

# U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Veterans Benefits Administration



## SURVEY OF DEPENDENTS SATISFACTION with the VA EDUCATION BENEFITS CLAIMS PROCESS

Thank you for your help with this important project. This booklet contains questions about your recent experience with filing for VA education benefits. Please base your answers only on your experience with the education claim identified in the space below.

If you'd prefer to complete this survey on-line, see the letter enclosed with this questionnaire for instructions.

Please read and answer the following question first.

**According to their records, VA received an education claim from you, you are currently receiving education benefits, or you have received them in the past. Is this true?**

- Yes** (Continue to instructions on the next page of the booklet, complete the rest of the questionnaire as soon as possible, and mail it in the enclosed postage-paid envelope.)
- No** (STOP. You do not have to complete the rest of this questionnaire, but please return the questionnaire in the enclosed postage-paid envelope.)

Again, we thank you for helping VA provide better service to veterans and their dependents.



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## INSTRUCTIONS

This survey will take about 20 minutes to complete. Please follow these instructions.

- 1 Use a soft lead pencil.
- 2 Fill in only one answer circle for each question unless it tells you to "Mark all that apply."
- 3 When you are finished, place the questionnaire in the enclosed postage-paid envelope and put it in the mail.

All questions ask you to fill in a circle. For example:

10. Did VA let you know your application had been received?

- Yes  
 No

In addition, at the end of the form there is space for you to give us any additional comments concerning how VA could improve the way education benefits are handled.

Please watch for "SKIP" instructions -- they tell you when to skip over a group of questions that you do not need to answer.

### OMB Control Number: 2900-0569 Public Reporting Burden Statement

VA may not conduct, sponsor, or require the respondent to respond to this collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB Control Number. All responses for this collection are voluntary. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 20 minutes per response, including the time necessary for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Failure to furnish the requested information will have no adverse effect on any VA benefit to which you may be entitled.

The information you supply will be confidential and protected by the Privacy Act of 1974 (5 U.S.C. 522a) and the VA's confidentiality statute (38 U.S.C. 5701) as implemented by 38 CFR 1.526(a) and 38 CFR 1.576(b). Disclosure of information involves releases of statistical data and other non-identifying data for the improvement of services within the VA benefits processing system and associated administrative purposes. If you have comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspects of this collection of information, call 1-800-827-1000 for mailing information on where to send your comments.

## PREPARING FOR YOUR EDUCATION BENEFITS

**1. Which of the following best describes your eligibility for education benefits?**

- Orphan of the veteran
- Child of the veteran
- Widow or widower of the veteran
- Current or former spouse of the veteran

**2. Where did you first LEARN about VA's education benefits program?**

- Letter from VA
- VA information pamphlet
- Friend or family
- Military base or family support center
- Commercial or advertisement
- VA's website on the Internet
- Other

**3. Looking back, how much of what you NEEDED TO KNOW did you get from this source?**

- All
- Most
- Some
- Little
- None

**4. How accurate was the information you received?**

- Very accurate
- Somewhat accurate
- Neither accurate nor inaccurate
- Somewhat inaccurate
- Very inaccurate
- Don't know

**GO TO TOP OF NEXT COLUMN**

**5. Within the past year, did you receive a VA pamphlet about your education benefits through the mail ?**

- No (SKIP to Q 7, page 2)
- Yes (CONTINUE with Q 6)



**6. How much of what you NEEDED TO KNOW did you get from the pamphlet?**

- All
- Most
- Some
- Little
- None

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## APPLYING FOR BENEFITS

### 7. To whom did you submit your application for education benefits?

- School
- VA directly by mail or visit
- VA directly on-line through VA's website
- Don't recall

### 8. Did you find anything to be difficult or confusing about the application?

- No (SKIP to Q 10)
- Yes (CONTINUE with Q 9)



### 9. What specifically did you find to be difficult or confusing about the application?

#### Mark all that apply

- Print size was hard to read
- It was too long
- Some questions were not clear
- Some instructions were confusing
- Asked for information VA should have already had
- Asked for information that was hard to supply
- Not clear why all the information was needed

### 10. Did VA let you know your application had been received?

- Yes
- No

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### 11. How completely did VA keep you informed of the status of your application?

- Completely
- Mostly
- Somewhat
- Only a little
- Not at all
- Didn't need status information

### 12. How long did it take VA to process your application?

- 1 week
- 2 weeks
- 3 weeks
- 4 weeks
- 5 weeks
- 6 weeks
- 7 weeks
- 8 weeks
- 9 weeks
- 10 weeks or more

### 13. How long do you think is REASONABLE for VA to process your application?

- 1 week
- 2 weeks
- 3 weeks
- 4 weeks
- 5 weeks
- 6 weeks
- 7 weeks
- 8 weeks
- 9 weeks
- 10 weeks or more

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## CONTACTING VA BY TELEPHONE

14. Did you PHONE VA about your recent education claim?

- No (SKIP to Q 25, page 4)  
 Yes (CONTINUE with Q 15)



15. How many times did you phone VA about your recent claim?

- 1 time  
 2 times  
 3 times  
 4 times  
 5 times or more

16. Why did you call VA?

*Mark all that apply*

- Get information before I applied for benefits  
 Apply for education benefits  
 Check on the status of my education claim  
 Change the status of enrollment  
 Verify enrollment to VA  
 Check on my remaining education benefits  
 Check on payment  
 Correct a payment problem  
 Get other information

17. How easy was it to get through to VA when you called?

- Very easy  
 Somewhat easy  
 Neither easy nor difficult  
 Somewhat difficult  
 Very difficult  
 Never got through (SKIP to Q 25 page 4)

**GO TO TOP OF NEXT COLUMN**

18. Which of the following happened to you when you called VA?

*Mark all that apply*

- Got through on first try  
 Got a busy signal  
 Experienced a reasonable wait time  
 Waited over a minute for call to be answered  
 Hung up, couldn't wait for call to be answered  
 Call disconnected before it was answered  
 Call got misdirected  
 Other, specify \_\_\_\_\_  
 None of the above

19. How much of what you NEEDED TO KNOW did you get from your telephone contact with VA?

- All  
 Most  
 Some  
 Little  
 None

20. Generally, were you able to get this information on the first call?

- Yes  
 No

21. Was your question answered by the automated system or did you speak with a VA employee?

- Automated system (SKIP to Q 25, page 4)  
 VA employee  
 Both } (CONTINUE with Q 22)

22. How responsive was the person you talked to?

- Very responsive  
 Somewhat responsive  
 Neither responsive nor non-responsive  
 Somewhat non-responsive  
 Very non-responsive

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**23. How courteous was the person you talked to?**

- Very courteous
- Somewhat courteous
- Neither courteous nor discourteous
- Somewhat discourteous
- Very discourteous

**24. Were VA employees able to give you information about your particular education claim on the phone?**

- Yes
- No
- Didn't need claim information

**GO TO TOP OF NEXT COLUMN**

**VISITING VA'S WEBSITE AND CONTACTING VA BY INTERNET OR E-MAIL**

**25. Within the past year, did you VISIT VA's Internet website [www.gibill.va.gov] about your education benefits ?**

- No (SKIP to Q 30, page 5)
- Yes (CONTINUE with Q 26)



**26. Why did you visit VA's website [www.gibill.va.gov]?**

**Mark all that apply**

- Get information before I applied for benefits
- Apply for education benefits
- Send an inquiry to VA
- Get other information about VA education programs
- Couldn't get through on a toll-free phone number
- Download a form
- See what is available on the website
- Other, specify \_\_\_\_\_

**27. In general, how much of what you were looking for did you find on VA's website?**

- All
- Most
- Some
- Little
- None

**28. Did you find anything difficult or confusing about the website?**

- No (SKIP to Q 30, page 5)
- Yes (CONTINUE with Q 29, page 5)

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**29. What specifically did you find difficult or confusing about the website?**

**Mark all that apply**

- System down or not working
- Information displayed was hard to read
- Information displayed was hard to understand
- Didn't understand where to go to retrieve the information I wanted
- Website didn't have the information I was looking for
- It was hard to move about within the website
- Other, specify \_\_\_\_\_

**30. Within the past year, did you use the Internet or e-mail to CONTACT VA about your education benefits?**

- No (SKIP to Q 34, page 6)
- Yes (CONTINUE with Q 31)



**31. Why did you contact VA using the Internet or e-mail?**

**Mark all that apply**

- Get information before I applied for benefits
- Check on the status of my education claim
- Report a change in the status of my enrollment
- Check on my remaining education benefits
- Check on payment
- Correct a payment problem
- Couldn't get through on a toll-free number
- Sent an e-mail to get information after visiting the VA website
- Other inquiry, specify \_\_\_\_\_

**GO TO TOP OF NEXT COLUMN**

**32. What response did you get to your Internet or e-mail inquiry?**

**Mark all that apply**

- Received an acknowledgment of my inquiry
  - Received a complete answer to my inquiry
  - Received an answer, but not all the information requested
  - Inquiry was sent to another office
  - Never received an answer from VA
  - Other, specify \_\_\_\_\_
- (SKIP to Q 34, page 6)**

**33. In general, how much of what you NEEDED TO KNOW did you get from your contact with VA using the Internet or e-mail?**

- All
- Most
- Some
- Little
- None

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## OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION

34. Within the past year, did you receive information about your education benefits from any of the following?

Mark all that apply

- State or county Veterans Service Organizations
- Friends, family, co-workers
- School
- Congressional Office
- Other, specify \_\_\_\_\_
- None of the above

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## WRITING TO VA

35. Did you WRITE to VA about your recent education claim?

- No (SKIP to Q 39, page 7)
- Yes (CONTINUE with Q 36)



36. Why did you write to VA about your education benefits?

Mark all that apply

- Get information before I applied for benefits
- Apply for education benefits
- Check on the status of my claim
- Give VA more information
- Respond to a VA letter
- Respond to a phone call from VA
- Get an explanation of a VA letter
- Have a permanent record in my file of a phone call or interview
- Couldn't get through on a toll-free phone number
- Other, specify \_\_\_\_\_

37. How easy was it for you to understand VA's written reply to your letter(s)?

- Very easy
- Somewhat easy
- Neither easy nor difficult
- Somewhat difficult
- Very difficult
- Didn't receive a written reply (SKIP to Q 39 page 7)

38. How much of what you NEEDED TO KNOW did you get from VA's written reply?

- All
- Most
- Some
- Little
- None

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## RECEIVING YOUR BENEFIT PAYMENTS

**39. From the time your application was submitted to VA, how long did it take to get your first check?**

- 1 week
- 2 weeks
- 3 weeks
- 4 weeks
- 5 weeks
- 6 weeks
- 7 weeks
- 8 weeks
- 9 weeks
- 10 weeks
- 11 weeks
- 12 weeks
- 13 weeks or more

**40. From the time your application was submitted to VA, how long do you think is REASONABLE for you to receive your first check ?**

- 1 week
- 2 weeks
- 3 weeks
- 4 weeks
- 5 weeks
- 6 weeks
- 7 weeks
- 8 weeks
- 9 weeks
- 10 weeks
- 11 weeks
- 12 weeks
- 13 weeks or more

**41. Did you find anything to be difficult about the benefit payment process?**

- Yes
  - No
  - Don't know
- (CONTINUE with Q 42)  
(SKIP to Q 43)

**42. What specifically did you find to be difficult about the benefit payment process?**

**Mark all that apply**

- Payments didn't arrive when needed
- Payments didn't arrive at the same time each month
- Have had to contact VA (in addition to enrollment verification) to get payment
- No explanation of the amount
- No access to direct deposit
- Problem with direct deposit

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**43. Have you received an inaccurate payment on your recent claim?**

- No (SKIP to Q 45)
- Yes (CONTINUE with Q 44)



**44. Was the inaccuracy resolved in a timely manner?**

- Yes
- No

**45. For your recent claim, have you had to borrow or pay out-of-pocket expenses in order to enroll or stay in school because VA didn't complete your paperwork on time?**

- Yes
- No

**46. For your recent claim, have you had to delay enrollment because VA didn't complete your paperwork on time?**

- Yes
- No

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## OVERALL IMPRESSIONS

**47. All things considered, how satisfied are you with the way VA has handled your education benefits claim?**

- Very satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

**48. Do you plan to use all of your benefits for this education program?**

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

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## GENERAL INFORMATION

**49. What is your gender?**

- Male
- Female

**50. What is your current age?**

- 19 years old or younger
- 20 to 24 years old
- 25 to 29 years old
- 30 to 34 years old
- 35 to 39 years old
- 40 to 49 years old
- 50 or older

**51. What is your current marital status?**

- Never been married
- Married
- Separated
- Divorced
- Widowed

**52. Aside from the classes you are currently taking, what is the highest level of education you have completed?**

- High school graduate or GED
- Some college
- College graduate
- Some graduate work
- Graduate or professional degree

**53. In what type of education program are you currently enrolled?**

- On-the-job training or apprenticeship program
- Certificate/license program
- Two-year academic college program
- Four-year academic college program
- Post-graduate degree program

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**54. Do you have access to the Internet?**

- No (SKIP to Q 56, page 10)
- Yes (CONTINUE with Q 55)



**55. Where do you have access to the Internet?**

***Mark all that apply***

- At home
- At my place of work
- At school
- At a friend's or relative's home
- At a commercial establishment
- At a public library
- At a military base or reserve unit
- Other, specify \_\_\_\_\_

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