

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS SERVICES

2009 ANNUAL REPORT

TO

GOVERNOR TIMOTHY M. KAINE

AND

THE VIRGINIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

ON THE

**VIRGINIA MILITARY SURVIVORS
AND DEPENDENTS EDUCATION PROGRAM**

August 1, 2009



Virginia Department of Veterans' Services

Serving those who served.

**Department of Veterans Services
2009 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. Award of this stipend is determined by the Virginia General Assembly and availability of Commonwealth general funds.

“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.

As required by the Code, the Commissioner of the Department of Veterans Services must 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 include the number of current beneficiaries, the educational institutions attended by beneficiaries, and the completion rate of the beneficiaries.

Information Dissemination

During the past year, hundreds of bookmarks and an FAQ sheet were distributed, and information was posted on the DVS website.

Other activities included:

- A dialog was continued with the Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals to educate them about the VMSDEP.
- Personnel in DVS’ State Approving Agency for Veterans Education and Training and the Virginia Wounded Warrior Program continue to provide training about the program. Additionally, bookmarks and FAQ sheets are distributed at outreach events.

- As in the past, DVS continued to review all new rating decisions for Virginia veterans promulgated by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) Roanoke Regional Office. In Fiscal Year 2009, approximately 100 veterans were identified whose period of service and level of disability met VMSDEP requirements, making their spouse and qualifying children eligible for VMSDEP and VMSDEF benefits. DVS has notified the veterans and offered assistance with the VMSDEP application process.
- Updated bookmarks and FAQ sheets were provided to the manager of the phone and personal contact unit at the USDVA Roanoke Regional Office.

Current Beneficiaries and Institutions Attended

A total of 858 unique students used VMSDEP benefits during the Fall 2008 and Spring 2009 semesters. This represents a 23 percent increase over the number of unique students using VMSDEP benefits in 2007-08. Of these students 374 (43 percent) attended a four-year institution, while 495 (57 percent) attended a two-year college or community college.

Of the four-year institutions, Old Dominion University had the highest participation (60 students), followed by Virginia Commonwealth University with 58 students. Tidewater Community College led all schools with 159 students. Thomas Nelson Community College was second among community colleges with 41 students. More detailed information is presented in Appendix A. A comparison of participants during 2007-08 and 2008-09 is presented in Appendix B.

Completion Rates

The Department of Veterans Services continues to work with the State Council of Higher Education (SCHEV) to accurately define and quantify the completion rate of beneficiaries.

Currently, the DVS and SCHEV have identified 64 students in our databases who have completed their college degree programs during the past fiscal year. Letters of congratulations from the DVS Commissioner will be sent to each student.

APPENDIX A
2008-09 Number of Recipients and Amount Awarded as of May 15, 2009

	Fall 2008		Spring 2009		Total		Summer 2008	
	Number	Dollars	Number	Dollars	Unique #	Dollars	Number	Dollars
Four-Year Publics								
Christopher Newport University	12	9,000	10	6,380	13	15,380	1	750
College of William and Mary	12	9,000	13	7,869	14	16,869	2	1,250
George Mason University	20	13,388	19	10,845	22	24,233	1	500
James Madison University	20	14,388	20	12,760	23	27,148	3	1,250
Longwood University	11	8,250	10	6,380	12	14,630	0	0
Norfolk State University	42	29,888	37	23,393	46	53,281	4	2,000
Old Dominion University	60	41,526	54	33,387	66	74,913	7	3,500
Radford University	21	14,840	16	9,960	22	24,800	7	3,250
University of Mary Washington	8	5,250	9	4,890	9	10,140	2	750
University of Virginia	13	9,750	13	8,294	14	18,044	0	0
University of Virginia's College at Wise	11	7,181	6	3,615	11	10,796	1	500
Virginia Commonwealth University	58	41,250	52	33,388	66	74,638	7	3,000
Virginia Military Institute	3	2,250	4	2,552	4	4,802	0	0
Virginia State University	23	17,138	26	15,950	28	33,088	2	750
Virginia Tech	23	16,500	24	14,673	26	31,173	4	1,750
Four-Year Public total	337	\$239,598	313	\$194,336	374	\$433,934	41	\$19,250
Two-Year Publics								
Richard Bland College	4	3,000	3	1,914	4	4,914	0	0
Two-Year Public total	4	\$3,000	3	\$1,914	4	\$4,914	0	\$0
Community Colleges								
Blue Ridge Community College	10	5,750	9	4,464	10	10,214	2	1,000
Central Virginia Community College	13	7,750	9	3,828	15	11,578	6	2,500
Dabney S. Lancaster Community College	4	2,750	3	1,488	4	4,238	0	0
Danville Community College	1	500	2	638	2	1,138	0	0
Eastern Shore Community College	1	500	1	425	1	925	0	0
Germanna Community College	15	10,000	14	7,868	18	17,868	2	1,000
J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College	8	4,750	10	5,103	12	9,853	2	1,000
John Tyler Community College	6	4,250	10	5,103	10	9,353	1	500
Lord Fairfax Community College	9	5,000	7	3,402	10	8,402	1	250
Mountain Empire Community College	19	12,250	20	11,057	22	23,307	6	3,000
New River Community College	6	4,500	4	2,062	6	6,562	2	1,000
Northern Virginia Community College	24	16,276	25	14,035	28	30,311	5	2,500
Patrick Henry Community College	10	6,500	9	4,677	11	11,177	3	1,250
Paul D. Camp Community College	9	5,750	9	4,891	10	10,641	1	500
Piedmont Virginia Community College	3	1,750	5	2,764	5	4,514	2	750

	Fall 2008		Spring 2009		Total		Summer 2008	
	Number	Dollars	Number	Dollars	Unique #	Dollars	Number	Dollars
Rappahannock Community College	4	3,000	4	2,126	5	5,126	3	1,250
Southside Virginia Community College	10	6,000	9	5,742	10	11,742	4	1,750
Southwest Virginia Community College	19	13,888	23	14,036	24	27,924	7	2,750
Thomas Nelson Community College	41	25,750	41	20,413	55	46,163	14	6,250
Tidewater Community College	159	104,500	158	87,504	190	192,004	59	26,000
Virginia Highlands Community College	10	7,500	11	6,167	13	13,667	3	1,250
Virginia Western Community College	17	11,000	16	8,506	23	19,506	5	2,250
Wytheville Community College	8	5,250	8	4,152	10	9,402	3	1,500
Community College total	406	\$265,164	407	\$220,451	491	\$485,615	131	\$58,250
Total	747	\$507,762	723	\$416,701	858	\$924,463	172	\$77,500

Notes:

The \$77,500 paid for Summer 2008 awards were paid out of both 2007-08 and 2008-09 funds.

\$75,537 of the 2008-09 appropriation was used to cover Summer 2008 awards disbursed after June 30, 2008.

Due to insufficient funds, four students who were eligible for spring stipends were not fully funded (two received no award and two received partial awards).

Term award amounts	Pre January	January forward
Full-time enrollment	\$750	\$638
Half-time enrollment	\$500	\$425
Less than Half-time enrollment	\$250	\$213

Source: SCHEV

Appendix B

**Number of Recipients and Amount Awarded
2007-2008 and 2008-2009**

	2007-08 Total *		2008-09 Total **	
	Unique #	Dollars	Unique #	Dollars
Four-Year Publics				
Christopher Newport University	8	6,708	13	15,380
College of William and Mary	9	12,750	14	16,869
George Mason University	17	22,500	22	24,233
James Madison University	14	19,000	23	27,148
Longwood University	10	12,986	12	14,630
Norfolk State University	28	34,686	46	53,281
Old Dominion University	47	57,500	66	74,913
Radford University	30	37,875	22	24,800
University of Mary Washington	9	10,000	9	10,140
University of Virginia	10	13,500	14	18,044
University of Virginia's College at Wise	9	12,000	11	10,796
Virginia Commonwealth University	58	72,500	66	74,638
Virginia Military Institute	2	2,250	4	4,802
Virginia State University	8	8,750	28	33,088
Virginia Tech	26	32,000	26	31,173
Four-Year Public total	284	\$355,005	374	\$433,934
Two-Year Publics				
Richard Bland College	2	2,250	4	4,914
Two-Year Public total	2	\$2,250	4	\$4,914
Community Colleges				
Blue Ridge Community College	13	14,250	10	10,214
Central Virginia Community College	17	16,000	15	11,578
Dabney S. Lancaster Community College	2	2,250	4	4,238
Danville Community College	3	1,500	2	1,138
Eastern Shore Community College	0	0	1	925
Germanna Community College	16	13,750	18	17,868
J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College	9	8,750	12	9,853
John Tyler Community College	14	13,000	10	9,353
Lord Fairfax Community College	9	8,250	10	8,402
Mountain Empire Community College	23	28,000	22	23,307
New River Community College	12	13,000	6	6,562
Northern Virginia Community College	15	15,000	28	30,311
Patrick Henry Community College	7	7,500	11	11,177
Paul D. Camp Community College	6	7,500	10	10,641
Piedmont Virginia Community College	5	5,250	5	4,514
Rappahannock Community College	6	6,250	5	5,126

	2007-08 Total *		2008-09 Total **	
	Unique #	Dollars	Unique #	Dollars
Southside Virginia Community College	14	16,250	10	11,742
Southwest Virginia Community College	16	19,750	24	27,924
Thomas Nelson Community College	41	45,500	55	46,163
Tidewater Community College	146	148,750	190	192,004
Virginia Highlands Community College	18	20,500	13	13,667
Virginia Western Community College	16	15,902	23	19,506
Wytheville Community College	14	17,250	10	9,402
Community College total	419	\$444,152	491	\$485,615
Total	696	\$801,407	858	\$924,463

Notes:

* The above figures do not include summer 2008 awards.

** The \$77,500 paid for Summer 2008 awards were paid out of both 2007-08 and 2008-09 funds.

Due to insufficient funds, four students who were eligible for spring stipends were not fully funded (two received no award and two received partial awards).

Source: SCHEV

APPENDIX C

Code of Virginia, § [23-7.4:1A](#)

§ [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 90percent 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 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.