

VAU.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

News Release

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VA Colmery Act IT implementation complete

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced today the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) and Office of Information and Technology (OIT) successfully completed all Information Technology (IT) updates to process education benefits for Veterans.

The updates were completed Oct. 31 in accordance with the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017, also referred to as the Forever GI Bill, which included 31 GI Bill®-related provisions that expanded and enhanced opportunities for Veterans using the GI Bill® in pursuit of their educational and career goals.

“These IT changes improve our ability to deliver education benefits to GI Bill® students.” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “As VA works to modernize processes, this milestone is an important step in our digital transformation journey — merging people, procedures and technology.”

Since 2018, VA has ensured Veterans realized the impact of these provisions — including restoration of entitlement, removal of the delimiting date to use the Post-9/11 GI Bill® and full benefits to eligible Purple Heart recipients — while implementing these changes within its IT systems.

The implementation of the Colmery Act has been a joint undertaking with VBA, OIT, MITRE Corporation and Accenture Federal Services. Working together as an integrated unit, the team delivered comprehensive software development, integration, testing, communications and training to meet immediate needs.

The “go-live” of Colmery Act IT updates ultimately changes the way VBA interfaces with Veterans. The integrated solution allows VA to better serve Veterans in pursuit of their education and career goals through improved processing times, rapid response to legislation and fewer manual work arounds.

The team utilized an innovative Scaled Agile Framework (SAFe) to collaborate across multiple systems and VA offices, resulting in improved engagement, quality and efficiency. Despite transitioning to a virtual work environment in March, the team adapted quickly and continued to meet the mission leveraging the SAFe approach.

The following updates represent important benefits changes for GI Bill® students, as the Colmery Act expands opportunities under the Post-9/11 GI Bill®.

- Removed the expiration of benefits for those who served on or after Jan. 1, 2013.
- Changed the way Post-9/11 GI Bill [Monthly Housing Allowance is calculated](#).
- Expanded [Yellow Ribbon Program eligibility](#) to include Purple Heart recipients.
- Established the Edith Nourse Rogers STEM Scholarship and improved the [attendance verification process](#) for scholarship recipients.
- [Proration of the entitlement](#) charge for licensing, certifications, and national exams.

To communicate these important changes and provide updates throughout the implementation process, VA conducted extensive communication, outreach campaigns and gathered feedback. This included channels such as email, [toolkits](#) and [focus groups](#), as well as grassroots efforts such as social media campaigns reaching more than 910,000 stakeholders, and a nine-state, 24-stop nationwide [School Tour](#).

For more information on the bill visit [VBA benefits](#).

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