

APPLICATION

Veterans can get VA benefits information from our website (www.gibill.va.gov), by phone (1-888-442-4551). They can also send VA secure email questions via the Questions and Answers link on our website.

In order to pay education benefits, VA needs three things:

1. An **Application** completed by the veteran,
2. An **Enrollment Certification**, and
3. A copy of the veteran's **Veteran OJT Training Plan and Agreement** signed and dated by the facility and the veteran.

Veterans who haven't received VA education benefits before must complete an *Application for Education Benefits* (VA Form 22-1990). Veterans who have received VA education benefits before should complete a *Request for Change of Program or Place of Training* (VA Form 22-1995).

Veterans can complete and submit applications online <http://vabenefits.vba.va.gov/vonapp/main.asp>. If the vet doesn't have access to apply online the vet can call 1-888-442-4551 and ask that a form be mailed to them.

The application must identify the facility as the veteran's training establishment and program as the veteran's vocational course.

If a veteran has already submitted an application, there's no need to submit another. Simply submit the *Enrollment Certification* and the copy of the veteran's apprenticeship agreement. If an application hasn't been submitted, all three items (application, enrollment certification, and apprenticeship agreement) should be mailed to VA as a package.

NOTE: Retroactive benefits can be paid up to one year prior to the date VA receives the application.

ENROLLMENT CERTIFICATION

In addition to the veteran's application, VA needs an *Enrollment Certification* and a copy of the trainee's training agreement to pay education benefits for OJT training.

Certification of enrollment is the responsibility of the On Time Appraisal Service. The certifying official listed in WEAMS is the only person authorized to sign the *Enrollment Certification*.

A copy of the veteran's *Training Agreement* should be submitted with the *Enrollment Certification*.

The *Enrollment Certification* asks about credit allowed (box 7). The number of hours allowed for prior experience must be reported. Don't leave the item blank. Enter "none" if no prior credit is granted.

The beginning date (box 10A) should match the start date on the *Training Agreement*. The ending date (box 10A) is the length of the program, minus hours allowed for prior experience. **VA benefits are paid for OJT hours.** If a program is 5,000 hours (2 1/2 years) and the start date is 11/1/10, then the end date is 4/30/13. If the veteran is granted 500 hours (3 months) credit for prior experience, then the ending is 1/31/13, not 4/30/13. Each 500 hours equals 3 months. Enter full dates, MM/DD/YY.

Report all hours completed to date in the remarks section (box 11) on the initial certification. If today is 11/23/10 and the start date is 8/15/10, report the number of OJT hours for each month from the start date through the last full month. For example, in remarks you might write: "Hours completed to date: AUG 2010 82, SEP 2010 172, OCT 2010 156." VA will pay the months reported when the *Enrollment Certification* is processed.

The application, *Enrollment Certification*, and *Training Agreement* should be mailed, stapled together as a package, to the VA Regional Processing Office in Muskogee. The address is:

VA Regional Office
PO Box 8484
Muskogee, OK 74402-8484

MONTHLY CERTIFICATION OF TRAINING

If VA authorizes benefits, a *Monthly Certification of On-the Job and Apprenticeship Training* form will be mailed to the trainee.

The trainee must report hours worked during the period shown on the monthly certification form. For VA purposes, training hours are actual hours on the job and **do not include** vacations, medical leave, military leave, strikes, or layoff time.

A trainee must work 120 or more hours during a month to be paid the full VA training allowance for that month. If less than 120 hours are worked, benefits for the month are reduced in proportion to the number of hours less than 120.

The monthly certification should not be signed and dated until the end of the period shown, and it must be returned to release a benefit payment. The Certifying Official should sign and mail the monthly certification to VA if it is complete, accurate, and signed by the trainee. When signed, the Certifying Official certifies the form is "true and correct". Instructions for completing the monthly certification are on the form.

The Trainee Should:

- Complete and sign the monthly certification.
- Submit the monthly certification to the certifying official.

The Certifying Official Should:

- Review the monthly certification of training form for accuracy.
- Sign and submit monthly certification of training form to VA, keeping a copy in the veteran's training folder.

TERMINATION

When a trainee ends his or her training or is paid the objective wage (add general cost of living increases given all employees to the approved objective wage), he or she is no longer entitled to VA education benefits for the OJT program. The date training ended or the date the objective wage began **must be reported** on the trainee's final monthly certification of training form.

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If a veteran completes training earlier than the ending date certified or if you terminate a veteran for any reason, send VA a letter and report the completion or termination. The letter should follow this pattern:

RE: G. I. Veteran SSN 500 00 1111

Veteran was certified in the OJT program 1/1/10 to 7/1/12. Veteran terminated his employment with the "Forest Grove Fire & Rescue" 7/15/11. Our last monthly certification reported 172 OJT hours APR 2011. Additional OJT hours through Veteran's termination are: MAY 2011 164, JUN 2011 17, and JUL 2011 24.

Please terminate Veteran and pay the additional OJT hours.

RECORDS

Records must be kept that verify hours worked, wages paid, and the trainee's progress. The records must be retained for at least three years following the trainee's completion of the OJT program and, upon request, must be made available for inspection by authorized representatives of the government. If your existing records have this information, then those records suffice for VA purposes.

PROBLEMS

Enrollment certifications are generally processed within 6 to 8 weeks. If you send VA an *Enrollment Certification*, expect a decision within 60 days. If the veteran does not give you a monthly certification the first month after 60 days has passed, ask the veteran what happened and remind the veteran that monthly certifications must be given to you.

If the veteran has not heard from VA within 60 days, the veteran should call VA at 888-442-4551 and say:

I'm (name) and my social security number is (number). I submitted an application for education benefits on (date) and the facility submitted an

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enrollment certification on (date). I haven't received a response and request that an "inquiry" be taken.

An inquiry is a procedure VA has to solve problems. Not acting on an *Enrollment Certification* within 60 days is a problem. The paperwork will be found, reviewed, the problem resolved, and the veteran called back within two weeks (on rare occasion, a little longer). If the veteran cannot be reached by phone, a letter will be sent.

NOTES: (1) The nationwide phone server for the 888 automated phone system doesn't work for OJT programs. When the first recording starts, the veteran should hit 1 and then 0 to transfer the call to from the nation-wide system to the Muskogee system. (2) Veterans can contact Muskogee through the Questions and Answers link on our secure website (www.gibill.va.gov) instead of calling Muskogee.

PROGRAM APPROVAL AND CHANGES

VA may only pay benefits for approved programs. If a veteran enters an apprentice program that hasn't been approved for VA purposes, the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries' (BOLI) Apprenticeship Operations Manager. BOLI is the State Approving Agency responsible for approving apprentice programs for VA purposes in Oregon. BOLI's address is:

Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries
Apprenticeship and Training Division
800 NE Oregon St. #1045
Portland, OR 97232-2180
Phone: 971-673-0760

After September 30th, 2016 the SAA Director and contact information for Program Approvals and Changes will be the following:

Higher Education Coordinating Commission
Barbara Zeal
255 Capitol Street NE
Salem, OR 97310-0203
(503) 947-5727

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If your contact information changes (address, phone, email) or you change certifying officials, contact Kate Nicholson (katherine.nicholson@va.gov or 503-412-4669), Oregon's VA Education Liaison Representative. She'll send you a new *Designation of Certifying Official(s)* form and will answer any questions the new certifying official may have.