

Yellow Ribbon Open Season

We received the following information from VA concerning the 2015 Yellow Ribbon Open Season. If your school is an Institution of Higher Learning and you have Chapter 33 students who are 100% on the tier chart, your school may voluntarily participate in the Yellow Ribbon Program. Please visit the website for additional information.

“VA is now accepting modifications to terms of existing Yellow Ribbon Program agreements and soliciting for initial participation from Institutions of Higher Learning. If your school is currently participating, your open-ended agreement will be automatically renewed with the same terms unless you submit a request for changes or submit a request for withdrawal.

Otherwise, no further action or communication is required if your institution does not need to modify terms of its agreement. The agreement form and instructions, the cover letter, and FAQs have been posted at http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/yellow_ribbon/yellow_ribbon_info_schools.asp. Schools participating in the Yellow Ribbon Program for the 15-16 academic year should be posted to our website by June 1, 2015.

Please immediately notify your school President and/or financial representative, if appropriate, to ensure that they are aware of this information and understand that any modifications to existing agreements and any new agreements must be submitted no later than May 15, 2015. Please inform students that the listing of institutions participating in the YR Program for the 15-16 academic year will not be reflected on VA's website until June 1, 2015.

Thank you for your interest in the Post-9/11 GI Bill Yellow Ribbon Program”

School Certifying Official Workshops

The Veterans/Military Education Division of the Pennsylvania Department of Education will conduct three School Certifying Official Workshops in April 2015.

Workshops are scheduled as follows:

- April 15, 2015 – PaTTAN Center, Harrisburg, PA
- April 22, 2015 – Community College of Allegheny County, Boyce Campus, Monroeville, PA
- April 29, PaTTAN Center, King of Prussia, PA

These workshops are open to all persons at a school, college, or university who are concerned with or handle veterans 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:

- 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 in order that we can provide accurate numbers to our caterers for morning refreshments and lunch.

Light morning refreshments will be served during registration from 9:00 to 9:30 am. Lunch will be served from 12:00 to 12:30 pm. If you have special dietary needs, please bring your own lunch. We are not able to accommodate special needs.

Over the past three 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 2015 workshops.

Following is a draft Agenda for the workshops. The final agenda will be available at the workshops.

April 2015

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| ➤ 9:00 to 9:30 | Registration (Coffee, juice and water provided) | |
| ➤ 9:30 to 9:45 | Welcome & Administrative Announcements | SAA Staff |
| ➤ 9:45 to 10:30 | <i>GI Bill Benefits – Overview</i> | SAA Staff |
| ➤ 10:30 to 10:45 | Break – Networking Time | |
| ➤ 10:45 to 11:30 | <i>GI Bill Benefits – Overview</i> | SAA Staff |
| ➤ 11:30 to 12:00 | Compliance Survey and SAA Issues | SAA Staff |
| ➤ 12:00 to 12:30 | Lunch (Provided) – Working Lunch and Networking Time | |
| ➤ 12:30 to 1:15 | VA-ONCE – Tips and Updates | |

- 1:15 to 1:45 Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Voc Rehab Staff
- 1:45 to 2:00 Break – Networking Time
- 2:00 to 2:30 *GI Bill Benefits – Update* SAA Staff
- 2:30 to 3:15 Round Table Discussion SCOs and SAA Staff
 - Questions and Answers
 - Best Practices
- 3:15 to 3:30 Closing and Evaluations SAA Staff

Please note there will be a question and answer period at the end of the day. We are asking all School Certifying Officials to submit questions in advance of the workshop so we can research the answers and provide the best service to you at the workshop. We will answer general GI Bill and VA-ONCE questions. We will be unable to answer questions on specific student issues. Please send your questions, placing “**SCO Workshop Question**” in the subject line, to RA-VetEd@pa.gov, the same e-mail address where you can register for the workshop.

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