

CHAPTER 31 VETERAN READINESS AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICE

VA's Chapter 31 has a new name! Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Service is now Chapter 31 Veteran Readiness and Employment Service!

Do you need assistance with preparing for, obtaining, or maintaining employment? On the other hand, do you need assistance to enable you to live more independently? The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E) program offers services to assist Veterans who have service-connected disabilities reach these goals. Although you are presently using your Post 9/11 GI Bill benefits, I urge you to continue reading below about how VR&E can assist you as there may be additional benefits VR&E can provide that the GI Bill cannot.

How can the VR&E program assist you?

The VR&E program provides vocational testing and counseling to assist you in identifying occupations that match your interests, abilities, and skills. A counselor will work closely with you to develop a plan of services that will enable you to reach your employment goal.

If you qualify to receive the full benefit of VR&E services, your counselor will work closely with you to implement your training plan, if needed, and employment plan by using some or all of the following services:

- Retraining, which includes the cost of tuition, books, fees, supplies, and a monthly subsistence allowance
- Job placement assistance
- Resume development
- Interviewing skills
- Assistance with starting a small business, if approved
- Counseling, Medical and dental services

If your goal is to live more independently, your counselor will complete an assessment of your independent living needs, work closely with your physician to identify services to address those needs, and coordinate with a variety of VA and community resources to meet those needs.

If you are interested in VR&E services, please complete the attached VA Form 28-1900 and return to this email or apply online at www.benefits.va.gov/vocrehab. After we receive your application, our office will assign you to a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC) and schedule you for an initial evaluation appointment. Given the COVID-19 pandemic, the initial appointment will be conducted through Tele-counseling. To attend your scheduled Tele-counseling appointment, you will need access to a web-enabled device (i.e. smartphone, tablet, or a computer). If you do not have access to the equipment noted above, please let us know and we will work with you to arrange a telephone appointment.

We have included a VR&E (Chapter 31) Fact Sheet, a CH31/CH33 Comparison Sheet and an application to the program. We look forward to hearing from you.

Send applications directly to amy.brady@va.gov

Manchester Regional Office VR & E phone 603-222-5751

VETERANS CRISIS LINE: 1-800-273-8255 PRESS 1 OR TEXT TO 838255 TO GET HELP NOW!



Department of Veterans Affairs

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SPACE
 (VA DATE STAMP)

**APPLICATION FOR VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION FOR CLAIMANTS
 WITH SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITIES
 (Chapter 31, Title 38, U.S.C.)**

PURPOSE OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION: Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment provides services that will assist certain claimants with disabilities in obtaining and maintaining suitable employment. If employment is not an option because of the severity of the claimants' disability conditions, services to assist them to achieve maximum independence in their daily living activities may also be provided.

IMPORTANT: To decide if you should fill out this form, please read the information on back of this form.

1. FIRST, MIDDLE, LAST NAME OF CLAIMANT		2. SOCIAL SECURITY NO.	3. VA FILE NO. <i>(If different from Item 2)</i>	4. DATE OF BIRTH <i>(Month, Day, Year)</i>
5. MAILING ADDRESS <i>(No. and street or rural route, City, State and ZIP Code, OR write "None," if no mailing address.)</i>			6. MAIN TELEPHONE NUMBER <i>(Include Area Code, or write "None" if no available telephone number.)</i>	
7. E-MAIL ADDRESS OF CLAIMANT			8. CELL PHONE NUMBER <i>(Include Area Code or write "None" if no available cell phone number.)</i>	
9. IF YOU ARE MOVING WITHIN THE NEXT 30 DAYS , PROVIDE US YOUR NEW ADDRESS			10. NUMBER OF YEARS OF EDUCATION	
<p>I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT the information I have entered on this form is true and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief. I realize that making willful false statements concerning a material fact in a claim of vocational rehabilitation benefits is a punishable offense that may result in a fine or imprisonment, or both. <i>(Reference: 38 U.S.C. 3802(a))</i></p>				
11A. SIGNATURE OF CLAIMANT <i>(Do not print) (Sign in ink)</i>			11B. DATE SIGNED	

INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLYING FOR VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES

TO APPLY OR RECEIVE INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE:

- To apply, you may submit the completed application to the nearest VA office or apply online at <https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/homepage>.
- You may obtain information and assistance from any VBA office or online at <http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/vre/index.htm>.
- Local representative of claimant's service organizations and the American Red Cross also have information and forms available.
- Mailing Address: You will not be denied benefits on the basis that you do not have a mailing address under the provisions of 38 U.S.C. 5126. If you do not have a mailing address, please write "none" in response to question 5. However, you must provide an alternative means of contact if you are unable to provide an address or telephone number, so we can schedule your initial evaluation appointment.

EVALUATION: A combined and compensable service-connected disability rating of 10 percent or more by VA is required for you to apply for vocational rehabilitation services. Once your application is received, we will provide you a comprehensive evaluation, where a VA Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC) will work with you to determine:

1. If you meet the requirements for entitlement Chapter 31 benefits.
2. If you are within the time limit for receiving this benefit, which is generally 12 years from the date VA notified you of your compensation rating for at least a 10% service-connected disability.

PLANNING AND COUNSELING: After a VRC determines that you meet the entitlement requirements, your assigned VRC will assess your vocational rehabilitation and employment needs with you. Subsequently, your VRC will develop a plan of services and assistance with you to help you reach your employment goal. Counseling will be available throughout your program to help you when problems arise.

REHABILITATION SERVICES: Vocational rehabilitation programs do not always require training. You may only need employment services to help you get a suitable job. If your VRC determines that you need training to reach your vocational goal, he or she will also determine the number of months needed to complete your training. You may train in a vocational school, a specialized rehabilitation facility, an apprenticeship program, other on-job training position, a college, or a university.

If training is necessary, VA will provide medical and dental care treatment, assistance to get and keep suitable employment, and other services you may need. If employment is not currently feasible for you, VA may provide services and assistance to improve your ability to live independently.

SUPPORT: VA may pay for tuition, fees, books, equipment, tools, or other supplies you need to succeed in your rehabilitation program. During your training, you may qualify for a monthly subsistence allowance to help you with your living expenses. Payment for subsistence allowance depends on your type of training, rate of attendance, and number of dependents. You will receive this allowance in addition to any VA compensation or military retired pay that you may be receiving.

PRIVACY ACT: The VA will not disclose information collected on this form to any source other than what has been authorized under the Privacy Act of 1974 or Title 38, Code of Federal Regulations 1.576 for routine uses (i.e. VA needs the information this form requests to help determine your eligibility to the benefit) as identified in the VA system of records, 58VA21/22/28, Compensation, Pension, Education and Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Records - VA, published in the Federal Register. Your response is required to obtain benefits (5 CFR 1320.8(b)(3)(iv)). Giving us your Social Security Number (SSN) information is mandatory. Applicants are required to provide their SSN under Title 38 USC 5101 (c) (1). The VA will not deny benefits for any individual refusing to provide his or her SSN unless the disclosure of the SSN is required by a Federal Statute of law in effect prior to January 1, 1975, and still in effect.

RESPONDENT BURDEN: We need this information in order for claimants with compensable service-connected disabilities to apply for vocational rehabilitation under title 38, U.S.C. chapter 31. We estimate that you will need an average of 15 minutes to review the instructions, find the information, and complete this form. VA cannot conduct or sponsor a collection of information unless a valid OMB control number is displayed. You are not required to respond to a collection of information if this number is not displayed. Valid OMB control numbers can be located on the OMB Internet Page at www.reginfo.gov/public/do/PRAMain.



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Benefits Administration

Veteran Readiness and Employment Services: Chapter 31

What is the Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E) program?

The VR&E program is authorized under Title 38, U.S. Code, Chapter 31. It is referred to as the Chapter 31 program. It assists entitled Veterans with service-connected disabilities and an employment handicap to prepare for, find, and maintain a job. It also helps entitled transitioning Servicemembers.

If you are a Veteran or Servicemember with a service-connected disability and not currently able to work, VR&E also offers services to help you live as independently as possible.

Basic Period of Eligibility

There is a 12-year basic period of eligibility for VR&E services. The period begins on the latter of the following dates:

- Date of separation from active duty
- Date you were first notified of a service-connected disability rating

Who Is Entitled to Receive VR&E Service?

Active-duty Servicemembers who:

- Expect to receive an honorable discharge
- Obtain a VA memorandum rating of 20 percent or more
- Are participating in the Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES) or have an injury or illness that prevents them from performing military duties
 - Servicemembers participating in IDES are presumed entitled.

- Are determined by VR&E to need vocational rehabilitation services

Veterans who:

- Have received an honorable or other than dishonorable discharge
- Have a VA service-connected disability rating of:
 - 10 percent with a serious employment handicap, or
 - 20 percent or more with an employment handicap
- Are determined by VR&E to need rehabilitation services

How Is Entitlement Established?

You are entitled to services if:

- You have a 20 percent service-connected disability AND
- You have an employment handicap.

If your service-connected disability is only 10 percent, you must have a serious employment handicap to be eligible.

A Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC) will work with you to determine entitlement. The evaluation will:

- Assess your interests, aptitudes and abilities
- Assess your service-connected disability and your ability to hold a job
- Include vocational exploration activities and goal development
 - Used to determine suitable employment and maximize independent living
- Explore labor markets and wage information
- Select a VR&E program track
- Develop an individualized rehabilitation plan

What Is a Rehabilitation Plan?

This plan provides a detailed outline of VR&E program services. It is individualized to meet the needs of the Veteran or Servicemember. The plan is a signed agreement between the recipient and VA. The following service delivery options may be included in a rehabilitation plan:

- Re-employment

- Rapid employment services for new employment
- Self-employment
- Employment through long-term services
- Independent living services

What Other Benefits May Be Provided?

After the plan is enacted, the VRC will provide ongoing counseling, assistance and coordination of services. These include:

- Tutorial assistance
- Job-seeking skills training
- Medical and dental referrals to the Veterans Health Administration
- Adjustment counseling
- Payment of training allowance
- Other services required to help achieve a career and live as independently as possible

How Can You Apply?

- Apply online:
<https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/about/feature?feature=vocational-rehabilitation-and-employment>.
- Fill out VA Form 28-1900, "Disabled Veterans Application for Vocational Rehabilitation." You can find the form at <https://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/vba-28-1900-are.pdf>. Mail the form to your closest VA regional office.

VR&E (Ch 31) and Post 9/11 GI Bill (Ch 33) Comparison

VR&E (Ch 31)	Post 9/11 GI Bill (Ch 33)
<p>Ch 31 is an Employment program. Under Ch 31, you first need to be determined entitled and feasible for employment. If we conclude these findings, we can proceed with supporting a vocational goal. If we find that training is a component that is necessary to achieve the vocational goal of interest, to support the training, we need to make sure it is in line with the veteran's disabilities and the labor market to approve it.</p>	<p>Ch 33 is an Education program which means you can take any certification or degree program that you want under Ch 33 to utilize your months of entitlement as long as the facility is VA approved.</p>
<p>Ch 31 provides up to 48 months of entitlement; the amount of time approved is determined by VR&E and what is needed for the veteran to obtain suitable employment. The basic period of eligibility in which VR&E services may be used is 12 years from the latter of the following: date of separation from active military service, or date the veteran was first notified by VA of a service-connected disability rating.</p>	<p>Ch 33 provides up to 36 months of education benefits, generally benefits are payable for 15 years following your release from active duty. Ch 33 pays 100% benefit with 36 months or more of active duty or at least 30 continuous days and discharge due to service-connected disability. If you had less active duty time and were not medically discharged, it is possible that your tuition, fees, books will be pro-rated. For example: A veteran with 23 months on active duty after 9/11/01 would be entitled to 70% of monthly housing allowance, tuition, fees and books.</p>
<p>Ch 31 pays a monthly subsistence allowance using BAH rate of E-5 with dependents (for those that have Ch 33 eligibility) at 100% no matter how many months of active duty time after 9/11/01, if EDU determines the veteran is eligible for Ch 33 and the veteran has at least 1 day of entitlement remaining. Note: For Post 9/11 subsistence allowance as of January 1, 2020, \$92 is added to the full-time DOD BAH E-5 with dependents rate. This rate must be pro-rated accordingly for ¾ and half-time pursuit.</p>	<p>Ch 33 pays a monthly housing allowance (MHA) using BAH rate at E-5 with dependents. This is pro-rated by rate of pursuit rounded to nearest tenth. If not entitled to 100% benefit, amount will be prorated by percentage of benefit.</p>
<p>Ch 31 calculates training time at ½ time (50% of BAH), ¾ time (75% of BAH) and full-time (100% of BAH). During a standard Spring/Fall term for undergraduate courses, 6-8 credits is ½ time, 9-11 is ¾ time and 12 credits or more is full-time. For graduate courses, the school determines the training time.</p>	<p>Ch 33 calculates training time in 10% increments starting at 60% of BAH.</p>
<p>Ch 31 pays the cost of living adjustment (COLA) that comes out for DOD BAH rates in December starting the following January 1st. The subsistence allowance rate is different for veterans in VR&E that are not eligible for Ch 33; normal subsistence COLA is received on October 1st. Example of Impact: Veteran attends Plymouth State College (NH) full-time from 01/12/20 - 05/08/20 and receives VR&E's Post 9/11 subsistence allowance rate. Veteran is paid \$1,701.00/month capped rate for veterans who applied after 01/01/2018. For veterans who applied prior to 10/10/2018 an uncapped rate of \$92 is added.</p>	<p>Ch 33 pays the COLA that comes out for DOD BAH rates in December starting the following August 1st. Example of Impact: Veteran attends Salem State University full-time from 01/12/20 - 05/08/20 and receives Ch 33 MHA rate. Veteran is paid \$1,584.00/month.</p>

Ch 31 pays a monthly subsistence allowance of \$870.50/month for full-time exclusively online training effective 01/01/20-12/31/20.	Ch 33 pays a monthly housing allowance of \$850.00/month for full-time exclusively online training effective 08/01/19-07/31/20.
Ch 31 pays a monthly subsistence allowance to those attending ½ time or more.	Ch 33 does not pay a monthly housing allowance for veterans attending classes at ½ time or less.
Ch 31 covers all tuition/fees for public or private schools for all the required courses that are necessary to obtain the certification/degree that has been approved. Ch 31 does not pay for student health insurance. You are required to seek a waiver from the school. Veterans enrolled in CH31 receive necessary medical and dental services provided by VHA for items interrupting educational services.	Ch 33 covers all tuition/fees for an in-state student to public school. The cap for private and foreign school as of August 1, 2019 is up to \$24,476.79 per academic year. Institutions that have a yellow ribbon agreement may get funds matched by VA for each additional dollar that an institution contributes, up to total cost of tuition and fees. Ch 33 pays for student health insurance as it is reported as a fee.
Ch 31 covers all books, supplies, and tools required for training program	Ch 33 covers yearly books and supplies stipend of up to \$1000 paid proportionately based on enrollment.
Ch 31 will not pay for the retake of a course if the grade obtained meets the degree requirement. Approval of additional course(s) during the last semester would be determined on an individual basis by the veteran's counselor. The course(s) would need to be considered a key component in assisting the veteran with obtaining employment. The veteran would need to request approval in advance of the last term	Ch 33 will not pay for the retake of a course if the grade obtained meets the degree requirement with the following exception: The veteran can round out a schedule with non-required courses to bring his/her course load up to full-time in his/her last term only. The veteran may use any credit hour subject, including a subject that has previously been successfully completed.
Ch 31 will provide a laptop and printer to those that do not own one. If the veteran owns one when they begin the program and it malfunctions while the veteran is in a training program, Ch 31 will repair or purchase a new one.	Ch 33 does not provide a laptop and/or printer
Ch 31 provides assistance with career exploration, vocational counseling, information and referral to VHA including access to free dental (not routine) and vision services, assistance with obtaining tutoring, disability services, accommodations, job-seeking skills training, as well as a referral to the Department of Labor for job search and placement assistance.	Ch 33 does not provide assistance with these items.

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