

### **Yellow Ribbon Open Season**

Yellow Ribbon Open Season begins 15 March 2016 and ends on 15 May 2016. If you are a Yellow Ribbon School and your school wants to make changes to the Yellow Ribbon Agreement, you must do so during this period on the new VA Form 22-0839 dated August 2015:

<http://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-22-0839-ARE.pdf>

If you are a Yellow Ribbon School and your school does not want to make any changes, DO NOTHING.

If you are not a Yellow Ribbon School and your school wants to participate in the program, complete the VA Form 22-0839 above and submit the form by May 15, 2016.

See the following link for additional information:

<http://www.benefits.va.gov/GIBILL/docs/letters/Yellow%20Ribbon%20Letter%20March%2015.pdf>

Note: Item 14 asks the school if they would like to participate in Principles of Excellence.

### **Chapter 1607 (REAP) Sunset**

#### **School Certifying Official Notice:**

Section 555 of the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2016 amended chapter 1607 of title 10, United States Code, by inserting a new section (16167) to sunset the Reserve Educational Assistance Program (REAP).

- (a) Sunset.—The authority to provide educational assistance under this chapter shall terminate on the date that is four years after the date, November 24, 2019, of the enactment of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016.
- (b) Limitation on provision of assistance pending sunset.—Notwithstanding any other provision of this chapter, during the period beginning on the date of the enactment of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016 and ending on the date that is four years after the date of the enactment of that Act, educational assistance may be provided under this chapter only to a member otherwise eligible for educational assistance under this chapter who received educational assistance under this chapter for a course of study at an educational institution for the enrollment period at the educational institution that immediately preceded the date of the enactment of that Act.

#### **What You Need to Know**

School Certifying Officials (SCO) should continue processing enrollment certifications, VA-Form 22-1999s to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for REAP students. VA Education Service will determine if the claimant is eligible to continue using REAP. In the event a

beneficiary is not eligible for REAP, VA will determine eligibility for another education benefit and notify the student directly.

### **New VA Form 22-5490**

Dependents' Application for VA Education Benefits is now dated October 2015. The October 2014 form will not be used. A link to the new form follows:

<http://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-22-5490-ARE.pdf>

Dependents applying for Chapter 35 benefits **or** the Fry Scholarship use the same form, VA Form 22-5490. They must be careful completing Items 24 and 25 on page 2 of the form. Note the instructions for Items 24 and 25 indicate that the election for Chapter 35 **or** Fry Scholarship is an **Irrevocable Election**.

Spouses currently receiving Chapter 35 benefits who now, under the new law, want to change their benefits to the Fry Scholarship must complete a new VA Form 22-5490, Oct 2015, in accordance with the Information and Instructions attached to the form.

Spouses and/or children entering the Chapter 35 **or** Fry Scholarship program for the first time must complete the VA Form 22-5490, October 2015.

### **2016 SCO Workshops**

The Veterans/Military Education Division of the Pennsylvania Department of Education will conduct five School Certifying Official Workshops in April 2016.

Workshops are scheduled as follows:

- April 19, 2016 – PaTTAN Center, Harrisburg, PA
- April 20, 2016 – PaTTAN Center, King of Prussia, PA
- April 26, 2016 – Mercyhurst University, Main Campus, Erie, PA
- April 27, 2016 – CCAC Boyce Campus, Monroeville, PA
- April 28, 2016 – Pittsburgh Technical Institute, Oakdale, PA
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These workshops are open to all persons at a school, college, or university who are concerned with or handle veteran's education benefits. Please pass this newsletter along to any and all persons at your institution who may be interested in attending one of these workshops.

To register for a workshop, please send an e-mail with the following information to [RA-VetEd@pa.gov](mailto:RA-VetEd@pa.gov):

- Name(s) of person(s) attending
- Institution you will be representing
- E-mail address of each person attending
- Telephone number of each person attending

Registrations will conclude two weeks prior to each workshop.

Over the past four years the State Approving Agency has been assisting VA with Compliance Surveys. In most cases errors discovered in processing veterans education benefits can be traced to School Certifying Officials who have not attended any formal training offered by this office. Therefore, we are encouraging all School Certifying Officials to attend one of our April 2016 workshops.

### **Share This Newsletter**

This newsletter is being e-mailed to School Certifying Officials at each school. Please share this newsletter with all other Certifying Officials, the Bursar's or Comptroller's Office, Financial Aid Office and other interested individuals at your school. It is extremely important that the information in this newsletter receives the widest dissemination in order that veterans receive the GI Bill and other educational benefits to which they are entitled.