



Virginia Department of Veterans Services

**Veterans Education Transition and Employment
Virginia Military Survivors and
Dependents Education Program**

Frequently Asked Questions

2025-2026

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Contents

Program Overview	1
Eligibility	2
Program Benefits.....	3
Application Process	4
Enrollment Updates	5
Stipend Questions.....	5
Benefit Usage.....	6
Course Type and Degree Eligibility.....	6
Other Programs and Reimbursement	7
Contact Information	7

Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program (VMSDEP)

Frequently Asked Questions: 2025–2026



Program Overview

The VMSDEP is a Commonwealth of Virginia benefit that provides education assistance to spouses and children of qualifying military Veterans and Service Members. These include individuals rated by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) as totally and permanently disabled or at least 90% permanently disabled due to military service, or those who were killed, became missing in action, or taken prisoner due to direct involvement in covered military combat.

VMSDEP is administered by the Virginia Department of Veterans Services (VDVS), in partnership with the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) and Virginia's public colleges and universities.

Eligibility

1. Who is eligible for VMSDEP?

Tier 1 Eligibility:

- Student must be admitted to a Virginia public college or university.
- Must be the spouse or child (ages 16–29; no age limit for spouse) of a Veteran rated by USDVA as totally and permanently disabled or at least 90% permanently disabled due to military service.
- Must meet Virginia domiciliary requirements (Code of Virginia § 23.1-608).

Tier 2 Eligibility:

- Student must be admitted to a Virginia public college or university.
- Must be the spouse or child (ages 16–29; no age limit for spouse) of a Service Member killed, missing in action, taken prisoner, or rated by the USDVA as totally and permanently disabled at least 90% permanently disabled due to direct involvement in covered military combat.
- Must meet Virginia domiciliary requirements (Code of Virginia § 23.1-608).

2. Can stepchildren or adopted children qualify?

Yes.

- Biological and adopted children are eligible.
- Effective July 1, 2022, stepchildren may qualify if the deceased Service Member was involved in covered military combat and either claimed the stepchild on a tax return or in DEERS while on active duty.

3. Does marriage affect eligibility?

No. A child's marital status does not affect eligibility.

4. Can the spouse use VMSDEP after turning 30?

Yes. There is no age limit for the spouse.

5. Can the child use VMSDEP after turning 30?

No. The child must be between the ages of 16 and 29.

NOTE: The Code of Virginia §23.1-608 permits an age waiver only when the individual had an opportunity to use the benefit but was prevented due to circumstances beyond their control. Requests submitted after turning 30 by individuals who were never previously approved before that age do not align with the purpose of the waiver and will not be considered.

For instructions on submitting an age waiver, please contact the VMSDEP Office at 844-VDVS-VET or 844-838-7838 or VMSDEP@dvs.virginia.gov.

Program Benefits

6. What benefits are available?

- **Tuition and mandatory fees** are waived for Tier 1 and Tier 2 students.
- **Tier 2 students** may receive a **stipend** to help cover room, board, books, and supplies (subject to available funding).

7. Are there attendance or academic requirements?

No. Academic standing does not affect VMSDEP eligibility.

8. How many semesters of benefits are provided?

Eight semesters. This limit applies regardless of whether the student is full-time or part-time, or the institution attended.

Application Process

9. Who can apply?

Spouses and children of qualifying Veterans or Service Members.

10. How do I apply?

Submit an online application: <https://vmsdep.dvs.virginia.gov/user/login>

11. When should I apply?

Apply **at least 60 days** before tuition is due.

Recommended target dates:

Semester You Plan to Start Your Benefits	Submit Application By
Fall	July 1 st
Spring	November 1 st
Summer	April 1 st

12. How long does it take to process an application?

Up to **10 calendar days**.

Enrollment Updates

13. Do I need to reapply every year?

No. But you **must update enrollment** each semester.

14. How do I update enrollment?

Follow instructions at www.dvs.virginia.gov.

Update during the following periods:

Terms	Open	Close (Due by)
Fall	July 01	October 31
Spring (Winter credits hours are combined with Spring)	November 01	March 31
Summer	April 01	June 30

If the update is late, you must request retroactive approval from your school.

Stipend Questions

15. Who receives the stipend?

Only **Tier 2** beneficiaries are eligible to receive a stipend, subject to funding availability.

16. How is the stipend disbursed?

Funds are confirmed by the **SCHEV** and sent to the attending primary school. Contact the **school's financial aid office** for status update.

Benefit Usage

17. What should I do if I still have a balance after updating my enrollment?

Check your VMSDEP authorization in your VMSDEP account and contact your **school's financial aid or billing office**.

18. Can I repeat a class I failed using VMSDEP?

Yes. Each semester counts as one of your eight, regardless of how many courses are taken.

19. May I attend multiple Virginia public colleges?

Yes. You may use benefits at more than one Virginia public college or university simultaneously.

20. May I transfer benefits to another school?

Yes. See "How to Use VMSDEP After Approval" on the DVS website for steps.

21. What if I drop out or take a break?

If no benefits were used during a semester, it won't count against your eight semesters. Contact the VMSDEP Office if you see discrepancies.

Course Type and Degree Eligibility

22. Can I use VMSDEP for:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Online Courses• Remedial/Refresher Courses• Study-Abroad Programs• Graduate or Professional Degree Programs	Yes, if the student is admitted to a Virginia public college or university and the course or program is provided by that institution.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Non-credit courses• Private or out-of-state schools	No

Other Programs and Reimbursement

23. How does VMSDEP differ from USDVA's Dependents Education Assistance (DEA), Chapter 35, benefits?

- VMSDEP is a **state** benefit administered by DVS, SCHEV, and Virginia public colleges and universities.
- DEA (Chapter 35) is a **federal** benefit administered by the USDVA.
- Eligibility for one program does not imply eligibility for the other.

24. Can I use both VMSDEP and DEA?

Yes. You can use both **concurrently or separately**, depending on your circumstances.

25. Can I be reimbursed for previous out-of-pocket payments?

Colleges are **NOT required** to refund tuition paid before your VMSDEP approval.

Contact Information

For more information or help:

- Website: www.dvs.virginia.gov
- Email: VMSDEP@dvs.virginia.gov
- Phone: 844-VDVS-VET or 844-838-7838