

MONEY MATTERS



How Soldier Scholars Get Assistance

(NAPSA)—Good news for many of America's Veterans, Servicemembers and their families: The new GI Bill is the most extensive education benefit package presently offered. It has the potential to pay for an entire college education, including housing, books and supplies for an eligible student. The many great features of this program also make it far more complex to process than other veteran education benefit programs. The VA has provided a few facts and tips that can help eligible GI Bill participants expedite the processing of their claim:

Tips For Getting Your Benefits

- Before applying for education benefits investigate your options, where you want to go to school, and look at what benefits you qualify for and how much you are entitled to under each.

- Get your school to submit enrollment certifications—VA Form 22-1999. The school does not need to wait for your Certificate of Eligibility to submit Enrollment Certifications.

- To qualify for the housing benefit, you must be enrolled in at least one on-campus class and be registered for at least 51 percent of full-time credit hours.

- Be sure to inform VA if you change your direct deposit information.

- Remember that housing stipends are paid "in arrears" from the first day you attend classes. This means that your housing stipend for this month's attendance won't be received until next month.

- Get to know your VA School Certifying Official (check with the Financial Aid Department or Registrar). He or she certifies your



Veterans and their families can get help paying for college.

actual enrollment (that's what triggers your payments). Some schools wait until the drop/add period is over to certify enrollment, so check out the policy for your school.

- Be aware that tuition and fee payments go directly to the school. The more you understand about your benefits and the process, the more you can move your claim along.

Further Financial Help

If your personal financial situation makes it difficult for you to cover your living expenses, you may want to apply for either federal or private loans. Many of these loans are available interest-free until graduation. You can also check with your school for any scholarships or grants that are available or visit www.studentaid.ed.gov.

Learn More

If you have any question, you can visit the GI Bill Web site at www.gibill.va.gov and use the "Ask A Question/Get An Answer" feature.