Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor directly via phone or email with any questions or concerns they may have during this period.

Respectfully,
Education and VR&E Service