

Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance Program (Chapter 35)

The Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance (DEA) Program is available to the spouses and dependent children of service members with 100% total and permanent disability or those who are deceased (as a result of their service).

You can receive services under this program if both you and the Veteran or service member meet certain eligibility requirements. One of the descriptions below must be true.

The Veteran or service member:

- Is permanently and totally disabled due to a service-connected disability, **or**
- Died while on active duty or as a result of a service-connected disability, **or**
- Is missing in action or was captured in the line of duty by a hostile force, **or**
- Was forcibly detained (held) or interned in the line of duty by a foreign entity, **or**
- Is in the hospital or getting outpatient treatment for a service-connected permanent and total disability and is likely to be discharged for that disability (effective December 23, 2006)

If you're the child of a Veteran or service member

- You can get benefits if you're between the ages of 18 and 26, except in certain cases.

You may be married or unmarried.

- If you're over 18 years old and using DEA, you can't get Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) from us.

[Learn about DIC](#)

- If you join the military, you can't use this benefit while on active duty. And if you want to use this benefit after you leave the service, you can't have a dishonorable discharge. Military service can extend your eligibility, but this increase doesn't usually go past your 31st birthday.

If you're the spouse of a Veteran or service member

- Your benefits start on the date we conclude that you qualify or on the date of the Veteran's death, and last for 10 years.
- If we rated the Veteran as permanently and totally disabled, with an effective date that's 3 years after discharge, you'll qualify for benefits for 20 years from that effective date. This new policy began on October 10, 2008. We won't pay benefits for training you started before this date.
- If the service member died on active duty, your benefits end 20 years from the date of death.
- You can get DIC payments from us and use DEA benefits.

DEA includes the following:

- Up to 36 months of eligibility (effective August 1, 2018)
- Monthly benefit payments, paid to the student, made at the end of each month of enrollment.

Since the DEA program is paid directly to you, the student, you must make accommodations to pay your tuition and fees (through Financial Aid or other sources). If this is the first time you are using this benefit, it can take the VA up to 12 weeks to process your certification once it is submitted. You may not receive your housing allowance until mid to late semester. Budget accordingly.