

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS SERVICES

2013 ANNUAL REPORT

TO

GOVERNOR ROBERT McDONNELL

AND

THE VIRGINIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

ON THE

**VIRGINIA MILITARY SURVIVORS
AND DEPENDENTS EDUCATION PROGRAM**

November 1, 2013



Serving those who served

**Department of Veterans Services
2013 Annual Report on the
Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program**

Background

Under the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program (VMSDEP), tuition and required fees are waived at Virginia public colleges and universities for the qualified survivors and dependents of certain military service members. Through the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Fund (VMSDEF), a stipend is provided to offset the costs of room, board, books, and supplies. The amount of the stipend is determined by the Virginia General Assembly, the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV), and the availability of Commonwealth general funds.

A qualified survivor and dependent is defined as the spouse, or child between the ages of 16 and 29, of a military service member who, while serving as an active duty member in the United States Armed Forces, United States Armed Forces Reserves, the Virginia National Guard, or Virginia National Guard Reserve, during military operations against terrorism, on a peacekeeping mission, as a result of a terrorist act, or in any armed conflict subsequent to December 6, 1941, was killed or is missing in action or is a prisoner of war, or of a veteran who, due to such service, has been rated by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs as totally and permanently disabled or at least 90 percent disabled, and has been discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable. Domiciliary requirements also apply and are detailed in the Code of Virginia.

The Code of Virginia requires the Commissioner of the Department of Veterans Services (DVS) to report annually to the Governor and the General Assembly on the agency's policies and strategies relating to dissemination of information about the Program. The report must also include the number of current beneficiaries, the educational institutions attended by beneficiaries, and the completion rate of the beneficiaries.

Information Dissemination

Information about the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program is disseminated through multiple communications channels, including:

- DVS website;
- SCHEV website;
- Virginia public college and university websites;
- Information is published in "*Opportunities: Preparing for college guide and workbook.*" SCHEV partners with ECMC (Educational Credit Management Corporation) to produce and update this publication annually. Printed copies are distributed to students and guidance counselors free of charge through public and private high schools in Virginia. An electronic version of the guide is also posted on the SCHEV website;

- Meetings with college and university officials. DVS provides information and training annually on military and veteran education benefits, including VMSDEP;
- DVS-developed VMSDEP informational brochure, distributed through a variety of channels (colleges and universities, high school career fairs, veterans conferences, etc.);
- Direct outreach to veterans whose disability rating and period of service would potentially make their dependents eligible for VMSDEP benefits:
 - These veterans are identified through a review of all new rating decisions for Virginia veterans promulgated by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) Roanoke Regional Office;
 - In Fiscal Year 2013, approximately 1,522 veterans were identified whose period of service and level of disability met VMSDEP requirements, making their spouse and qualifying children potentially eligible for VMSDEP benefits;
 - DVS notified these veterans directly about the VMSDEP and offered assistance with the VMSDEP application process.

Current Beneficiaries and Institutions Attended

A total of 1,100 unique students were awarded a VMSDEP stipend during the Fall 2012 and Spring 2013 semesters. This represents a 12.6 percent increase over the number of unique students receiving a VMSDEP stipend in Fall 2011 and Spring 2012 (994 unique students). Nineteen students attended more than one college or university and are counted twice in the sub-totals presented in Appendices A and B, giving a total of 1,119 students.

Of the 1,119 students, forty-three percent (or 485 students) attended a four-year institution, while fifty-seven percent (634 students) attended a two-year college or community college.

Tidewater Community College led all schools with 247 students. Northern Virginia Community College was second among community colleges with 59 students.

Old Dominion University had the highest participation (113 students) among four-year institutions, followed by Virginia Commonwealth University with 82 students.

Detailed information for 2012-2013 is presented in Appendix A, while comparison of participants from 2010-13 is presented in Appendix B.

Completion Rates

Forty percent of students who entered a Virginia public institution in Fall 2007 and who used VMSDEP stipends graduated within five years (2011-2012 school year). Information is presented in Appendix C showing the degree completion rates by type of institution.

The State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) tracks graduation rates for Virginia colleges and universities. Information presented in Appendix C may be found on the

SCHEV website at <http://research.schev.edu/gradrates/subcohorts.asp> by selecting the following options:

Please select the desired institution:
List All Institutions

Select a sub-cohort of students
FTIC with Military Survivor/Dependent Award

Select a type of Degree Completion
Completed, Anywhere

Please select an entering student year
2007-08

Select a Gender
All Students

Select a student group
All Students

The 2007-2008 school year was the first full year in which graduation rates for VMSDEP students were tracked as a separate category. As of the date of this report, data is available through the 2011-2012 school year.

Code of Virginia and Appropriations Act Authority

Code of Virginia and Appropriations Act authority related to the VMSDEP is presented in Appendix D.

APPENDIX A

Number of Stipend Recipients and Amount Awarded 2012-2013

	Fall 2012		Spring 2013		Total		Summer 2012	
	Number	Dollars	Number	Dollars	Unique #	Dollars	Number	Dollars
Four-Year Publics								
Christopher Newport University	9	6,750	7	5,250	9	12,000	0	0
College of William and Mary	6	4,500	6	4,250	7	8,750	1	750
George Mason University	28	19,750	26	18,250	31	38,000	0	0
James Madison University	21	15,750	24	17,750	24	33,500	1	750
Longwood University	14	9,750	10	6,750	15	16,500	1	250
Norfolk State University	44	31,250	49	34,500	55	65,750	4	2,000
Old Dominion University	99	71,000	103	74,250	113	145,250	3	1,250
Radford University	32	23,234	31	21,917	33	45,151	2	1,000
University of Mary Washington	7	5,000	10	6,500	12	11,500	0	0
University of Virginia	10	7,000	11	7,500	12	14,500	1	500
University of Virginia's College at Wise	9	6,750	10	7,500	10	14,250	0	0
Virginia Commonwealth University	71	50,750	70	49,250	82	100,000	2	750
Virginia Military Institute	3	2,250	2	1,500	3	3,750	0	0
Virginia State University	40	28,250	38	28,500	43	56,750	0	0
Virginia Tech	34	24,750	33	24,500	36	49,250	1	500
Four-Year Public total	427	\$306,734	430	\$308,167	482	\$614,901	16	\$7,750
Two-Year Publics								
Richard Bland College	5	3,750	5	3,750	5	7,500	0	0
Two-Year Public total	5	\$3,750	5	\$3,750	5	\$7,500	0	\$0

	Fall 2012		Spring 2013		Total		Summer 2012	
	Number	Dollars	Number	Dollars	Unique #	Dollars	Number	Dollars
Community Colleges								
Blue Ridge Community College	5	3,750	7	4,750	7	8,500	3	1,250
Central Virginia Community College	3	5,000	11	6,500	13	11,500	1	250
Dabney S. Lancaster Community College	1	500	1	750	1	1,250	0	0
Danville Community College	5	3,000	6	4,250	6	7,250	0	0
Eastern Shore Community College	0	0	1	750	1	750	0	0
Germanna Community College	17	11,750	18	12,000	23	23,750	1	500
J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College	23	12,750	18	11,750	29	24,500	1	750
John Tyler Community College	29	17,500	26	15,500	36	33,000	7	3,000
Lord Fairfax Community College	7	4,250	5	2,750	8	7,000	1	250
Mountain Empire Community College	20	13,500	19	14,000	26	27,500	0	0
New River Community College	8	6,000	8	5,500	8	11,500	0	0
Northern Virginia Community College	49	30,750	45	26,250	59	57,000	8	4,000
Patrick Henry Community College	7	5,250	7	4,750	10	10,000	0	0
Paul D. Camp Community College	2	1,000	2	1,000	3	2,000	1	750
Piedmont Virginia Community College	10	6,750	1	750	10	7,500	2	1,250
Rappahannock Community College	6	4,000	7	4,250	9	8,250	0	0
Southside Virginia Community College	4	3,000	6	3,750	6	6,750	0	0
Southwest Virginia Community College	17	11,500	16	11,750	21	23,250	1	250
Thomas Nelson Community College	39	25,250	32	21,250	47	46,500	4	1,500
Tidewater Community College	209	131,750	196	120,000	247	251,750	41	18,000
Virginia Highlands Community College	11	7,500	8	6,000	12	13,500	0	0
Virginia Western Community College	37	23,750	31	19,500	43	43,250	0	0
Wytheville Community College	4	2,500	3	2,000	4	4,500	1	500
Community College total	519	\$331,000	474	\$299,750	629	\$630,750	72	\$32,250
Total	951	\$641,484	909	\$611,667	1,119*	\$1,253,151	88	\$40,000

Notes:

The \$40,000 paid for Summer 2012 awards were paid out of both 2011-12 and 2012-13 funds.
 \$20,285 of the 2012-13 appropriation was used to cover 2011-2012 awards disbursed after June 30, 2012.

Source: SCHEV May 2013 Report to the General Assembly

* Includes 19 students who attended more than one college or university.

**Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program
2012-13 Term Stipend Award Amounts**

Term award amounts	
Full-time enrollment	\$750
Half-time enrollment	\$500
Less than Half-time enrollment	\$250

Source: SCHEV May 2013 Report to the General Assembly

APPENDIX B

Number of Recipients and Amount Awarded 2010-2013

	2010-11 Total		2011-12 Total		2012-13 Total	
	Unique #	Dollars	Unique #	Dollars	Unique #	Dollars
Four-Year Publics						
Christopher Newport University	11	13,975	12	17,250	9	12,000
College of William and Mary	10	12,255	2	3,000	7	8,750
George Mason University	29	32,895	27	31,500	31	38,000
James Madison University	22	22,790	18	24,500	24	33,500
Longwood University	11	12,255	12	15,750	15	16,500
Norfolk State University	43	45,688	37	45,545	55	65,750
Old Dominion University	95	96,965	95	119,000	113	145,250
Radford University	23	25,370	27	35,000	33	45,151
University of Mary Washington	9	9,460	8	9,500	12	11,500
University of Virginia	11	13,115	12	16,500	12	14,500
University of Virginia's College at Wise	8	8,771	10	12,000	10	14,250
Virginia Commonwealth University	67	71,380	71	87,250	82	100,000
Virginia Military Institute	5	5,805	2	3,000	3	3,750
Virginia State University	39	46,225	39	48,000	43	56,750
Virginia Tech	28	34,185	27	32,750	36	49,250
Four-Year Public total	411	\$451,134	399	\$500,545	485	\$614,901
Two-Year Publics						
Richard Bland College	5	4,945	5	6,000	5	7,500
Two-Year Public total	5	\$4,945	5	\$6,000	5	\$7,500
Community Colleges						
Blue Ridge Community College	15	12,685	10	9,000	7	8,500
Central Virginia Community College	17	13,330	16	17,500	13	11,500
Dabney S. Lancaster Community College	0	0	0	0	1	1,250
Danville Community College	5	3,655	4	4,250	6	7,250
Eastern Shore Community College	1	1,075	1	500	1	750
Germanna Community College	23	19,995	23	20,250	23	23,750
J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College	15	13,330	20	20,000	29	24,500
John Tyler Community College	34	30,745	31	31,000	36	33,000
Lord Fairfax Community College	10	8,385	11	10,750	8	7,000
Mountain Empire Community College	28	26,015	25	28,000	26	27,500
New River Community College	9	6,020	11	11,750	8	11,500
Northern Virginia Community College	45	38,700	52	44,500	59	57,000
Patrick Henry Community College	7	6,020	7	9,500	10	10,000
Paul D. Camp Community College	5	4,515	11	10,250	3	2,000
Piedmont Virginia Community College	6	5,160	10	9,750	10	7,500
Rappahannock Community College	6	4,730	6	6,500	9	8,250
Southside Virginia Community College	10	8,815	5	4,750	6	4,750
Southwest Virginia Community College	19	19,780	17	18,500	21	18,500
Thomas Nelson Community College	53	41,065	59	57,750	47	57,750
Tidewater Community College	207	191,135	230	231,409	247	231,409
Virginia Highlands Community College	13	11,395	13	13,250	12	13,250
Virginia Western Community College	31	24,510	35	40,000	43	40,000
Wytheville Community College	9	8,170	7	8,250	4	8,250
Community College total	568	\$499,230	604	\$607,409	629	\$630,750
Total	979*	\$955,309	1004*	\$1,113,954	1,119*	\$1,253,151

Source: SCHEV May 2011, 2012, and 2013 Reports to the General Assembly

* The totals include students who attended more than one college or university: 11 in 2010-11, 10 in 2011-12, and 19 in 2012-13.

APPENDIX C

COMPLETION RATES STUDENTS ENTERING FALL 2007

**First-Time in College (FTIC) with Military Survivor/Dependent Award Completion Rates,
entering institution in Fall 2007**

Degree Completion	W/in 3yrs 2009-10	W/in 4yrs 2010-11	W/in 5yrs 2011-12
Total Public Four-year Institutions (Rate Profile) (detail)	2.6%	33.3%	61.5%
Total Public Two-Year Institutions (Rate Profile) (detail)	21.9%	27.1%	31.2%
Virginia Community College System (Rate Profile) (detail)	21.9%	27.1%	31.2%
Total Public Institutions (Rate Profile) (detail)	16.3%	28.9%	40.0%

Source: SCHEV <http://research.schev.edu/gradrates/subcohorts.asp>

APPENDIX D

CODE OF VIRGINIA AND APPROPRIATION ACT AUTHORITY

Code of Virginia, § [2.2-2004](#) Additional powers and duties of Commissioner

The Commissioner shall have the following powers and duties related to veterans services:

16. Certify eligibility for the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program and perform other duties related to such Program as outlined in § [23-7.4:1](#);

Code of Virginia, § [23-7.4:1](#) Waiver of tuition and certain charges and fees for eligible children and spouses of certain military service members, eligible children and spouses of certain public safety personnel, and certain foreign students.

A. There is hereby established the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program. Qualified survivors and dependents of military service members, who have been admitted to any public institution of higher education or other public accredited postsecondary institution granting a degree, diploma, or certificate in the Commonwealth of Virginia, upon certification to the Commissioner of the Department of Veterans Services of eligibility under this subsection, shall be admitted free of tuition and all required fees.

The Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program shall be implemented pursuant to the following:

1. For the purposes of this subsection, "qualified survivors and dependents" means the spouse or a child between the ages of 16 and 29 of a military service member who, while serving as an active duty member in the United States Armed Forces, United States Armed Forces Reserves, the Virginia National Guard, or Virginia National Guard Reserve, during military operations against terrorism, on a peacekeeping mission, as a result of a terrorist act, or in any armed conflict subsequent to December 6, 1941, was killed or is missing in action or is a prisoner of war, or of a veteran who, due to such service, has been rated by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs as totally and permanently disabled or at least 90% disabled, and has been discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable. However, the Commissioner of the Department of Veterans Services may certify dependents above the age of 29 in those cases in which extenuating circumstances prevented the dependent child from using his benefits before the age of 30.

2. Such qualified survivors and dependents shall be eligible for the benefits conferred by this subsection if the military service member who was killed, is missing in action, is a prisoner of war, or is disabled (i) was a bona fide domiciliary of Virginia at the time of entering such active military service or called to active duty as a member of the Armed Forces Reserves or Virginia National Guard Reserve; (ii) is and has been a bona fide domiciliary of Virginia for at least five years immediately prior to the date on which the admission application was submitted by or on behalf of such qualified survivor or dependent for admission to such institution of higher

education or other public accredited postsecondary institution; (iii) if deceased, was a bona fide domiciliary of Virginia on the date of his death and had been a bona fide domiciliary of Virginia for at least five years immediately prior to his death; (iv) in the case of a qualified child, is deceased and the surviving parent had been, at some time previous to marrying the deceased parent, a bona fide domiciliary of Virginia for at least five years or is and has been a bona fide domiciliary of Virginia for at least five years immediately prior to the date on which the admission application was submitted by or on behalf of such child; or (v) in the case of a qualified spouse, is deceased and the surviving spouse had been, at some time previous to marrying the deceased spouse, a bona fide domiciliary of Virginia for at least five years or is and has been a bona fide domiciliary of Virginia for at least five years prior to the date on which the admission application was submitted by such qualified spouse.

3. From such funds as may be appropriated and from such gifts, bequests, and any gifts, grants, or donations from public or private sources, there is hereby established the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Fund for the sole purpose of providing financial assistance, in an amount (i) up to \$2,000 or (ii) as provided in the appropriation act, for board and room charges, books and supplies, and other expenses at any public institution of higher education or other public accredited postsecondary institution granting a degree, diploma, or certificate in the Commonwealth of Virginia for the use and benefit of qualified survivors and dependents.

Each year, from the funds available in the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Fund, the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia and its member institutions shall determine the amount and the manner in which financial assistance shall be made available to beneficiaries and shall make that information available to the Commissioner of the Department of Veterans Services for distribution.

The State Council of Higher Education for Virginia shall be responsible for disbursing to the institutions the funds appropriated or otherwise made available by the Commonwealth of Virginia to support the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Fund and shall report to the Commissioner of the Department of Veterans Services the beneficiaries' completion rate.

The maximum amount to be expended for each such survivor or dependent pursuant to this subsection shall not exceed, when combined with any other form of scholarship, grant, or waiver, the actual costs related to the survivor's or dependent's educational expenses allowed under this subsection.

4. The Commissioner of the Department of Veterans Services shall designate a senior-level official who shall be responsible for developing and implementing the agency's strategy for disseminating information about the Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program to those spouses and dependents who may qualify. The Department of Veterans Services shall coordinate with the United States Department of Veterans Affairs to identify veterans and qualified survivors and dependents. The Commissioner of the Department of Veterans Services shall report annually to the Governor and the General Assembly as to the agency's policies and strategies relating to dissemination of information about the Program. The report shall also

include the number of current beneficiaries, the educational institutions attended by beneficiaries, and the completion rate of the beneficiaries.

Chapter 806, 2013 Acts of Assembly, Item 144

G.1. Out of this appropriation, ~~\$1,250,000~~ *\$1,325,000* the first year and ~~\$1,250,000~~ *\$1,850,000* the second year from the general fund is designated for the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents program, § 23-7.4:1, Code of Virginia, to provide up to a ~~\$1,500~~ *\$1,800* annual stipend to offset the costs of room, board, books and supplies for qualified survivors and dependents of military service members.

2. The amount of the stipend is an estimate depending on the number of students eligible under § 23-7.4:1, Code of Virginia. Changes that increase or decrease the grant amount shall be determined by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia.

3. The Director, State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, shall allocate these funds to public institutions of higher education on behalf of students qualifying under this provision.

4. Each institution of higher education shall report the number of recipients for this program to the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia by April 1 of each year. The State Council of Higher Education for Virginia shall report this information to the Chairmen of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance Committees by May 15 of each year.

5. The Department of Veterans Services shall consult with the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia prior to the dissemination of any information related to the financial benefits provided under this program.

Chapter 806, 2013 Acts of Assembly, Item 462

A. Notwithstanding § 23-7.4:1, Code of Virginia, the department shall provide the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia the information these schools need to administer the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependent Education Program. The department shall retain the responsibility to certify the eligibility of those who apply for financial aid under this program.

B. No child may receive the education benefits provided by § 23-7.4:1, Code of Virginia, and funded by this or similar state appropriations, for more than four years or its equivalent.