

Overview of VA Education Benefits for Reservists

There are various education programs available to reservists administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA). Each has its own set of eligibility requirements, rules, and payment levels. Each offers 36 months of benefits; however, the maximum number of months of benefits you can use when eligible for two or more programs is 48 months. It's important to understand and compare the program benefits to make the best financial decisions for your education.

The new Post-9/11 GI Bill (Chapter 33) is very complex. If you are already eligible for at least one education program (MGIB-SR, REAP, MGIB-AD), and you decide to use the Post-9/11 GI Bill, you will be required to relinquish one of those other benefit programs to use the Post-9/11 GI Bill prior to using it. If you are not eligible for any other education program, you may still be eligible for Post-9/11 GI Bill, as long as you meet all eligibility requirements.

For additional information, see the VA Homepage at <http://www.gibill.va.gov/> or call a VA Benefit Education Counselor at 1-888-GIBILL-1 (442-4551). Additional information can be found in Member Resources on the Reserve Homepage at <http://www.uscg.mil/reserve/education.asp>. You can also email reserveVAeducation@uscg.mil with questions. Please put your name and which program you're inquiring about in the Subject line.

Montgomery GI Bill Selected Reserve (MGIB-SR) (Chapter 1606)

MGIB-SR is for enlisted and officers serving in the Selected Reserve (SELRES). There is no cost to the reservist for this program. However, requirements must be met to establish and maintain eligibility. Reservists must obligate and serve six years of satisfactory participation in the SELRES and remain in SELRES while using MGIB-SR. After completing required paperwork and all required training, each reservist should receive a Notice of Basic Eligibility (NOBE) DD Form 2384-1. This form assists in certifying eligibility of MGIB-SR benefits with your school.

Benefits will be suspended and terminated upon separation from the SELRES or failure to meet satisfactory participation while SELRES. For additional information, see http://www.uscg.mil/reserve/docs/member_resources/Education/chapter1606oct2010.docx

Reserve Educational Assistance Program (REAP) (Chapter 1607)

REAP was established by the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2005. This program was designed to provide educational assistance to members of the Reserve components called or ordered to active duty in response to a war or national emergency

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(contingency operation) as declared by the President or Congress on or after September 11, 2001. You become eligible after serving 90 continuous days on contingency orders. The current qualifying Contingency Operations are Operation Noble Eagle (ONE), Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). There is no cost to the member for REAP, but there is an available REAP Buy-Up which could increase monthly benefits. The Buy-Up **does not** transfer to the Post-9/11 GI Bill if you choose to use the Post-9/11 GI Bill. If you meet all requirements, you may be able to retain your benefits for 10 years if you separate from SELRES to civilian life. If you were separated before completing 90 days with a service connected disability, please contact DVA for further information.

Benefits are a percentage of the three year MGIB-AD (Ch-30) and are based on the length of your longest continuous contingency active duty served. However, National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) 2008 authorized you to combine mobilized periods if you have an aggregate of three or more years of qualifying active duty.

A full description of REAP can be found on the VA webpage at http://www.gibill.va.gov/GI_Bill_Info/benefits.htm#REAP or on the USCG Reserve Homepage http://www.uscg.mil/reserve/docs/member_resources/Education/REAP_DEC%202010.pdf.

Montgomery GI Bill – Active Duty (MGIB-AD) (Chapter 30)

If you are a reservist who has been on active duty for a minimum of two consecutive years, you may be eligible for MGIB-AD. There is a \$1200 contribution and you remain eligible for 10 years after being “Released from Active Duty” (RELAD).

There are two benefit tiers for MGIB-AD: one for two years on active duty, and one for at least three years on active duty. Be sure you understand which tier your time on active duty counts towards. You can review them at: http://www.gibill.va.gov/GI_Bill_Info/rates.htm

There is also a Buy-Up Program to increase monthly benefits. It does not transfer to the Post-9/11 GI Bill.

Additional information can be found at:

http://www.gibill.va.gov/GI_Bill_Info/benefits.htm#MGIBAD

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Post-9/11 GI Bill (Chapter 33)

This is a no cost program for members of the Armed Forces (active duty and reserve) who have served at least 90 aggregate days of qualifying active duty on or after 11 Sep 2001. You are automatically eligible upon meeting the active duty requirements. If you were discharged due to a service-connected disability with at least 30 continuous days, please contact DVA for further information. This program began 1 August 2009. Benefits may include tuition and fees, a housing allowance, and a book/supplies stipend. If you are eligible for other education programs, you will have to make an irrevocable decision to relinquish one of them for Post-9/11 GI Bill.

The level of benefits is based on the length of service performed. DVA will determine the months of benefits remaining based on what you have already used, if any. Reservists generally have 15 years after Release from Active Duty (RELAD) of 90 consecutive days in which to exhaust entitlements.

This educational assistance, up to 36 months, may be transferred to DEERS eligible dependents as long as you are still a SELRES or in the Active Component. Most members will be required to obligate up to four years of additional service (SELRES or active duty). This additional service will run concurrent to other service contracts or agreements. To transfer your benefits, you will need to access the Transfer of Education Benefits (TEB) portal at www.dmdc.osd.mil/TEB/ with your CAC. See ALCGRSV 042/09 for obligating service requirements and processes.

Once in TEB, choose how many months of your benefits you want to give each dependent. VA will determine how many remaining months of entitlement you actually have. If you have not yet selected a program to relinquish by applying to VA for the Post 9/11 GI Bill through [VONAPP](#), VA will choose one for you when they receive the approved TEB Request. You may not add or transfer to new dependents after separation from SELRES. Your obligation begins on the date of TEB election as long as the obligated service agreement is received, if required. Service members may transfer benefits to children or spouse well in advance of them attending college.

Due to the complexities of this program, interested personnel should speak with a VA Education Counselor at 888-GIBILL-1 (442-4551) or your Education Services Officer (ESO).

For further information see ALCOAST 377/09 and <http://www.uscg.mil/reserve/docs/resources/chapter33.doc>

For up to date information, visit the VA Website at:

http://www.uscg.mil/reserve/docs/member_resources/Chapter_33_Update_SEP2010.pdf