

**VA's Implementation of Section 555 of the
National Defense Authorization Act of 2016
Education Call Center
Q&A Script**

Issue: Callers have been informed that the program known as the Reserve Educational Assistance Program (REAP) or chapter 1607 is no longer available.

Background:

The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) of 2016 ended the Reserve Educational Assistance Program (REAP) on Nov. 25, 2015, for new school enrollments. Due to Congressional mandate, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) can only grant REAP eligibility to those enrolled in school on November 24, 2015, or during their school's last term, quarter, or semester ending prior to that date.

Q: What does "sunset" mean?

A: It means the authority DoD had to provide or award educational assistance under REAP will be terminated.

- The VA can no longer grant eligibility to new applicants received on or after November 25, 2015.
- REAP beneficiaries who were attending an educational institution during the semester, quarter, or term immediately preceding November 25, 2015, may receive REAP benefits until November 25, 2019.

VA understands this change may have an impact on students who expect to return to school for the spring 2016 semester. In most cases, students will be eligible for Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits.

Q: I am a REAP student, currently using my benefits, how does this law impact me?

A: **Current REAP beneficiaries** -- Individuals who were attending an educational institution on Nov. 24, 2015, or during the last semester, quarter, or term ending prior to that date, are eligible to continue to receive REAP benefits until Nov. 25, 2019 or until his/her delimiting date.

Q: I used my REAP benefits in the past, but haven't used it recently, how does this law impact me?

A: **REAP beneficiaries not attending school** -- Individuals who applied for REAP but were not attending an educational institution on Nov. 24, 2015, or during the last semester, quarter, or term ending prior to that date are no longer eligible to receive REAP benefits.

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- Many of these Veterans may be eligible to receive benefits under the Post-9/11 GI Bill.

Q: I just applied for REAP benefits, how does this law impact me?

A: **New REAP applicants** – Individuals who have not enrolled in school and applied for REAP benefits prior to Nov. 25, 2015, are no longer eligible for REAP benefits. However, in most cases, those individuals will be eligible for the Post-9/11 GI Bill. If VA receives an application for REAP on or after November 25, 2015, VA will evaluate your eligibility for all programs (for example, Post-9/11 GI Bill) and may award benefits under a different program for which you may be eligible or request any additional information needed to make an award determination.

Q: How can I complete my program or continue my education if I was using REAP and it no longer exists?

A: If the VA determines you are not eligible for REAP, a separate determination will be made for other benefits. VA will evaluate your eligibility for all programs (for example, Post-9/11 GI Bill) and may award benefits under a different program.

Q: What if I have entitlement remaining under REAP/Chapter 1607?

A: If you have remaining entitlement for REAP, VA will determine if you can remain in the program. To remain eligible you must have been attending a term, quarter, or semester “immediately preceding” November 25, 2015.

Q: What does VA mean by remaining period of qualifying service?

A: If the period of service used to qualify for REAP started before August 1, 2011, that same period of service may be used to qualify for the Post-9/11 GI Bill. However, if the period of service used to qualify for REAP started on or after August 1, 2011, and the individual used that service to establish eligibility for REAP, then that same period of service may not now be used to qualify for Post-9/11 GI Bill.

Q: I am a GI Bill (MGIB, MGIB-SR, or Post 9/11) student, currently using my benefits, how will/does this impact me?

A: There is no impact for any individual receiving Chapter 30 (MGIB), Chapter 1606 (MGIB-SR), or Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits. You may continue using your benefits. The law only impacts REAP beneficiaries.

Q: I just applied for Post-9/11 benefits using the “in lieu of” REAP, how will this new law impact my benefits?

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Q&A Script**

A: VA will continue to process Post-9/11 applications. If you attempted to relinquish REAP for Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits, VA is evaluating your claim further. If any changes are required, we will contact you.

School Certifying Official (SCO), Hotline Question: I am a SCO, should I stop sending REAP enrollment certifications?

A: SCOs should continue processing enrollment certifications, VA-Form 22-1999s, to the Department of Veterans Affairs for REAP students. VA will determine if the individual is eligible to continue using REAP. In the event a beneficiary individual is not eligible for REAP, VA will determine eligibility for another education benefit and notify the student directly.