

**Department of Veterans Services
Veterans Education, Transition & Employment
Education Operations Update for the Board of Veterans Services
September 26, 2024**

Virginia State Approving Agency (SAA) for Veterans Education & Training – GI Bill Programs

The Virginia State Approving Agency (SAA) for Veterans Education & Training provides access to quality education and training programs in Virginia through over 900 approved programs of instruction.

In addition to providing access to GI Bill benefits, the Virginia SAA also protects the GI Bill from fraud, waste, and abuse through compliance monitoring, which includes risk-based surveys and supervisory visits.

Risk-based surveys are mandated by federal law based on actions such as financial issues, changes in profit status, increases in students, and tuition and fees.

Supervisory visits are a way to monitor the facilities and provide technical assistance to new school officials to ensure they comply with the law and prevent issues.

In FFY24, the SAA was tasked, under its contract with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) to conduct 10 risk-based surveys and 26 supervisory visits. By July 2024, the Virginia SAA completed all surveys and visits, two months ahead of the September 15 deadline.

Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program (VMSDEP)

On July 18, the General Assembly repealed the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program (VMSDEP) legislation with the requirements that all schools enforce satisfactory academic progress beginning the 2025 school year, providing additional funding to the schools to offset the expenses of the VMSDEP program and require the General Assembly's Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) to conduct a study on the VMSDEP program.

The DVS VMSDEP team has worked tirelessly to provide data and answer JLARC questions to facilitate their study, which is on the agenda for the October 7 meeting.

During the 2023-24 school year 8,091 unique students used VMSDEP benefits. DVS processed 8,019 requests for veteran verifications and new applications (with one business day turnaround) and approved 3,942 applicants (1,171 Tier 1 applicants and 2,769 Tier 2 applicants).

Military Education and Workforce Initiatives (MEWI)

The DVS Military Education and Workforce Initiatives (MEWI) enhances employment opportunities for transitioning service members, veterans, spouses, and dependents by creating pathways from education to employment opportunities.

The Virginia Veteran Laptop Project distributed 77 laptops to veterans and spouses this quarter. MEWI partnered with the Virginia Community College System (23 community colleges) and Virginia Commonwealth University to provide free laptops to veterans and spouses across Virginia. This effort is made possible through a generous donation given through the Veteran Services Foundation.

The Virginia SkillBridge Program has had 27 interns complete an internship, with 92% securing employment upon completion. Currently, the Virginia SkillBridge program has 132 providers to offer internship opportunities.

Finally, the MEWI program (in partnership with the Veterans Services Foundation) also pays for credentialing courses for veterans who take courses through the Community College Workforce Alliance. Generous donations have afforded students the opportunity to obtain 11 credentials including IT and manufacturing credentials. Nine credentialing courses were paid for this quarter.