

COVID-19 Protections for Education Benefits



Continued GI Bill benefits for those negatively impacted by COVID-19

On January 5, 2021, the President signed the [Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020 \(P.L. 116-315\)](#) into law. This new law provides protections to education benefits for GI Bill® students who have been negatively impacted by COVID-19.

Did you know...

You may be eligible to receive your Monthly Housing Allowance (MHA) at your original rate for up to a *total* of four weeks if...

Your school took any of the following actions since March 1, 2020

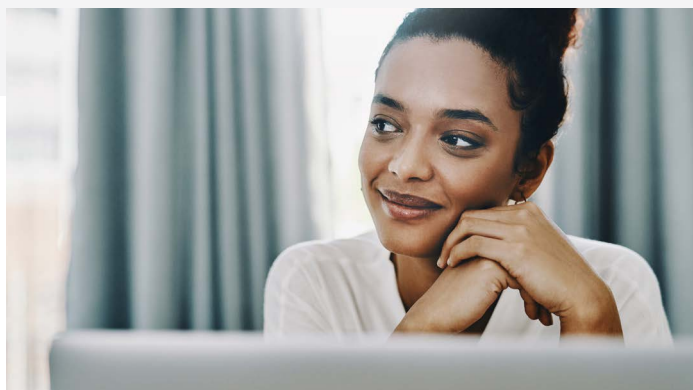
- Closed (temporarily or permanently)
- Reduced the number of credit hours you could attend
- Shortened semesters or periods
- Was delayed
- Relocated
- Converted to online training
- Disapproved or canceled a program
- Modified or made a program unavailable due to COVID-19 after March 1, 2020

For example: In April 2020, you were enrolled in university full-time, taking 12 credits, and receiving your MHA at a 100% rate of pursuit. You were taking a 3-credit lab course as required by your degree, but because of COVID-19 restrictions, your school cancelled all in-person classes. As a result, your lab was cancelled, dropping your credit hours to 9 and rate of pursuit to 75%. *Because of this new law, you are eligible to receive up to a total of 4 additional weeks of MHA at the 100% rate of pursuit (what it was before your lab was cancelled).*

VA will continue to pay your MHA at the full-time rate for any subsequent enrollments between March 1, 2020 and December 21, 2021 if...

Your school closed, fully or partially cancelled your program, or your program was disapproved because the course was modified due to COVID-19, and you were enrolled as a full-time student on or as of March 1, 2020.

For example: You were enrolled in school full-time at the beginning of 2020. In April 2020, some of your classes were canceled due to COVID-19. For the remainder of the spring and for the fall semester, you continued training but only at a 50% rate of pursuit. Because you were enrolled full-time as of March 1, 2020, you can continue to receive your MHA at the full-time rate while enrolled in any institution between March 1, 2020 and December 21, 2021.





If you are a Veteran using your GI Bill benefits (Montgomery Bill, Post-9/11, or VR&E), the expiration date of your benefits will automatically be extended 661 days if...

Your school closed (temporarily or permanently) due to COVID-19.

Please note, if you are a Veteran who was released from Active Duty on or after January 1, 2013, you are a surviving spouse using Fry Scholarship benefits, or you are a surviving child using Fry Scholarship benefits based on a death occurring on or after January 1, 2013, **there is no limitation for the use of your Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits.**

If you are a child using transferred benefits, your expiration date cannot be automatically extended 661 days but rather will be extended for the period of time you are prevented from training as a result of the closure.

For example: You were released from Active Duty on January 1, 2010 and were using your GI Bill benefits to attend university between March 1, 2020 and December 21, 2021. Due to COVID-19 your school closed temporarily from April-May 2020. Because the pursuit of your education was negatively impacted by COVID-19, your GI Bill benefits are automatically extended for an additional 661 days. Your previous expiration date was January 1, 2025 (15 years from your discharge date); it will now be October 24, 2026.

On-the-Job (OJT) Training and Apprenticeship VA will pay your MHA based on the maximum hours offered by your program if...

Your OJT or apprenticeship program has reduced the number of hours you are able to work due to COVID-19 and you are no longer able to fulfill the 120-hour requirement. Your rate of pursuit and MHA will be calculated based on the number of hours you are offered to work. Additionally, you can now roll over any hours worked in excess of 120 from one month to the next.

For example: Your employer could only offer you 60 hours of work due to COVID-19, and you are only able to work 50 of those hours. Because of this new law, you will still be paid your MHA the same way as if you worked 100 of 120 hours offered (applying the same ratio of hours worked to total hours offered).

If any of these situations apply to you, you may receive a letter from VA with additional information if you have not already. If you have not been contacted by VA and you believe that you may have been affected, please contact your School Certifying Official (SCO) or call the Education Call Center at 1-888-GI-BILL-1 (1-888-442-4551). For students outside the U.S., call 001-918-781-5678.

For more information: Learn more about the **Isakson and Roe Act** or visit our general **COVID-19 student FAQs** on our website.