

UNDERSTANDING VR&E

VA VETERAN READINESS & EMPLOYMENT - CHAPTER 31



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AGENDA



- WHAT IS VR&E
- VR&E ELIGIBILITY & ENTITLEMENT
- VR&E SUPPORT AND SERVICE TRACKS
- VR&E VS POST 9/11 GI BILL
- Can VR&E participants receive payments equivalent to the Post 9/11 rate?
- E-AUTHORIZATIONS AND P.O. NUMBERS
- VR&E TUNGSTEN INVOICING
- HOW TO CONTACT YOUR LOCAL VR&E OFFICE
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WHAT IS VR&E?

VETERAN READINESS AND EMPLOYMENT (VR&E) (FORMERLY KNOWN AS VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AND EMPLOYMENT) PROVIDES SERVICES TO ASSIST ELIGIBLE VETERANS AND SERVICE MEMBERS WITH JOB TRAINING, EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT ACCOMMODATIONS, RESUME DEVELOPMENT, AND JOB SEEKING SKILLS COACHING. OTHER SERVICES MAY BE PROVIDED TO ASSIST WITH STARTING BUSINESSES OR INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES FOR THOSE WHO ARE SEVERELY DISABLED AND UNABLE TO WORK IN TRADITIONAL EMPLOYMENT.

VR&E ELIGIBILITY & ENTITLEMENT

- Veterans are eligible to apply for VR&E benefits if they did not receive a dishonorable discharge and have a service-connected disability rating of at least 10% from VA.
- Eligible Veterans/Service Members can apply for benefits by completing VA Form 28-1900 or by applying online at www.va.gov .
- Once the application has been received, the claimant will be scheduled to attend an initial evaluation with a VA Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC), at which time an entitlement determination will be made.



VR&E ELIGIBILITY & ENTITLEMENT

- A positive entitlement determination will be rendered if the claimant presents with an Employment Handicap (EH) and is within his/her 12-year period of basic eligibility. (Note: There is no limit of eligibility for Veterans discharged from active duty on or after 01/01/2013.)
- An Employment Handicap is defined as a vocational impairment, resulting in substantial part from the claimant's SC disability condition(s) and resulting limitations that interferes with the claimant's ability to prepare for, obtain, or retain employment consistent with his/her abilities, aptitudes, and interests. (38 U.S.C. 3101 and 38 CFR 21.35(a)) .
- For claimants with a SC disability rating of 10% and/or for those who are beyond the 12-year period of basic eligibility, a finding of Serious Employment Handicap (SEH) is required to establish entitlement to the VR&E program.

VR&E ELIGIBILITY & ENTITLEMENT

- **Serious Employment Handicap is defined as significant barriers to employability that the average job seeker does not have to overcome. The number and severity of disabling conditions, existence of neuropsychiatric conditions, history of substance abuse, history of homelessness, criminal history, & unstable work history are some of the factors that are considered when establishing an SEH.**
- **Once a claimant has been found entitled to the VR&E program, the VRC will proceed with the evaluation process to determine which service(s) offered by VR&E, the claimant is entitled to.**

VR&E SUPPORT-AND-SERVICE TRACKS



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- Reemployment track
- Rapid Access to Employment track
- Self-Employment track
- Employment Through Long-Term Services track
- Independent Living track

VR&E REEMPLOYMENT TRACK

This track is for claimants who served on active military service or in the National Guard or Reserves and are now returning to employers for whom they worked prior to going on active duty. The claimant is protected under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 (USERRA),

Services may include:

- Vocational counseling and guidance
- Reemployment rights guide
- Short-term training or certification
- Medical/Psychological treatment referrals

- Job abilities assessment
- Job site analysis
- Job accommodations
- Job modifications
- Work adjustment assistance
- Recommendation and provision of necessary assistive technologies
- Development of reassignment options, if necessary
- Follow-up with employer and claimant to ensure maintenance of employment
- Personalized case management support
- Consultation with employer to assist with stabilization of employment

VR&E RAPID ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT TRACK

Assist claimants that present with experience, education, and/or training in a field that matches his/her demonstrated pattern of interests, aptitude, and abilities obtain suitable employment. Services may include:

- Job skills assessment
- Labor market analysis
- Vocational counseling and guidance
- Short-term training or certification (tuition, fees, books, tools, supplies)
- Subsistence allowance while in short-term training
- Career development and skills acquisition
- Employment readiness preparation (resume writing and interview skills training)
- Special employer incentives (Refer to [M28C.VI.A.3](#) for more information)
- self-directed and/or assisted job search
- Use of specialized employment resources and/or career centers
- Job site analysis
- Job accommodations
- Work adjustment assistance
- Veteran preference documentation for special hiring authorities
- Career counseling
- Post-employment consultation and assistance

VR&E SELF-EMPLOYMENT TRACK

- The self-employment track is focused on claimants who have limited access to traditional employment, need flexible work schedules, or need a more accommodating work environment due to their disabling conditions or other life circumstances. To ensure success, claimants must have the interest, financial resources, and aptitude to pursue self-employment. After completion of a comprehensive initial evaluation and selection of this track, services are determined by the severity of the disability and limitations to employability.

VR&E EMPLOYMENT THROUGH LONG TERM SERVICES

The employment through long-term services track is targeted to claimants who need long-term services, such as remedial or refresher courses, specialized training, and/or post-secondary education, to obtain and maintain suitable employment. Services may include:

- Traditional vocational assessment
- Specialized testing and evaluation
- Vocational counseling and guidance
- Job skills assessment
- Labor market analysis
- Career development and skills acquisition
- Apprenticeships
- On-the-Job Training (OJT)

- Non-Paid Work Experience (NPWE)
- Subsistence Allowance while in training
- Employment readiness preparation (resume writing and interview skills training)
- Veteran preference documentation for special hiring authorities
- Self-directed and/or assisted job search
- Use of specialized employment resources and/or career centers
- Job site analysis
- Job accommodations
- Special employer incentives
- Work adjustment assistance
- Career counseling
- Post-employment consultation and assistance

VR&E INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM

- The purpose of IL services is to enable the claimant, to the maximum extent possible, to live independently and participate in family and community life. IL services are also provided to increase the claimant's potential to return to work by providing services designed to lessen or accommodate the effects of the disability(ies).
- Services may include- Incidental Training, Assistive Technology Assessment, Medical and Mental Health Services, Identifying Appropriate Housing Accommodations, Coordination with Community-Based Resources, and/or Equipment to Increase Independence in Activities of Daily Living.

VR&E VS. POST 9/11 G.I. BILL

- VR&E is a return-to-work program.
- Once a vocational goal has been selected, VR&E provides the training required to qualify the claimant for employment in the agreed upon field, if it is determined that additional training is required.
- VR&E will not approve training if the claimant does not have enough entitlement remaining to complete the entire training program.
- VR&E will not approve training if the claimant's Eligibility Termination Date has expired or will expire prior to the anticipated date of program completion and no SEH exists.
- VR&E is not an extension of the G.I. Bill.
- Chapter 33 or Post 9/11 G.I. Bill is an education program.

CAN VR&E PARTICIPANTS RECEIVE PAYMENTS EQUIVALENT TO THE POST 9/11 RATE?

- A Veteran participating in the VR&E Program who qualifies for Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits can elect to receive an alternate subsistence allowance rate that is equal to the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) rate associated with the zip code of the training facility. VR&E refers to this alternate rate as the "Post 9/11 Subsistence Allowance" (P911SA) rate.
- In most cases, the P911SA rate is higher than the regular CH31 subsistence allowance rate. To elect the P911SA rate, the Veteran must have remaining eligibility for the Post-9/11 GI Bill and must formally choose or elect the P911SA rate.
- Unlike the Post 9/11 GI Bill, Veterans participating in the CH31 Program who elect the P911SA rate are paid at 100% of the rate, which is then prorated based on the rate of pursuit.
- For example, if a claimant is not attending school at the full-time rate, the actual subsistence allowance paid will be based on the 100% rate but reduced based on the percentage of training time you are attending. Additional benefits are also available through the CH31 Program, such as payment of all required books, fees, and supplies, as well as other supportive services.

E-AUTHORIZATIONS AND P.O. NUMBERS

- Once a claimant has been determined entitled to VR&E benefits, an Individualized Written Rehabilitation Plan (IWRP)/ Individualized Employment Assistance Plan (IEAP) will be developed.
- Claimant will be moved to an active status once the IWRP/IEAP has been developed, reviewed, and signed by both the VRC and the claimant. Subsequently, an eAuthorization containing a P.O. Number will be generated and submitted to the approved training facility.
- The eAuthorization will identify the claimant's approved program of training and the dates that the authorization is valid. It may also include courses authorized by the VRC that are not required for the Veteran's degree program.
- eAuthorizations are also issued to the bookstores and may include specific supplies and/or books that the claimant has been authorized to receive.
- Please DO NOT certify enrollment and/or approve bookstore purchases prior to receiving an eAuthorization from the VRC.

ENROLLMENT CERTIFICATIONS

- Claimant's enrollment should be certified in Enrollment Manager.
- Enrollment certifications should include the number and type of hours, beginning and ending dates, and changes in enrollment.
- The SCO should report the first scheduled date of classes for any standard term or non-standard term, quarter, or semester in which the claimant is enrolled.
- Please amend the enrollment certification as soon as possible if the claimant add courses, drop courses, completely withdraw from training, or switch from online to residential status / residential to online status. (Please refer to the VR&E School Certifying Official Handbook for additional information).
- A change in the election of VA benefits in the middle of a semester or term is not allowed. This means that if authorization is issued for a CH31 participant who is currently enrolled under CH33, Post 9/11 GI Bill, the certification for the CH31 cannot begin until the start of the new semester or term.

ENROLLMENT CERTIFICATIONS

- On August 13, 2021, SCOs were issued a revised guidance by the Education Service, which was discussed during the August 2021 Office Hours Webinars. The information explained how an SCO should calculate the full-time requirement for standard and non-standard terms for graduate programs when the school has an individually defined full-time modifier (IDM) and when the school does not have an IDM. This means that the SCO must report the number of hours required to be considered full-time, regardless of whether the school has an IDM or not.
- This change in procedure also applies to the CH31 program for terms beginning on or after September 1, 2021. Hence, the SCO must follow the same procedures to certify graduate programs for CH31 participants in the same way as CH33, as outlined in the Education Procedural Advisory issued on August 13, 2021.

VR&E INVOICING

- The training facility must submit all invoices for tuition, fees, books, and supplies electronically within the Tungsten Network.
- Additionally, the training facility must ensure that a separate invoice is submitted for each Chapter 31 participant with a current VA Authorization.
- ALL invoices should be itemized.
- If a school or training facility invoices VA by any method other than through the Tungsten Network, the receiving VR&E office will return the invoice for re-submission through the Tungsten Network

HOW TO CONTACT YOUR LOCAL VR&E OFFICE

- If you are unable to reach your VRC, call or visit your VA Regional Office and ask to speak to the VR&E Supervisor. Someone will assist you in your VRC's absence. A link to an updated contact list for all Regional offices is listed below.
- https://www.knowva.ebenefits.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_ssnew/help/customer/locale/en-US/portal/55440000001018/content/554400000260849/VR&E-Officers-and-Contact-Information (press control and click link)
- Note: The SCO should contact the VR&E Officer at least once a year to obtain a current list of each VRC and his or her contact information.

QUESTIONS???

WAVES 2024 VR&E Q&A -
Question Submission





THANK YOU

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