

Supporting Veterans Through the Post-9/11 GI Bill

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The educational benefit programs from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) are critical for veterans and their families. In 2021, over 800,000 beneficiaries received more than \$10.5 billion in funding from these programs.¹ The vast majority of those funds were distributed through the Post-9/11 GI Bill.

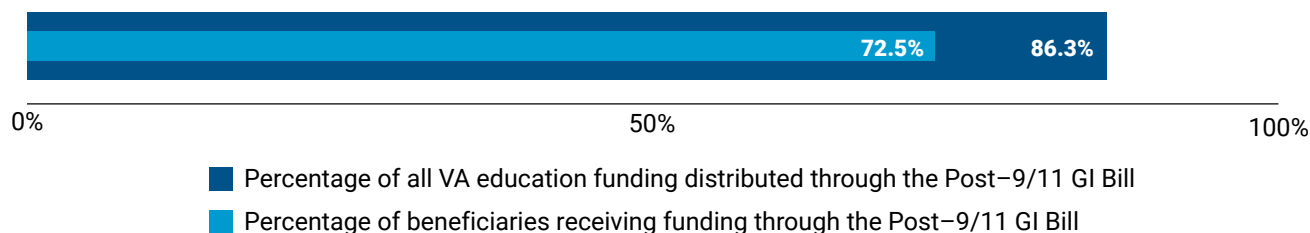
Most veteran beneficiaries use these funds to attend public and nonprofit institutions. Continuing educational benefits, administering them effectively, and ensuring that beneficiaries can enroll in the highest-quality academic programs are vital components for ensuring that veterans, their spouses, and their dependents have the opportunity to succeed in higher education.



The Post-9/11 GI Bill is the VA's largest educational benefit program

The VA provided over \$9 billion in Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits in 2021, supporting over 600,000 veterans and their family members.² Of the VA's seven educational benefit programs, the Post-9/11 GI Bill is by far the largest in terms of funding and number of beneficiaries.

Figure 1. VA education benefits distributed through the Post-9/11 GI Bill



Note: Total beneficiary counts may include individuals who received funds from multiple programs, thus counting the same person multiple times. Beneficiary and funding totals include the Post-9/11 GI Bill, Montgomery GI Bill Active Duty, Montgomery GI Bill Selected Reserve, Reserve Educational Assistance Program, Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance, and the Veterans' Educational Assistance Program.

Source: Data from Veterans Benefits Administration, [Veterans Benefits Administration Annual Benefits Report Fiscal Year 2021](#) (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2022), 21.

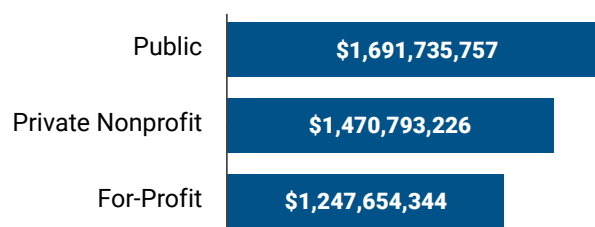
- 1 Veterans Benefits Administration, [Veterans Benefits Administration Annual Benefits Report Fiscal Year 2021](#) (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2022), 10.
- 2 Veterans Benefits Administration, [Veterans Benefits Administration Annual Benefits Report Fiscal Year 2021](#), 10.

The Post-9/11 GI Bill includes support for tuition and fees, a monthly housing allowance, and funds for books and supplies. Veterans are eligible if they served after September 10, 2001, and they may transfer a portion of their benefits to their spouse or children.³ The funds can be used for college and university degrees, vocational programs, distance education, and reimbursement of licensure or certification exams as well as on-the-job training and apprenticeship programs. At public institutions, benefits cover up to the full cost of tuition and fees. At private nonprofit and for-profit institutions, benefits cover up to \$26,042.81 in tuition and fees for the 2022-23 academic year.⁴

How do beneficiaries use the Post-9/11 GI Bill?

Most Post-9/11 GI Bill funds support beneficiaries who are enrolled in public and nonprofit institutions, with a smaller share going toward for-profit institutions. Of the 10 largest recipients of Post-9/11 GI Bill funds, four are public institutions, three are nonprofit, and three are for-profit.

Figure 2. Top institutions receiving tuition and fees paid through the Post-9/11 GI Bill, by type



Note: This figure shows only tuition and fees paid through the Post-9/11 GI Bill in 2019-20 and does not include housing or other eligible expenses. For that reason, amounts do not sum to the total shown in figure 1.

Source: Data from U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, "[GI Bill® Comparison Tool](#)," updated November 4, 2022.



Policy connections

Though most Post-9/11 GI Bill funds support students attending high-quality programs, policymakers and advocates have raised concerns about some programs that target veterans. Ensuring necessary protections for veterans will continue to be a top priority for policymakers. Colleges and universities must also continue their efforts to support veterans who are using the education benefits that they earned in service to the United States.⁵

³ "[Post-9/11 GI Bill \(Chapter 33\)](#)," U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, accessed January 6, 2023.

⁴ "[Past Rates for Post-9/11 GI Bill](#)," U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, accessed January 6, 2023.

⁵ "[85/15 Frequently Asked Questions](#)," Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, accessed January 6, 2023.