



# CPEC

## Update on the Post-9/11 GI Bill

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The Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008, or Post-9/11 GI Bill, becomes effective August 1, 2009. The bill covers in-state graduate and undergraduate fees and vocational and technical training for veterans who served after September 10, 2001.

Benefits are available for up to 36 months — equivalent to four academic years — and veterans have 15 years to use the benefits after separation from service. The Post-9/11 GI Bill can be used toward undergraduate and graduate degrees at any public two- and four-year institution and at participating non-public colleges and universities.

### Benefit Levels

The maximum tuition and fee allocation is set at the highest-cost public undergraduate program in each state. In California, this is \$6,586 per term, based on costs at UC Berkeley. Veterans are allocated a stipend for books and supplies and a living allowance based on local living costs. A one-time licensing or certification payment of \$2,000 is available.

### The Yellow Ribbon Program

The Yellow Ribbon GI Education Enhancement program is a voluntary agreement for non-public colleges with tuition and fees higher than the state public maximum allocation. If the college agrees to contribute up to half the cost that exceeds the state maximum, the government matches that amount. Public institutions can also participate for out-of-state students who pay higher fees than in-state students. The Yellow Ribbon program is open to veterans eligible at the 100% benefit level.

Each institution determines how many veterans they will accept in the program, the number of students in each degree program, and how funding is allocated — either to undergraduate or graduate students.

### California's Challenge

There has been concern that the way tuition and fees are defined in California may limit participation in the Yellow Ribbon program. California's Master Plan for Higher Education prohibits public colleges and universities from charging tuition, so the Department of Veterans Affairs sets "tuition" at zero and "fees" at \$6,586 per term. This limitation may reduce benefit levels for veterans who attend a private or independent school that bills the bulk of their expenses as tuition, not fees.

It is unclear if the VA will make tuition and fees interchangeable for funding purposes. With the maximum funding for tuition set at zero, independent colleges that charge tuition may have to make up a larger portion of the matching funds. This may reduce the number of non-public institutions that participate in the Yellow Ribbon program. The California State Approving Agency for Veterans Education, which regulates veterans' education programs in California, is working with the VA in an attempt to change the provision that sets California's tuition to zero.

## Eligibility and Benefit Levels for the Post-9/11 GI Bill

California Post-9/11 Education Benefits		Active Duty Completed after September 10, 2001	Maximum Benefit
Tuition	zero		
Fees	\$6,586 per term	At least 36 months	100%
Living Allowance	\$952 to \$2,763 per month	At least 30 continuous days active duty or discharged due to service-connected disability	100%
Book Stipend	\$1,000 per year	30 to 36 months	90%
License or certificate	\$2,000 one-time funding	24 to 30 months	80%
<p>Non-public institutions agree to fund educational expenses above \$6,586.</p> <p>Fees are paid directly to the college or university. The monthly living allowance is paid to the student. Students enrolled entirely in online or distance learning do not receive the living allowance.</p>		18 to 24 months	70%
		12 to 18 months	60%
		6 to 12 months	50%
<p>Veterans can earn multiple degrees provided that they have not exceeded the 36-month limit.</p>		90 days to 6 months	40%
		<p>Reserve and National Guard members with three years of active duty service qualify for full benefits. Source: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs</p>	