



**Department of  
Veterans Affairs**

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# News Release

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## **Secretary Shinseki Orders Emergency Checks to Students Awaiting Education Benefits *Thousands of Checks to Alleviate Student Financial Burden***

WASHINGTON – Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki announced the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has authorized checks for up to \$3,000 to be given to students who have applied for educational benefits and who have not yet received their government payment. The checks will be distributed to eligible students at VA regional benefits offices across the country starting Oct. 2, 2009.

“Students should be focusing on their studies, not worrying about financial difficulties,” Secretary Shinseki said. “Education creates life-expanding opportunities for our Veterans.”

Starting Friday, Oct. 2, 2009, students can go to one of VA’s 57 regional benefit offices with a photo ID, a course schedule and an eligibility certificate to request advance payment of their housing and book allowance. Because not all these offices are located near students, VA expects to send representatives to schools with large Veteran-student bodies and work with Veteran Service Organizations to help students with transportation needs.

A list of those VA regional offices is available at [www.vba.va.gov/VBA/benefits/offices.asp](http://www.vba.va.gov/VBA/benefits/offices.asp).

“I’m asking our people to get out their road maps and determine how we can reach the largest number of college students who can’t reach us,” VA’s Under Secretary for Benefits Patrick Dunne said. “Not everyone has a car. Not everyone can walk to a VA benefits office.”

Although VA does not know how many students will request emergency funds, it has approximately 25,000 claims pending that may result in payments to students.

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## **GI Bill 2/2/2/2**

The funds VA will give to students now are advance payments of the earned benefits for housing and books. This money will be deducted from future education payments.

VA officials said students should know that after this special payment, they can expect to receive education payments on the normal schedule -- the beginning of the month following the period for which they are reimbursed.

“This is an extraordinary action we’re taking,” said Shinseki. “But it’s necessary because we recognize the hardships some of our Veterans face.”

More than 27,500 students have already received benefits for housing or books under the new Post-9/11 GI Bill, or their schools received their tuition payments.

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## **Background Information**

- 1. I have heard about education advanced payments. What are they?**  
Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki has authorized advanced education payments up to \$3,000 for veterans who have applied for VA educational benefits and who have not yet received their monthly education payment as of October 2, 2009. **This is an advance payment of the veteran's housing and book allowance only, as the tuition payment will be paid to the school.**

## **Obtaining Payment**

- 2. How do I obtain an advance payment and what do I need to provide?**  
Starting October 2<sup>nd</sup>, you may go to one of VA's 57 regional offices with a government issued photo ID (Driver's License, Military ID, etc.) and proof you are enrolled in school (class schedule, admission letter, enrollment verification letter, etc.)  
You will be required to sign for the payment upon receipt.
- 3. What if I cannot make it to a Regional Office?**  
Currently VA is only offering advance payments at one of our 57 offices, however we are looking at other alternatives.
- 4. Can I receive more than one advance payment?**  
This is a one-time advance payment, which will be recouped from future education payments. Only one payment is authorized per veteran, up to \$3000.

## **Payment Details**

- 5. I am a veteran, am I eligible for an advance payment?**  
Yes, if you are currently enrolled in school under a VA education program.  
  
List of VA Education Programs:
  - Ch33 - Post-9/11 GI Bill
  - Ch 30 - Montgomery GI Bill
  - Chapter 1606 - Montgomery GI Bill Selected Reserve
  - Ch 1607 – Reserve Education Assistance Program
- 6. I am a dependent, am I eligible for an advance payment?**  
No, payments are only available to veterans.
- 7. If I received my education payment on October 1<sup>st</sup>, am I still eligible for a \$3000 advance payment?**

No, advance payments are only authorized for veterans who did not receive a payment on October 1<sup>st</sup>.

**8. Will I have to pay this advance payment back to VA?**

This payment will be recouped from future VA payments. However, if you stop attending school during the semester, recoupment by VA will not be possible and you will have to repay the advance payment.

**9. What if I want less than \$3000?**

Veterans may chose to receive a payment less than \$3000, however, only one advance payment is authorized regardless of amount.

### **Future Payments**

**10. When can I expect future payments?**

After the advance payment is recouped, you can expect future payments at the beginning of each month, which will likely start in November.

**11. How does this emergency payment affect my future education payments?**

This payment will be recouped from future VA payments, however, if you stop attending school during the semester, recoupment by VA will not be possible and you will have to repay the advance payment. The exact recoupment amount will be determined once your education claim is processed.

### **Additional Information**

This is the latest information concerning the education advance payments. At this time, there is no additional information that can be provided or number to refer the claimant to for additional information. If a claimant needs more information, they should contact the National Call Center (888-442-4552) for updated information or visit the education website at [www.gibill.va.gov](http://www.gibill.va.gov)