



**WV HIGHER EDUCATION
POLICY COMMISSION**

Apprenticeship & OJT Training Certifying Official's Introductory Guide

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What are On-The-Job and Apprenticeship Training Benefits?

The benefit is a monthly allowance paid to an eligible veteran or dependent in vocational training with his employer. The trainee is normally receiving reduced wages until the completion of the training.

APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING - An apprentice program conducted by a training establishment, including a course(s) under the supervision of a college or university, any state department of education, state apprenticeship agency, state board of vocational education, joint apprenticeship committee, or the Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training and which has been approved by the state approving agency, which is the Office of Veterans Education and Training Programs (OVETP), and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Education Liaison Representative (ELR).

OJT (ON-THE-JOB TRAINING) - Training given while on the job by an employer who agrees to retain the trainee in employment will be considered a program of education for VA benefit purposes. The training must be for a minimum period of six months and can not exceed two years.

Who is eligible for this benefit?

All veterans who have established eligibility under Chapter 30, Chapter 32 - Section 903, Chapter 33, Chapter 1606, or Chapter 1607 and any spouse or child who is eligible under Chapter 35 benefits. The benefit is not available for a person on active duty.

How do you apply for the benefit?

The trainee needs to contact the employer's training coordinator to determine whether the employer is already approved or willing to participate and become approved to provide training. Many registered apprentice programs, JATCs (Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee), unions, and other large employers are already approved or can obtain approval easily. Other employers can call OVETP who can give a more detailed explanation of the requirements. OVETP personnel and the ELR are available to visit your facility to assist in completing the required forms and explain the reporting requirements. Please contact OVETP at (304) 558-0263 to schedule an appointment or your ELR at (304) 399-9316.

Trainee's Responsibilities

Each trainee must submit an application for education benefits (VA Forms 22-1990 or 22-5490) to the VA so eligibility to benefits under one of the laws can be determined. Once the employer is approved and the appropriate forms have been submitted, the trainee will be issued an award letter explaining the monthly benefit and the monthly reporting procedures. Each month, the trainee will receive VA Form 22-6553d - Monthly Certification, which must be completed by you and the trainee to report the number of hours worked for each month. On this form, you will certify the information and forward it to the Regional Processing Office (RPO) so that payment may be released. **It should be noted that for apprenticeship training, the trainee must also complete 144 hours of related instruction each year.**

Employer's Responsibilities

The employer is responsible for providing the training as outlined by the training agreement. This includes having adequate space, equipment, instructional material, and qualified personnel to provide satisfactory training. Trainee records must be kept to showing the conduct and progress made toward their job objectives while in the training program.

What Are the Benefits for an Employer in Sponsoring an Apprenticeship Program?

Employers find that they benefit in two ways when they utilize apprenticeship or OJT programs.

Economic benefits are derived from your eligibility to pay apprenticeship wages (usually 40 - 50 % of journeyman wages). Registered apprenticeship sponsors are also exempted from paying overtime to apprentices for the related instruction portion of their training. In addition, you may be entitled to tax credits if you hire people who meet specific criteria or if your business is located in specific areas. Furthermore, many sponsors report reduced turnover. We believe this is because the apprentice knows that the employer values trained employees; thus, employee morale is increased.

The intrinsic benefits are many. Overall, apprentices in registered training programs know they have jobs in the future. By working for an employer who values life long learning, apprentices become invested in improving their skills and in achieving a Certificate of Completion, which is a nationally recognized credential. Because apprentices not only learn the techniques of a trade but also understand why they do what they do, they become good problem solvers, work better as team members, and demonstrate better interpersonal skills. Apprentices become skilled, motivated craft workers with a strong work ethic, are well versed in company policy, average better attendance, possess the latest technological skills, and fill critical needs for skilled workers in the face of retirements and to be highly productive with a reduced workforce. Apprentices become skilled craft workers, flexible and productive, who are dedicated to the industry and the specific employer.

Key People

Who are the key people involved in seeing that eligible veterans, service persons, and their dependents receive VA education benefits? This section will introduce you to those key players and their responsibilities.

Certifying Official	You, the Certifying Official, are your employer’s representative responsible for completing all paperwork necessary to certify the enrollment and changes in enrollment for trainees eligible for VA benefits.
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs	<p>The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is the government agency responsible for determining eligibility for VA education benefits and for authorizing benefit payments. You will come in contact with several employees. They are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Buffalo RPO Chief Education Liaison Officer (CELO) Gerald Miller ▪ Education Liaison Representative (ELR) Ronald Marcinko ▪ Education Compliance Survey Specialist (ECSS) Ronald Marcinko <p>The CELO is the supervisor of all ELRs and ECSSs within their Regional Processing Office (RPO) area and is responsible for overseeing the education liaison and compliance functions of VA. The ELR is responsible for reviewing the approvals completed by the state approving agency (SAA) and will serve as VA’s liaison representative with each training establishment. The ECSS is responsible for conducting reviews of the employer’s policies, procedures, and records to ensure they are in compliance with the laws which allow VA benefits to be paid. The ELR and/or the ECSS will visit the training establishment to assist you in completing certifications and to review the facility’s policies, procedures, and trainee records. (NOTE: Sometimes the ELR and the ECSS is the same person, which is the case for WV.)</p>
State Approving Agency	West Virginia’s state approving agency (SAA) is the Office of Veterans Education & Training Programs (OVETP) within the WV Higher Education Policy Commission. OVETP is responsible for reviewing the training establishment and apprenticeship/OJT programs to determine if they can be approved for payment of VA education benefits. Throughout the facility’s approval process, OVETP personnel will visit the facility to review policies, procedures, and trainee’s records. If you need assistance with certifications or have any questions/concerns about the approval of current or new programs, please contact OVETP.
Employees	<p>Trainees who are eligible to receive VA education benefits may fall in one of the following categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Active Selective Reservist or National Guards person ▪ Veteran (discharged or separated service person) ▪ Veteran’s dependent (spouse, surviving spouse, or child) ▪ Disabled veteran

Helpful Numbers & Addresses

The following phone numbers and addresses are important in the certification of veterans, service persons, and dependents for VA benefits. These contact numbers and addresses will link you with people who can help you get started and answer your questions.

Office of Veterans Education and Training Programs (OVETP) WV Higher Education Policy Commission

Personnel	Skip Gebhart, Administrator Nancy Taylor, Associate Statewide Coordinator
Phone Number	304-558-0263
Fax Number	304-558-0089
Email Addresses	gebhart@hepc.wvnet.edu or taylor@hepc.wvnet.edu

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs – Education Service (Local Office)

Personnel	Ronald Marcinko, ELR/ECSS
Phone Number	304-399-9316
Fax Number	304-399-9358
Email Address	ronald.marcinko@va.gov

Other Helpful Numbers and Addresses

Education Related VA Information & Questions	1-888-442-4551 or 1-888-GIBILL1
Non-Education Related VA Information & Questions	1-800-827-1000
For the Hearing Impaired	1-800-829-4833 (<i>This is a computer device and the caller may encounter a lot of static during the call.</i>)
West Virginia’s Vocational Rehabilitation Division	304-399-9300
Addresses	Mail all certifications (except Chapter 31) to: <div style="text-align: center;"> U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs P.O. Box 4616 Buffalo, NY 14240-4616 </div>

VA Education Programs

VA administers several education programs as set down in law, Title 38 United States Code. Each program is found in a different chapter of the law and this chapter number is often used to refer to the different benefit programs. They also have specific names and each program provides different benefits for different groups of individuals. The current payment rates for any chapter can be found at www.gibill.va.gov.

Chapter 30	The Montgomery GI Bill – Active Duty is the most common program. It is for individuals who have been on Active Duty since 7/01/85 and who paid into an education fund for one year. They receive 36 months of full-time benefits.
Chapter 33	The Post-9/11 GI Bill is for individuals who have at least 90 days of aggregate service on or after September 11, 2001, or individuals discharged with a service-connected disability after 30 days. You must have received an honorable discharge to be eligible for the Post-9/11 GI Bill. The Post-9/11 GI Bill will become effective for benefits on or after August 1, 2009. This benefit will provide up to 36 months of benefits and is generally payable for 15 years following release from active duty. It does NOT include benefits for OJT and Apprenticeship!
Chapter 1606	The Montgomery GI Bill - Selective Reserves (formerly chapter 106) is for individuals in the Selected Reserve or National Guard (not on active duty). They must be currently and actively drilling and under a 6-year contract. They are only eligible for benefits as long as they remain in the Reserves.
Chapter 1607	REAP is for members of the Reserve components called or ordered to active duty in response to a war or national emergency (contingency operation) as declared by the President or Congress. This new program makes certain individuals who were activated after September 11, 2001 either eligible for education benefits or eligible for increased benefits.
Chapter 35	<p>The Dependents Educational Assistance Program is the only benefit for individuals without military service. It is for the dependents of a member of the Armed Forces who has died while on active duty or as the result of a service-connected disability, or is 100% permanently and totally disabled for a service-related reason. Dependents receive up to 45 months of full-time benefits. Children generally are eligible for benefits between the ages of 18 and 26, but in certain instances may begin before age 18 and continue beyond age 26.</p> <p>They have a VA file or claim number (C#) that is related to the parent or spouse under whom they are eligible. The dependent's file is also identified by a suffix. (10 or W, 41 or A, 42 or B, etc.) The Chapter 35 program has its own Application for Benefits form (VA Form 22-5490) and its own Change of Program/Training form (VA Form 22-5495).</p>
Chapter 32	The Veterans Educational Assistance Program (VEAP) is the post-Vietnam era program. It is for individuals who served on active duty from 1/1/77 - 6/30/85. This chapter is being phased out.

Chapter 31

Vocational Rehabilitation is for disabled veterans. This is the most unique program and each training establishment is assigned a Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist to work with these trainees and to assist the Certifying Official. These disabled veterans go through a testing process to determine if they are eligible for the benefit. If eligible, VA sends an Authorization to the facility. Full program cost, fees, books, and in many cases, even parking passes are paid by the VA to the facility. In addition, the trainee gets a monthly check depending on their training status.

Responsibilities of the Certifying Official

As the Certifying Official, you are responsible for certifying the enrollment and changes in enrollment of eligible trainees to the VA. This section will briefly describe your responsibilities.

Primary Function	Your primary function is to let VA know if a trainee is enrolled in the program, showing the beginning and ending dates and reporting the number of clock hours per month the beneficiary works. Additionally, you are responsible for notifying VA of any changes in enrollment.
When Can A Trainee Be Certified?	A trainee may be certified after they apply and are accepted by the employer into the training program.
How Do You Certify A Trainee?	You can certify a trainee for VA benefits by filling out VA Form 22-1999, Enrollment Certification Form and SAA 15 Form, Application for Approval and Training Agreement for Apprenticeship/On-the-Job Training. Once completed, these forms must be mailed to OVETP for processing. In addition, you should include any updated wage scales or other information pertinent to the program's approval with the above forms. This will help to speed the processing of the trainee's application.
How are Enrollment Changes Handled?	Each trainee's records should be verified monthly to determine that nothing has changed. Notify VA using VA Form 22-1999b, Notice of Change in Student Status, if the trainee does not make satisfactory progress in the program, has been laid off, changed jobs, etc. (except Chapter 31 trainees – where you need to notify their Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist).
What Records Do I Keep?	You will need to keep copies of all completed VA Forms, progress records, and any other supporting documents, including the trainee's discharge papers (DD-214) or Notice of Basic Eligibility (NOBE), in either paper or electronic form for three years.

VA Forms

To assist a trainee in utilizing their VA Education Benefits, you will need to use a variety of VA and OVETP forms, which will be briefly described in this section. It would be advisable to keep a supply of these on hand. To order additional forms, you can complete VA Form 20-8800, Request for VA Forms and Publications, and fax it to your ELR at (304) 399-9358. Also, you may contact OVETP at (304) 558-0263 for their forms and they do keep a small supply of VA forms on hand in case of emergency need. However, the majority of the necessary forms are available for download at www.veteranseducationwv.com or www.va.gov/forms/benefits.htm.

22-1990	VA Form 22-1990, Application for Education Benefits, is completed by the trainee the first time an application is made. It is helpful and results in faster processing, if the trainee completes this form online at http://vabenefits.vba.va.gov/vonapp/main.asp . If you receive VA Form 22-1990 for processing, we would suggest you keep a copy in the trainee's file. If the trainee has been discharged or released from active duty within the past 90 days, a copy of his/her DD-214 (Member 4) Form should be submitted to the RPO. If the trainee is active in a Reserve or Guard unit, there will not be a DD-214 but a Notice of Basic Eligibility (NOBE) from the unit's Education Officer. However, do not delay sending in VA Form 22-1999 if the trainee doesn't have this form completed.
22-5490	VA Form 22-5490, Application for Survivor's and Dependent's Educational Assistance is used by first time Chapter 35 trainees to apply for benefits. It would be helpful and result in faster processing, if the trainee completed this form online at http://vabenefits.vba.va.gov/vonapp/main.asp . If you receive VA Form 22-5490 for processing, we would suggest you keep a copy in the student's file REMEMBER: Dependents of veterans have a different VA file number than their Social Security Number. It is the VA claim number of the veteran who died while in service or of a service connected disability, or is 100% permanently disabled due to a service-connected disability. This number is sometimes called a "C" number. The "C" number is followed by a payee number or letter. You may see it as 10 or W for a spouse, and 41 or A, 42 or B, 43 or C, etc. for children.
22-1995	VA Form 22-1995, Request for Change of Program or Place of Training, is used for trainees who have previously received VA education benefits. Trainees who have been out of school for six months or more and are returning to the same program will also need to complete this form. To speed the claims process, the trainee should complete this form online at: http://vabenefits.vba.va.gov/vonapp/main.asp . (Note: Chapter 31 – Vocational Rehabilitation trainees will need to utilize VA Form 28-1905 and Chapter 35 trainees will use VA Form 22-5495.)

<p>22-5495</p>	<p>VA Form 22-5495, Request for Change of Program or Place of Training (Survivor's and Dependents Educational Assistance), is used by dependents that are changing their program or have used their benefits at another school/institution or facility. Dependents that have been out for six months or more and are returning to the same program will also need to complete this form. To speed the claims process, the trainee should complete this form online at: http://vabenefits.vba.va.gov/vonapp/main.asp.</p> <p>REMEMBER: Chapter 35 students have a VA claim number that is not their Social Security number; it is the claim number of the veteran whose death or disability gives them their eligibility.</p>
<p>22-1999</p>	<p>VA Form 22-1999, Certification of Enrollment, is used by you to inform VA about the trainee's enrollment. It includes the dates of enrollment (beginning and ending dates), number of clock hours in training, prior credit awarded, type of training (apprenticeship or OJT), and the name of the approved training program.</p>
<p>22-1999b</p>	<p>VA Form 22-1999b, Notice of Change in Student Status, is used to notify VA of any change in a trainee's enrollment - withdrawal from the facility, dismissal for unsatisfactory progress, etc. This form is used for all trainees except Chapter 31 – Vocational Rehabilitation beneficiaries. <i>REMEMBER:</i> All changes in trainee enrollment must be reported to VA within 30 days of the change.</p>
<p>22-6553d</p>	<p>VA Form 22-6553d, Monthly Certification of On-The-Job and Apprentice Training, is used to report the hours that the trainee works monthly. This form will be sent directly to the trainee from the RPO. He/she will be responsible for signing it and giving it to you for verification of hours worked. Once completed, it must be sent back to the issuing RPO so payment can be processed.</p>
<p>28-1905</p>	<p>VA Form 28-1905, Authorization & Certification of Entrance or Re-Entrance in Rehabilitation and Certification of Status, is used for Chapter 31 trainees for both first time application and for changes. The Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist sends VA Form 28-1905 directly to you when a claim has been established and you will then certify the trainee.</p>
<p>28-0175</p>	<p>VA Form 28-0175, Chapter 31 Change in Enrollment, is only used for changes in enrollment for Chapter 31 trainees.</p>

OVETP (SAA) Forms

SAA 15	SAA Form 15, Application for Approval and Training Agreement for On-the-Job Training, is utilized to ensure that the training program has the ability to meet the Code of Federal Regulations and U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs guidelines. In addition, it serves as the agreement between the employer and trainee about the requirements of the training program and the utilization of VA education benefits.
SAA 17	SAA Form 17, Progress and Attendance Record, is designed during the initial application process for the employer based upon the job outline and defined tasks that will be completed. The form is to be used by the trainee and immediate supervisor to ensure that adequate progress is being made in the training program. If your facility has a similar document which tracks the progress of the trainee, the SAA will accept those document in lieu of the SAA 17.

Military Forms

DD-214	The DD-214 Form is the veteran's discharge or separation papers. You need to ask for Member Copy 4. This is indicated on the bottom of the form and shows the individual's type of discharge and reason for discharge.
NOBE	The NOBE is a Notice of Basic Eligibility. It is a temporary eligibility certificate, which is issued by the unit's Education Officer to individuals in the active Selective Reserves or National Guard who have established eligibility for Chapter 1606/1607, but whose computer record has not yet been updated to show the eligibility.

What to Do When a Trainee Has Questions About VA Education Benefits

When a trainee first comes in seeking your assistance, there are several questions you should ask that will help you decide how best to assist the employee. The questions and information on how you should proceed based upon their responses is shown below.

<p>Am I eligible for VA benefits? I have questions about VA benefits.</p>	<p>Refer the student to the toll-free VA Education Phone number: 1-888-GIBILL1 or 1-888-442-4551. Do not try to make determinations of eligibility. The benefit programs change frequently and each individual can have a unique situation so it is best to refer the trainee directly to VA for questions about the programs.</p>
<p>Have you been accepted into the training program?</p>	<p>If they say “NO”, give them the website address for the application forms but explain that until they have applied and are officially accepted into the program, you cannot certify their enrollment or submit their forms. Once they have been officially accepted into the training program, advise them to come back to you.</p> <p>If they say “YES”, continue with the following determinations and explain the trainee’s responsibilities regarding training, maintaining satisfactory progress, and withdrawals.</p>
<p>Have you ever received VA education benefits before?</p>	<p>If they say “YES”, do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have them fill out VA Form 22-1995 or 22-5495 if they are a Chapter 35 student. ▪ Ask them which chapter for which they are eligible. If they do not know, ask whether they are or were active military or active reserves. Sometimes a trainee is eligible under two chapters - they were active and are now active reserve. Chapters 30 and 32 pay better than 1606 and 1607, so it is best for them to use all their benefits under the chapter that pays the best and when that is exhausted apply for benefits under the next chapter. ▪ If known, write the Chapter(s) on the top of the form. The form doesn’t ask for the chapter(s) but this is information you need to certify them. ▪ If they are Chapter 31 – Vocational Rehabilitation, they do not need to fill out either form. You should refer them to their Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist for authorization. <p>If they say “NO”, do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have them fill out an application for education benefits, VA Form 22-1990 or 22-5490 if they are a Chapter 35 student.

Did you have active military service or are you an active reservist?

- If they have been **discharged within the last 90 days**, ask them to provide you with their DD-214, Member Copy 4, which they receive at the time of their separation from active duty. This should be submitted with their VA Form 22-1990. However, if they do not have a copy immediately available, **do not** delay in the submission of paperwork. VA will ask for a copy if necessary.
- If they are **Active Reserves or National Guard**, have signed a 6-year contract with a Unit, and are actively drilling, they will need to get a Notice of Basic Eligibility (NOBE) from their unit.
 - Note: The NOBE is not sufficient for VA after 90 days. At that time, the electronic DOD record should be updated. If it isn't, VA will accept a letter on the unit's letterhead verifying the reservist is under a 6-year contract and is actively drilling. The letter should provide a contact person (name & phone number) and it should be signed by the Commanding Officer of the Unit.
- If the student has never served in the active military or reserves, but is a **dependent** with eligibility based on an eligible parent or spouse, have them fill out the Application for Dependent's Education Benefits, VA Form 22-5490. (They need to know the veteran's file or claim number.)
- If the student is **disabled** and wants to apply for Vocational Rehabilitation, refer them to the Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist. Explain that they will be certified once the VA furnishes the authorization.

Rules Of Thumb (And Their Exceptions)

VA has many rules that govern how benefits can be paid. The following section discusses some “rules of thumb” that will help you in understanding the process and will clarify some of the more complicated areas.

<p>36 Months of Full Time Benefits</p>	<p>Eligible trainees receive 36 months of full time VA education benefits. This does not mean they have to be in the training program full time, which is considered 120 hours worked during a given month. They can receive their benefits in lesser amounts over a longer period of time. For example, if they are in the training program half-time, they can receive benefits over a period of 72 months, for $\frac{3}{4}$ time - they get 54 months, etc.</p> <p>If the trainee is unsure how many months remain, have them call VA and ask exactly how much their full time benefits will be. There are many different programs with different “kickers” so it is best to ask VA rather than guess.</p> <p>Exceptions to the 36-month rule:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Chapter 31 - VA Vocational Rehabilitation determines the number of months ▪ Chapter 35 - have 45 months of eligibility ▪ Students with eligibility under more than one program - have 48 months
<p>10 - 15 Years To Use Benefits</p>	<p>Eligible veterans have 10-15 years from their date of discharge to use their education benefits depending on the chapter in which they have earned eligibility. If a veteran has any questions about eligibility, urge them to call VA.</p>
<p>Where Benefit Checks Are Sent</p>	<p>VA benefit checks are sent directly to the trainee at the address or bank account indicated on the application. Benefit checks are NOT paid to the employer. The money is intended to help defray training expenses; it can be used any way the trainee wants.</p> <p>Exception:</p> <p><i>Chapter 31:</i> These benefit payments are sent as 3rd party billing. The training costs are billed directly to the VA. VA is also billed directly for books and certain supplies listed on an approved list of supplies provided by the Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist. Supplies not on the list may require special approval.</p>
<p>Benefits Are Paid In Arrears</p>	<p>Benefits are paid in arrears. The trainee receives payment for the month of training after VA Form 22-6553d, Monthly Certification of Hours has been received by the RPO.</p>

Completing VA and OVETP (SAA) Forms

When completing any VA or OVETP (SAA) form, always read the instructions for detailed instructions. It is also helpful to fill out a sample form before attempting to assist a trainee.

When completing the forms, always print clearly and firmly. Complete all sections and make sure the forms are properly dated and signed. The trainee should be strongly encouraged to complete VA Form 22-1990 or 22-5490, Application for Benefits or VA Form 22-1995 or 22-5495, Request for Change in Training or Place of Training, online at <http://vabenefits.vba.va.gov/vonapp/main.asp>. You, the Certifying Official, are the only individual authorized to complete VA Form 22-1999, Certification of Enrollment, or VA Form 22-1999b, Change in Enrollment.

The OVETP (SAA) Forms need to be completed for every trainee entering the training program. The SAA 15, Application for Approval and Training Agreement for On-The-Job Training, needs to be completed by you, the Certifying Official. This form does require the trainee's signature, date signed, Social Security Number, and start date of training as well as your signature and date.

If you have any questions or problems related to the completion of these forms or need additional assistance, please feel free to contact OVETP personnel (Skip Gebhart - Administrator or Nancy Taylor - Associate Statewide Coordinator) or ELR/ECSS (Ron Marcinko). Once completed, all of these forms need to be submitted to the following address for processing:

Office of Veterans Education and Training Programs
West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission
1018 Kanawha Boulevard, East - Suite 700
Charleston, WV 25301