

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS SERVICES

2010 ANNUAL REPORT

TO

GOVERNOR ROBERT McDONNELL

AND

THE VIRGINIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

ON THE

**VIRGINIA MILITARY SURVIVORS
AND DEPENDENTS EDUCATION PROGRAM**

September 24, 2010



Virginia Department of Veterans' Services

Serving those who served.

**Department of Veterans Services
2010 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.

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, revisions were made to the VMSDEP Application and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ). The updated documents were posted on the DVS website.

Other activities included:

- 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 2010, approximately 1,118 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.

Current Beneficiaries and Institutions Attended

A total of 913 unique students used VMSDEP benefits during the Fall 2009 and Spring 2010 semesters. This represents a 6.4 percent increase over the number of unique students using VMSDEP benefits in 2008-09. Of these 913 students, 396 (43 percent) attended a four-year institution, while 517 (57 percent) attended a two-year college or community college.

Of the four-year institutions, Old Dominion University had the highest participation (89 students), followed by Virginia Commonwealth University with 67 students. Tidewater Community College led all schools with 193 students. Thomas Nelson Community College was second among community colleges with 50 students. More detailed information is presented in Appendix A. A comparison of participants during 2008-09 and 2009-10 is presented in Appendix B.

Completion Rates

The Department of Veterans Services continues to work with the State Council of Higher Education (SCHEV) to track each student's eligibility and use of benefits. Students, as well as institutions, are advised accordingly. DVS continues to provide SCHEV with updated eligibility reports.

APPENDIX A
2009-2010 Number of Recipients and Amount Awarded

	Fall 2009		Spring 2010		Total	
	Number	Dollars	Number	Dollars	Unique #	Dollars
Four-Year Publics						
Christopher Newport University	9	5,850	9	6,075	10	11,925
College of William and Mary	7	4,725	5	3,375	7	8,100
George Mason University	15	9,675	17	10,350	19	20,025
James Madison University	23	15,525	24	15,750	25	31,275
Longwood University	10	6,750	10	6,750	10	13,500
Norfolk State University	48	29,925	42	26,100	49	56,025
Old Dominion University	78	51,300	77	49,500	89	100,800
Radford University	17	11,321	17	10,575	20	21,896
University of Mary Washington	10	5,625	8	4,725	11	10,350
University of Virginia	11	7,200	10	6,525	11	13,725
University of Virginia's College at Wise	8	4,725	9	5,509	12	10,234
Virginia Commonwealth University	63	40,725	57	36,900	67	77,625
Virginia Military Institute	5	3,375	4	2,700	5	6,075
Virginia State University	33	21,375	32	20,925	36	42,300
Virginia Tech	24	16,200	26	17,100	28	33,300
Four-Year Public total	361	\$234,296	347	\$222,859	396	\$457,155
Two-Year Publics						
Richard Bland College	5	3,150	4	2,250	5	5,400
Two-Year Public total	5	\$3,150	4	\$2,250	5	\$5,400
Community Colleges						
Blue Ridge Community College	17	10,350	11	6,750	18	17,100
Central Virginia Community College	14	7,425	10	4,725	17	12,150
Dabney S. Lancaster Community College	2	1,125	2	900	2	2,025
Danville Community College	4	2,700	5	3,150	5	5,850
Eastern Shore Community College	1	450	1	225	1	675
Germanna Community College	14	6,975	10	6,075	16	13,050
J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College	13	6,750	11	6,750	15	13,500
John Tyler Community College	16	9,900	15	9,675	20	19,575
Lord Fairfax Community College	11	5,625	9	4,725	12	10,350
Mountain Empire Community College	23	14,400	17	10,800	24	25,200
New River Community College	1	225	3	1,575	3	1,800
Northern Virginia Community College	25	14,400	29	16,650	35	31,050
Patrick Henry Community College	7	3,600	5	2,475	9	6,075
Paul D. Camp Community College	8	4,725	7	4,275	10	9,000
Piedmont Virginia Community College	3	1,575	4	2,250	5	3,825

	Fall 2009		Spring 2010		Total	
	Number	Dollars	Number	Dollars	Unique #	Dollars
Rappahannock Community College	5	2,925	5	2,925	5	5,850
Southside Virginia Community College	10	6,075	10	5,850	11	11,925
Southwest Virginia Community College	18	11,475	16	9,900	20	21,375
Thomas Nelson Community College	45	25,875	29	14,625	50	40,500
Tidewater Community College	164	92,925	152	87,300	193	180,225
Virginia Highlands Community College	17	9,675	12	7,200	18	16,875
Virginia Western Community College	19	11,250	17	9,900	20	21,150
Wytheville Community College	7	4,275	7	4,500	7	8,775
Community College total	444	\$254,700	387	\$223,200	512	\$477,900
Total	810	\$492,146	738	\$448,309	913	\$940,455

Term award amounts	
Full-time enrollment	\$675
Half-time enrollment	\$450
Less than Half-time enrollment	\$225

Source: SCHEV

APPENDIX B

Number of Recipients and Amount Awarded 2008-2009 and 2009-2010

	2008-09 Total		2009-10 Total	
	Unique #	Dollars	Unique #	Dollars
Four-Year Publics				
Christopher Newport University	13	15,380	10	11,925
College of William and Mary	14	16,869	7	8,100
George Mason University	22	24,233	19	20,025
James Madison University	23	27,148	25	31,275
Longwood University	12	14,630	10	13,500
Norfolk State University	46	53,281	49	56,025
Old Dominion University	66	74,913	89	100,800
Radford University	22	24,800	20	21,896
University of Mary Washington	9	10,140	11	10,350
University of Virginia	14	18,044	11	13,725
University of Virginia's College at Wise	11	10,796	12	10,234
Virginia Commonwealth University	66	74,638	67	77,625
Virginia Military Institute	4	4,802	5	6,075
Virginia State University	28	33,088	36	42,300
Virginia Tech	26	31,173	28	33,300
Four-Year Public total	374	\$433,934	396	\$457,155
Two-Year Publics				
Richard Bland College	4	4,914	5	5,400
Two-Year Public total	4	\$4,914	5	\$5,400
Community Colleges				
Blue Ridge Community College	10	10,214	18	17,100
Central Virginia Community College	15	11,578	17	12,150
Dabney S. Lancaster Community College	4	4,238	2	2,025
Danville Community College	2	1,138	5	5,850
Eastern Shore Community College	1	925	1	675
Germanna Community College	18	17,868	16	13,050
J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College	12	9,853	15	13,500
John Tyler Community College	10	9,353	20	19,575
Lord Fairfax Community College	10	8,402	12	10,350
Mountain Empire Community College	22	23,307	24	25,200
New River Community College	6	6,562	3	1,800
Northern Virginia Community College	28	30,311	35	31,050
Patrick Henry Community College	11	11,177	9	6,075
Paul D. Camp Community College	10	10,641	10	9,000
Piedmont Virginia Community College	5	4,514	5	3,825
Rappahannock Community College	5	5,126	5	5,850

	2008-09 Total		2009-10 Total	
	Unique #	Dollars	Unique #	Dollars
Southside Virginia Community College	10	11,742	11	11,925
Southwest Virginia Community College	24	27,924	20	21,375
Thomas Nelson Community College	55	46,163	50	40,500
Tidewater Community College	190	192,004	193	180,225
Virginia Highlands Community College	13	13,667	18	16,875
Virginia Western Community College	23	19,506	20	21,150
Wytheville Community College	10	9,402	7	8,775
Community College total	491	\$485,615	512	\$477,900
Total	858	\$924,463	913	\$940,455

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.