

GI Bill entitlements upped for mobed Guard, Reserve

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The classic, "My recruiter lied to me," or the newer and more common, "Two weeks a summer my ass," may be heard bellowing from the back of the throats of naysayers serving the country on deployment in recent times.

But Uncle Sam's got something on the plate that may hush the sarcastic remarks and complaints of even the most cynical of Soldiers — the latest in Army college financial tuition assistance, Chapter 1607.

Since the new Chapter 1607 program is still in its infancy, all the details are still being hammered out from the top down by the Department of Defense (DOD), Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Veterans Affairs (VA). But among some of the general bits of information known is that all Reserve Component Soldiers supporting operations after September 11, 2001, are eligible for Chapter 1607.

According to Lt. Benjamin Stoner of the New Jersey National Guard Education Office, "Chapter 1607 gives National Guard (and Reserve) members a percentage of the active-duty Montgomery GI Bill rate. It was created to address the contributions and sacrifices that National Guard members have made to the War on Terrorism.

Prior to the War on Terrorism, the idea of a Reserve or National Guard Soldier activated on this large of a scale for so long may have never been conceived. But in a post- September 11 world, that is very much the case.

Active-duty Soldiers serving their country under the same light are offered the Army Montgomery GI Bill, Chapter 30. The program, administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), provides monthly payments for qualified Soldiers enrolled in VA-approved, college-level education and training. In order to be eligible for this program, a minimum contribution of \$1,200 is required, according to the VA.

Reserve and National Guard Soldiers who had served two full years were being offered Chapter 30. If they served less than two years, they were getting nothing.

The answer to this inequity was Chapter 1607. Chapter 1607 creates a progressive ladder toward the monetary stipend offered to active-duty Soldiers.

"The educational assistance allowance payable under Chapter 1607 is a percentage of the Chapter 30 three-year rate based on the number of continuous days served on active duty. The full-time rate in the table below is the rate for full-time institutional training under Chapter 1607 on or after Oct. 1, 2004. If your training was before October 1, 2004, your monthly rate will be a percentage of the Chapter 30 three year rate in effect at the time of your training," according to the VA.

And in the rare case that a Soldier does make it to two full years, they will be eligible for Chapter 30.

"They may actually be eligible for both (Chapters 30 and 1607), but as I understand it right now, if they do serve two years consecutively, and it is their first time on active duty, then they are eligible to enroll in Chapter 30," said Stoner.

But if that's not you, then Chapter 1606 most likely is. Like Chapter 1607, this chapter is available to Soldiers active in their reserve components, but the amount is only \$288 a month.

Stoner warns Soldiers who were activated and are now back in their civilian lives that using Chapter 1606 can burn Chapter 1607. He also said that if you're not receiving your Chapter 1607 it is retroactive.

So Soldiers need to remain patient. The VA estimates that it will take four to six months to fully design and implement the Chapter 1607 benefit program.

The main difference between Chapters 1607 and 30 is that Chapter 1607 doesn't require any financial contribution; however it does require a Soldier to be of active standing in his or her reserve component. In addition, Chapter 30 has a ten-year window, whereas 1607 can be used as long as a Soldier is retained.

A detailed description of Chapter 1607 as it stands presently along with a commonly asked question page is up to date and running at the VA Web site; <http://www.gibill.va.gov/> for those interested in more information.

For more specific questions call your local VA Regional Office toll-free at 1 (888) 442-4551.

Question

How much will I receive under Chapter 1607?

Answer

The educational assistance allowance payable under chapter 1607 is a percentage of the chapter 30 3-year rate based on the number of continuous days served on active duty. The full-time rate in the table below is the rate for full-time institutional training under chapter 1607 on or after October 1, 2004. If your training was before October 1, 2004, your monthly rate will be a percentage of the Ch 30 (3- Year Rate) in effect at the time of your training.

Time Reserve Member Serves on Active Duty	Percentage of Ch 30 (3-Year Rate)	Full-Time Rate (Eff. Oct. 1,2004)
90 days but less than one year	40%	\$401.60
One year but less than two years	60%	\$602.40
Two years or more	80%	\$803.20

Reduced rates will apply for correspondence, flight, apprenticeship/OJT and licensing and certification training.

Note: Disabled members released before 90 days are eligible for the 40% rate.

Question

How do I apply for Chapter 1607?

Answer

You can apply now, however, Department of Defense (DOD), Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) have not determined when full implementation will begin. Computer programs will have to be reprogrammed to pay the benefits, documents and forms will have to be rewritten, and a Memorandum of Understanding will have to be negotiated between DOD, DHS and VA.

VA Regional Processing Offices in Atlanta, St. Louis, Buffalo, and Muskogee will accept applications and supporting documents for Chapter 1607 claims. VA cannot take action on your claim at this time, but VA will store your documents and will notify you when full implementation has been approved. Your claim will be processed at that time.

If you have never submitted an Education Claim to VA-

Submit an ["Application for VA Education Benefits" \(VA Form 22-1990\)](#) and submit any available documents such as your Discharge from Military Service (DD Form 214), copies of orders to active duty and anything else available as evidence of qualifying service. **Annotate "Chapter 1607" prominently on all correspondence and documents.**

If you have previously filed a claim for Education benefits-

A new application form is not required. However, you should submit any available documents such as your Discharge from Military Service (DD Form 214), copies of orders to active duty and anything else available as evidence of qualifying service to help establish eligibility for this program. You should also submit a ["Request For Change of Program or Place of Training" \(VA form 22-1995\)](#) which should be annotated "1607." **Annotate "Chapter 1607" prominently on all correspondence and documents.**

Question

How long do I have to use my benefits under Chapter 1607?

Answer

You may use your benefits under Chapter 1607 as long as you remain within your component. Benefits must be terminated if you leave the Reserves or participate in a ROTC program under Title 10 Section 2107.

Note: There is no fixed delimiting period (ending date) for persons eligible under chapter 1607, as there is for all of the other VA education programs. There is one exception: If you are separated from the Ready Reserve for disability which was not the result of your own willful misconduct, you are entitled to chapter 1607 benefits for 10-years after the date of entitlement.

More info at: <http://www.gibill.va.gov>