

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS SERVICES

2017 ANNUAL REPORT

TO

GOVERNOR TERENCE R. MCAULIFFE

AND

THE VIRGINIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

ON THE

**VIRGINIA MILITARY SURVIVORS
AND DEPENDENTS EDUCATION PROGRAM**

October 27, 2017



Serving those who served

**Department of Veterans Services
2017 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 Armed Forces of the United States, Reserves of the Armed Forces of the United States, or Virginia National Guard, during military operations against terrorism, on a peacekeeping mission, as a result of a terrorist act, or in any armed conflict, was killed, became missing in action, or became a prisoner of war, or of a veteran who, as a direct result of such service, has been rated by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs as totally and permanently disabled or at least 90 percent permanently disabled and has been discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable. Domiciliary or physical presence 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;
- State Approving Agency for Veterans Education and Training eVeterin listserve;
- Virginia public college and university websites and catalogues;
- 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.); and
- 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 2017, 236 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.

VMSDEP ONLINE APPLICATION

In March 2014, DVS launched the VMSDEP online application. The online application moved the administration of VMSDEP from a manual to an automated process, increasing efficiency, accuracy and responsiveness. The portal allows applicants to submit and edit an application, review application status and upload requested documents related to the application. The automated workflow allows for email notification to be sent to the applicant during the entire process.

Current Beneficiaries and Institutions Attended

A total of 1,088 unique students were awarded a VMSDEP stipend during the Fall 2016 and Spring 2017 semesters. This represents a 7.56 percent decrease over the number of unique students receiving a VMSDEP stipend in Fall 2015 and Spring 2016.

Of the 1,088 students, 64.61% (703 students) attended a four-year institution, while 35.94% (391 students) attended a two-year college or community college.

Tidewater Community College led all schools with 122 students. Northern Virginia Community College was second among community colleges with 71 students.

Old Dominion University had the highest participation (172 students) among four-year institutions and followed by Virginia Commonwealth University with 120 students.

Detailed information for 2016-2017 is presented in Appendix A, comparisons of participants from 2014-17 is presented in Appendix B, and Appendix C shows comparisons of participants from the start of the program.

Completion Rates

92.3% who entered in Fall of 2007 in to a four year institution and who used VMSDEP stipends graduated within 10 years (i.e., by the end of the 2016-2017 school year). Information is presented in Appendix D showing the degree completion rates by additional types of institutions.

The State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) tracks graduation rates for Virginia colleges and universities. Information presented in Appendix D 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:

Select a sub-cohort of students

Select a type of Degree Completion

Please select an entering student year

Select a Gender

Select a student group

The 2007-2008 school year was the first full year in which graduation rates for VMSDEP students were tracked as a separate category.

Code of Virginia and Appropriations Act Authority

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

APPENDIX A

Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program 2016-17 Number of Recipients and Amount Awarded as of May 8, 2017

	Fall 2016		Spring 2017		Total	
	Number	Dollars	Number	Dollars	Unique #	Dollars
Four-Year Publics						
Christopher Newport University	21	18,900.00	21	18,900.00	23	37,800.00
College of William and Mary	11	9,675.00	11	9,900.00	11	19,575.00
George Mason University	72	63,675.00	73	63,225.00	81	126,900.00
James Madison University	35	30,685.00	32	27,675.00	37	58,360.00
Longwood University	14	12,600.00	15	13,500.00	16	26,100.00
Norfolk State University	32	27,450.00	25	21,825.00	34	49,275.00
Old Dominion University	160	138,375.00	151	130,500.00	172	268,875.00
Radford University	49	43,875.00	38	33,525.00	50	77,400.00
University of Mary Washington	26	21,375.00	26	21,825.00	28	43,200.00
University of Virginia	24	20,925.00	26	22,725.00	26	43,650.00
University of Virginia's College at Wise	10	9,000.00	10	8,775.00	11	17,775.00
Virginia Commonwealth University	110	93,600.00	108	90,225.00	120	183,825.00
Virginia Military Institute	5	4,500.00	5	4,500.00	5	9,000.00
Virginia State University	37	32,625.00	31	27,900.00	38	60,525.00
Virginia Tech	47	39,149.00	50	40,387.00	53	79,536.00
Four-Year Public total	653	566,409.00	622	535,387.00	703	1,101,796.00
Two-Year Publics						
Richard Bland College	7	6,300.00	7	6,075.00	7	12,375.00
Two-Year Public total	7	6,300.00	7	6,075.00	7	12,375.00
Community Colleges						
Blue Ridge Community College	7	5,175.00	6	3,825.00	7	9,000.00
Central Virginia Community College	2	1,800.00	2	1,800.00	2	3,600.00
Dabney S. Lancaster Community College	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Danville Community College	1	675.00	1	225.00	1	900.00
Eastern Shore Community College	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Germanna Community College	22	17,100.00	28	18,225.00	31	35,325.00
J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College	16	12,150.00	16	12,150.00	19	24,300.00
John Tyler Community College	32	22,725.00	25	20,025.00	35	42,750.00
Lord Fairfax Community College	3	2,475.00	5	3,600.00	5	6,075.00
Mountain Empire Community College	9	7,650.00	9	7,200.00	10	14,850.00
New River Community College	2	1,800.00	4	3,375.00	5	5,175.00
Northern Virginia Community College	57	38,700.00	53	32,850.00	71	71,550.00
Patrick Henry Community College	7	5,625.00	8	6,975.00	8	12,600.00
Paul D. Camp Community College	0	0.00	1	900.00	1	900.00
Piedmont Virginia Community College	5	3,825.00	4	2,700.00	5	6,525.00
Rappahannock Community College	5	2,925.00	4	2,475.00	5	5,400.00
Southside Virginia Community College	6	5,175.00	6	5,400.00	7	10,575.00
Southwest Virginia Community College	8	7,200.00	11	9,900.00	13	17,100.00
Thomas Nelson Community College	25	17,325.00	22	16,875.00	28	34,200.00
Tidewater Community College	97	74,250.00	86	64,575.00	122	138,825.00
Virginia Highlands Community College	4	3,150.00	4	2,925.00	5	6,075.00
Virginia Western Community College	8	5,850.00	4	2,700.00	8	8,550.00
Wytheville Community College	5	4,275.00	4	2,925.00	5	7,200.00
Community College total	321	239,850.00	303	221,625.00	391	461,475.00
Other Publics						
Eastern Virginia Medical School	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Other Public total	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Total all institutions	981	812,559.00	932	763,087.00	1,088	1,575,646.00

Appropriation	
	\$1,980,000
Maximum Annual Award	
	\$1,800
Term Award Amounts	
Full-time enrollment	\$900
3/4-time enrollment	\$675
Half-time enrollment	\$450
Less than half-time enrollment	\$225

APPENDIX B

Number of Recipients and Amount Awarded 2014-2017

	2014-15 Total		2015-16 Total		2016-17 Total	
	Unique #	Dollars	Unique #	Dollars	Unique #	Dollars
Four-Year Publics						
Christopher Newport University	20	32,960.00	20	31,500.00	23	37,800.00
College of William and Mary	5	9,000.00	12	18,000.00	11	19,575.00
George Mason University	51	81,900.00	79	121,500.00	81	126,900.00
James Madison University	35	57,825.00	36	61,200.00	37	58,360.00
Longwood University	17	28,800.00	16	27,000.00	16	26,100.00
Norfolk State University	60	92,925.00	57	82,125.00	34	49,275.00
Old Dominion University	156	224,100.00	153	228,375.00	172	268,875.00
Radford University	43	69,620.00	44	72,900.00	50	77,400.00
University of Mary Washington	18	26,775.00	26	33,975.00	28	43,200.00
University of Virginia	23	32,625.00	27	43,245.00	26	43,650.00
University of Virginia's College at Wise	13	22,500.00	15	23,837.00	11	17,775.00
Virginia Commonwealth University	99	149,625.00	115	172,800.00	120	183,825.00
Virginia Military Institute	5	9,000.00	7	10,800.00	5	9,000.00
Virginia State University	49	79,200.00	36	57,825.00	38	60,525.00
Virginia Tech	41	69,300.00	44	71,085.00	53	79,536.00
Four-Year Public total	592	896,262.00	683	1,056,167.00	703	1,101,796.00
Two-Year Publics						
Richard Bland College	7	9,000.00	10	14,850.00	7	12,375.00
Two-Year Public total	7	9,000.00	10	14,850.00	7	12,375.00
Community Colleges						
Blue Ridge Community College	8	11,250.00	9	10,350.00	7	9,000.00
Central Virginia Community College	3	2,925.00	5	6,075.00	2	3,600.00
Dabney S. Lancaster Community College	3	4,050.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Danville Community College	2	2,475.00	4	5,625.00	1	900.00
Eastern Shore Community College	1	1,800.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Germanna Community College	42	53,775.00	39	46,125.00	31	35,325.00
J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College	22	25,875.00	27	26,100.00	19	24,300.00
John Tyler Community College	47	49,725.00	42	46,800.00	35	42,750.00
Lord Fairfax Community College	4	4,275.00	4	4,275.00	5	6,075.00
Mountain Empire Community College	17	23,175.00	10	12,600.00	10	14,850.00
New River Community College	12	15,975.00	6	8,550.00	5	5,175.00
Northern Virginia Community College	81	94,950.00	79	84,150.00	71	71,550.00
Patrick Henry Community College	4	7,200.00	8	11,925.00	8	12,600.00
Paul D. Camp Community College	3	3,600.00	1	900.00	1	900.00
Piedmont Virginia Community College	6	7,425.00	5	6,300.00	5	6,525.00
Rappahannock Community College	8	11,475.00	8	8,100.00	5	5,400.00

**Number of Recipients and Amount Awarded
2014-2017**

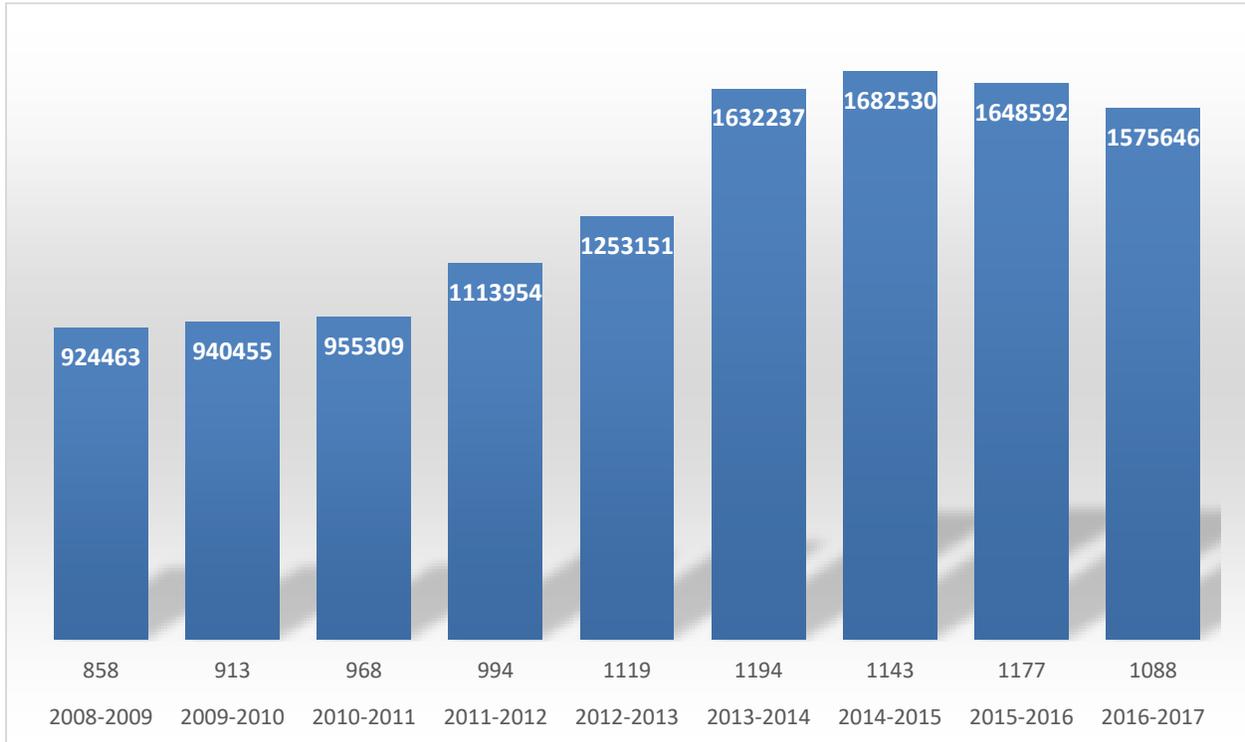
	2014-15 Total		2015-16 Total		2016-17 Total	
	Unique #	Dollars	Unique #	Dollars	Unique #	Dollars
Southside Virginia Community College	2	3,600.00	5	6,975.00	7	10,575.00
Southwest Virginia Community College	17	25,425.00	13	18,675.00	13	17,100.00
Thomas Nelson Community College	1	51,525.00	47	49,050.00	28	34,200.00
Tidewater Community College	199	236,025.00	162	189,225.00	122	138,825.00
Virginia Highlands Community College	11	11,475.00	8	9,675.00	5	6,075.00
Virginia Western Community College	26	32,175.00	18	21,150.00	8	8,550.00
Wytheville Community College	2	3,600.00	3	3,150.00	5	7,200.00
Community College total	519	683,775.00	502	575,775.00	391	461,475.00
Other Publics						
Eastern Virginia Medical School	2	3,600.00	1	1,800.00	0	0.00
Other Public total	2	3,600.00	1	1,800.00	0	0.00
Total	1,143	\$1,682,530	1,177	\$1,648,592.00	1,088	\$1,575,646.00

Source: SCHEV May 2015, 2016, and 2017 Reports to the General Assembly

APPENDIX C

Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program

State Council of Higher Education for Virginia Annual Stipend Reports



Source: SCHEV May 2009-2017 Reports to the General Assembly

APPENDIX D

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 Rate								
	W/in 3yrs 2009-10	W/in 4yrs 2010-11	W/in 5yrs 2011-12	W/in 6yrs 2012-13	W/in 7yrs 2013-14	W/in 8yrs 2014-15	W/in 9yrs 2015-16	W/in 10yrs /2016 -17
Total Public Four-year Institutions	2.6%	33.3%	76.9%	84.6%	87.2%	89.2%	92.3%	92.3
Total Public Two-Year Institutions	21.9%	27.1%	37.5%	43.7%	49.0%	49.0%	53.1%	53.1
Virginia Community College System	21.9%	27.1%	37.5%	43.7%	49.0%	49.0%	53.1%	53.1

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

APPENDIX E

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 § [23.1-608](#);

Code of Virginia, § [23.1-608](#) Waiver of tuition and mandatory fees for eligible children and spouses of qualified military service members, eligible children and spouses of certain public safety personnel, and certain foreign students.

A. As used in this section, unless the context requires a different meaning:

“Domicile” has the same meaning as provided in § [23.1-500](#).

“Fund” means the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Fund.

“Program” means the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program.

“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 Armed Forces of the United States, Reserves of the Armed Forces of the United States, or Virginia National Guard, during military operations against terrorism, on a peacekeeping mission, as a result of a terrorist act, or in any armed conflict, was killed, became missing in action, or became a prisoner of war, or of a veteran who, as a direct result of such service, has been rated by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs as totally and permanently disabled or at least 90 percent permanently disabled and has been discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable. However, the Commissioner 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.

B. The Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program is established for the purpose of waiving tuition and mandatory fees at a public institution of higher education or Eastern Virginia Medical School for qualified survivors and dependents who have been admitted to such institution and meet the requirements of subsection C, as certified by the Commissioner of Veterans Services.

C. Admitted qualified survivors and dependents are eligible for a waiver of tuition and mandatory fees pursuant to this section if the military service member who was killed, became missing in action, became a prisoner of war, or is disabled (i) established domicile (a) at the time of entering such active military service or called to active duty as a member of the Reserves of

the Armed Forces of the United States or Virginia National Guard; (b) at least five years immediately prior to, or had a physical presence in the Commonwealth 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 Eastern Virginia Medical School; or (c) on the date of his death and for at least five years immediately prior to his death or had a physical presence in the Commonwealth on the date of his death and had a physical presence in the Commonwealth for at least five years immediately prior to his death; (ii) in the case of a qualified child, is deceased and the surviving parent, at some time previous to marrying the deceased parent, established domicile for at least five years, or established domicile or had a physical presence in the Commonwealth 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 (iii) in the case of a qualified spouse, is deceased and the surviving spouse, at some time previous to marrying the deceased spouse, established domicile for at least five years or had a physical presence in the Commonwealth for at least five years prior to the date on which the admission application was submitted by such qualified spouse.

D. From such funds as may be appropriated and from such gifts, bequests, and any gifts, grants, or donations from public or private sources, the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Fund is established for the sole purpose of providing financial assistance in an amount (i) up to \$2,000 or (ii) as provided in the general appropriation act, for room and board charges, books and supplies, and other expenses at any public institution of higher education or Eastern Virginia Medical School for the use and benefit of qualified survivors and dependents, provided that 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 relating to the survivor's or dependent's educational expenses allowed under this subsection.

E. Each year, from the funds available in the Fund, the Council and each public institution of higher education and Eastern Virginia Medical School 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 Veterans Services for distribution.

F. The Council shall disburse to each public institution of higher education and Eastern Virginia Medical School the funds appropriated or otherwise made available by the Commonwealth to support the Fund and shall report to the Commissioner of Veterans Services the beneficiaries' completion rate.

G. The Department of Veterans Services shall disseminate information about the Program and Fund to those spouses and dependents who may qualify. The Department of Veterans Services shall coordinate with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to identify veterans and qualified survivors and dependents. The Commissioner of Veterans Services shall include in the annual report submitted to the Governor and the General Assembly pursuant to § [2.2-2004](#) an overview of the agency's policies and strategies relating to dissemination of information about the Program and Fund.

H. Each public institution of higher education and Eastern Virginia Medical School shall include in its catalog or equivalent publication a statement describing the benefits available pursuant to this section.

(1996, cc. [931](#), [981](#); 1998, c. [377](#); 2001, c. [330](#); 2003, cc. [657](#), [670](#); 2005, cc. [773](#), [783](#); 2006, c. [793](#); 2007, cc. [116](#), [161](#), [717](#); 2011, cc. [572](#), [586](#); 2012, c. [776](#); 2013, c. [719](#); 2014, cc. [184](#), [657](#).)

Chapter 2, 2014 Acts of Assembly Special Session I, Item 142

F.1. Out of this appropriation, \$1,915,000 the first year and \$1,930,000 the second year from the general fund is designated for the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents program, § 23.1-608, Code of Virginia, to provide up to a \$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 § 23.1-608, 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 2, 2014 Acts of Assembly Special Session I, Item 461

A. Notwithstanding § 23.1-608, 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 § 23.1-608, Code of Virginia, and funded by this or similar state appropriations, for more than four years or its equivalent.