

Updating Wage Rates

Keeping the wage rate updated for your facility is a vital part of your VA approval. The wage scale shown on the Training Agreement must be followed. If a general wage increase is authorized by the facility, the new wage scale must be reported to the State Approving Agency (Veterans/Military Education) and a letter will be sent to the VA to update the wages on your Approval.

If a trainee's performance is such that he or she does not merit the wage increase at a scheduled period, it is permissible to delay the increase. Such an action must be fully documented and maintained with the training records so that it will be available for review by officials of either the State Approving Agency or the VA.

In the case of Registered Apprenticeships, a Notification Form for New and Modified Programs must be completed and sent to the VA with a copy sent to the State Approving Agency. Your State Approving Agency Advisor can provide the form and assistance in completing it.

To obtain further information regarding the Modification Form or how to update your wage rate, contact your State Approving Agency Advisor or send an e-mail to RA-VetEd@pa.gov.



GI Bill® Website

GI Bill® information can be found on the VA's new GI Bill® website:

<http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/>

Veterans can apply online for benefits using e-benefits, research the various chapters and benefit options, and/or send questions to the VA.

Reporting Periods of Unemployment

Report lay off in periods of employment to the VA in order to maintain the integrity of the steps which correlate to veteran payment. As the GI Bill beneficiary progresses through an apprenticeship or on-the-job training program, the benefits decrease every six months. An example of Chapter 33, Post 9/11 benefits is below.

The payment rate for Chapter 33 is as follows:

Training Period Monthly rate

First six months of training	100% of your applicable MHA
Second six months of training	80% of your applicable MHA
Third six months of training	60% of your applicable MHA
Fourth six months of training	40% of your applicable MHA
Remaining pursuit of training	20% of your applicable MHA

Should the SCO report a period of layoff for OJT/APP?

Yes, if the layoff period is greater than a month or two (ball park). When an OJT/APP claim is awarded, the timeframe for the steps is established. (6 month periods until the final step is reached.) The steps roll on, even if no hours are submitted for a period. If a vet was laid off in Step 2 for 3 months, but it isn't reported as such, when he returned his award would have rolled over to Step 3 (a lower payment rate). Even if his end training date was extended, he would have been cheated out of three months of payment at Step 2 and only have received the extension months at the lower step rate. When the SCO reports the layoff and return to work, the VA stops the award at the start of the layoff and restarts it upon the vet's return to work. This ensures proper payment. Because this process is labor intensive, the VA doesn't make these changes for brief non-work periods.

Many construction trades have short layoff periods (a week or two) and those shouldn't be reported. When there are consecutive months of layoff, it should be reported to processing to have the steps readjusted. Notify the VA of the last date worked prior to the layoff and the first date back at work following the layoff and the new end of the program if the program was extended due to layoff.

22-8794 Designation of Certifying Official Form

It is important to update your Designation of Certifying Official Form as soon as there is a change regarding who is handling the veteran certification records. It is best to have more than one person listed so that there is a back-up person available that can sign the required forms. Send all new 22-8794 Designation of Certifying Official Forms to:

Veterans/Military Education
301 Fifth Avenue – Suite 204
Pittsburgh, PA 15222
e-mail: RA-VetEd@pa.gov

Retention of Records

Per VA regulations, training institutions must keep records and accounts pertaining to periods of enrollment of a veteran, reservist, or eligible person. If those records are not available electronically, the paper records must be kept intact and in good condition at the institution **for at least 3 years following the end of the enrollment period**. The electronic records must be easily accessible at the facility for at least 3 years following the end of the enrollment period.

Reporting Hours Worked

If the veteran is eligible he will receive a monthly certification form (VA-22-6553d-1) each month or one will be enclosed with his eligibility letter. Note that the VA has recently issued a new form 22-6553d-1. This form must be completed monthly and returned to either the Buffalo or St. Louis address listed on the form or eligibility letter. If the veteran does not receive VA Form 22-6553d-1, one is available online at <http://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-22-6553d-1-ARE.pdf> or through our offices by submitting a request to RA-VetEd@pa.gov. A letter listing the veteran's hours on your facility's letterhead can be sent to the VA in place of the form. **Return the monthly certification form or letter listing hours directly to the DVA.** Mail the forms to: VA Regional Office, P. O. Box 4616, Buffalo, NY 14240 or FAX to (716) 857-3274. You can also submit hours online using the 'Contact Us' link on the GI Bill® Website.

Reminder when reporting hours:

- When certifying hours on the 22-6553d-1 Monthly Certification of Hours form, record both the Month and **Year**.
- Do not certify hours before the end of the month. The VA will not accept hours certified in advance.

New!

The VA has recently published an Informational Guide "Understanding On-The-Job (OJT) Training and Apprenticeship Approval" written for employers and sponsors who are offering or wish to offer OJT or Apprenticeship training to Veterans and beneficiaries. It can be found on the GI Bill® website at http://www.benefits.va.gov/GIBILL/docs/job_aids/OJT_APPIInfoGuide.pdf