



## **WI GI BILL BENEFITS:**

### **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

*Updated as of July 2010*

Under the WI GI Bill, eligible veterans and their qualifying spouses and children may have their tuition and fees waived when attending Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) and University of Wisconsin System (UWS) institutions.

This document is intended as a reference tool to help WTCS students and administrators understand:

- **who is eligible** for the WI GI Bill,
- **how to apply** for the WI GI Bill,
- **what benefits the program provides** to eligible students
- **using the WI GI Bill if you are eligible for the federal Post-9/11 GI Bill**
- **eligibility for Spouses and Children** to use the WI GI Bill and
- **other questions about the WI GI Bill** important to know when applying for and using the WI GI Bill.

Your individual circumstances may affect the WI GI Bill benefits for which you qualify. Understanding the relationship among state and federal veteran benefits and determining which are best for your specific circumstance require that you are well informed. The WTCS urges you to speak directly with the following resource people:

- County Veterans Service Officer regarding Wisconsin Veterans Benefits programs (<http://dva.state.wi.us/CVSO.asp>)
- Federal Veterans Administration regarding federal benefits programs (<http://www.gibill.va.gov/>), and
- School Veteran Certifying Officials at the WTCS or UWS institution where you intend to enroll. For a list of WTCS school veterans certifying officials, visit [http://www.wtcsystem.edu/gi\\_bill/students/pdf/wtcs\\_vet\\_certifying\\_officials.pdf](http://www.wtcsystem.edu/gi_bill/students/pdf/wtcs_vet_certifying_officials.pdf)

You also can visit <http://gibillwisconsin.edu> for the latest information about changes to the WI GI Bill. At this site you can sign up for an RSS feed that will notify you when new information is posted. The <http://gibillwisconsin.edu> site is hosted by UWS but the information available there also applies to WTCS students unless noted.

## **Who is Eligible?**

### **Who is eligible for the WI GI Bill?**

*Veterans* who entered active military duty as a Wisconsin resident qualify for remission of program/tuition and material fees at any WTCS institution. **Beginning in January 2010**, students who have federal active duty service after September 10, 2001 must apply for benefits provided under the federal Post-9/11 GI Bill program before they can receive WI GI Bill benefits. More information on special WI GI Bill provisions for veterans with active duty after September 10, 2001 begins on page \_.

*Spouses and Children of veterans* may qualify for WI GI Bill remission if they are Wisconsin residents and they are the surviving spouse or child of an eligible Wisconsin veteran. More information about eligibility for spouses and children of veterans is available on page \_\_ .

### **Are there additional requirements that affect my eligibility for the WI GI Bill?**

**Beginning in January 2010**, veterans who have federal active duty service after September 10, 2001 must apply for benefits provided under the federal Post-9/11 GI Bill program and provide either a federal Veterans Administration (VA) Certificate of Eligibility or a rejection notice for Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits before they can receive WI GI Bill benefits. If an eligible veteran transferred their Post-9/11 benefits to an eligible spouse or child, the spouse or child must use the federal Post-9/11 benefits before using the WI GI Bill. Those who use the Post-9/11 GI Bill may qualify for additional state benefits when using the WI GI Bill. Please see information beginning on page \_ about using the WI GI Bill if you are eligible for the federal Post-9/11 GI Bill.

### **If I am on currently active duty, can I use the WI GI Bill?**

Yes, if you are currently in the military (either active duty, Guard or Reserves) and have qualifying service, you may qualify for WI GI Bill benefits if you meet all of the eligibility requirements, including enrolling in the federal Post-9/11 GI Bill as of January 2010.

### **Am I eligible for other veteran's benefits if I use the WI GI Bill?**

You may be eligible for other state or federal veteran's benefits. Your best source of information about other WI veteran benefits is your County Veterans Service Officer (<http://dva.state.wi.us/CVSO.asp>) or the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA, [http://dva.state.wi.us/.](http://dva.state.wi.us/))

For information on federal benefits, contact the US Department of Veterans Administration regarding federal benefit programs (<http://www.gibill.va.gov/>)

## ***How do I apply for the WI GI Bill?***

### **Do I have to complete special forms to use the WI GI Bill?**

Yes, you must apply specifically to use your WI GI Bill benefits, but the forms you are required to complete differ if you have used or applied for the WI GI Bill prior to January 2010. You also must submit some forms to the college where you want to use your WI GI Bill benefits and some forms to the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA).

***If you used or applied for the WI GI Bill prior to January 2010***, you must complete a new “Continuing Eligibility form” available from the WTCS college in which you are enrolled to verify when you had active duty service. You should provide this form to the WTCS School Veterans Certifying Official where you attend.

Students who indicate on the continuing eligibility form that they had no active duty since September 10, 2001 will continue to be eligible for the WI GI Bill. Students who indicate on the form that they had active duty service since September 10, 2001 must apply for the federal Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits and provide their federal Veterans Administration Certificate of Eligibility (COE) or rejection notice to their campus School Veterans Certifying Official to continue qualifying for the WI GI Bill.

***If you are a new applicant for the WI GI Bill after January 2010***, you must complete the WI GI Bill application form (WDVA form #2029) and declare whether you had active duty since September 10, 2001. Form #2029 is available from School Certifying Officials and online from the WDVA as part of the WI GI Bill application packet at:  
[http://dva.state.wi.us/webForms/WDVA\\_B0105\\_Wisconsin\\_Tuition\\_Programs\\_\(WI\\_GI\\_Bill\)\\_Color.pdf](http://dva.state.wi.us/webForms/WDVA_B0105_Wisconsin_Tuition_Programs_(WI_GI_Bill)_Color.pdf)

Students with active duty service after September 10, 2001 must apply for the federal Post-9/11 GI Bill or they cannot use the WI GI Bill. There are, however, some specific situations in which you are not required to apply for the federal Post-9/11 GI Bill. Please see the information specific to the federal Post-9/11 GI Bill beginning on page \_.

You must submit the completed WDVA form #2029 to the School Veterans Certifying Official of the WTCS college in which you are enrolling along with, if applicable, copies of your marriage certificate, birth certificate or income tax form for children needing to demonstrate their dependent status.

### **Are there other forms that new applicants seeking to use the WI GI Bill for the first time must complete?**

***New applicants*** also must complete “Request for Certification” (WDVA form #2030) and submit it to the Wisconsin Department of Veterans. The form is available electronically at:  
[http://dva.state.wi.us/webForms/WDVA\\_B0105\\_Wisconsin\\_Tuition\\_Programs\\_\(WI\\_GI\\_Bill\)\\_Color.pdf](http://dva.state.wi.us/webForms/WDVA_B0105_Wisconsin_Tuition_Programs_(WI_GI_Bill)_Color.pdf)

When you apply for the WI GI Bill, WDVA also requires that you submit other documents (if you have not already provided them) including a copy of your DD 214, your eligibility determination, and if applicable, a death certificate or federal VA service-connect disability rating notification letter.

### **Who determines if I am eligible for the WI GI Bill?**

The Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) determines your eligibility for the WI GI Bill using your Request for Certification form (WDVA form # 2030). They notify the college(s) you list on the Request for Certification about your eligibility. The college you attend determines the actual fee remission for which you are eligible.

### **What happens if WDVA denies my eligibility for the WI GI Bill? May I appeal?**

You will be notified by WDVA if they deny your eligibility. You may appeal WDVA's decision using the appeal protocol described in the notice of denial.

If a WTCS college denies your fee remission, the School Veterans Certifying Official will send you a written notice explaining the reason for denying the remission. You can appeal college decisions through the normal student appeal process at the institution from which you are seeking remission.

### **Is there an application deadline to qualify for the WI GI Bill?**

To ensure timely consideration of your application, you must submit the required WI GI Bill application forms to WDVA and the college(s) you plan to attend by the 14th day of the fall or spring semester in which you intend to use the benefits. For summer sessions, applications must be submitted by June 1st. Once you successfully complete the application process, the college where you are attending will adjust your student account to reflect the remission of fees for which you qualify. You are responsible for any unpaid fees that are not included in the remission or because you do not qualify for the WI GI Bill.

### **Do I need to reapply for the WI GI Bill each semester?**

You only need to reapply if there is a break in your enrollment (other than during a summer session) once WDVA determines you are eligible and the college you are attending approves remission under the WI GI Bill. If you transfer to another college, you need to notify the school certifying officials at both the new college you are attending and the college from which you are transferring to ensure that you can continue to use the WI GI Bill at the new college you are attending without reapplying.

### **What if the information I included in my WI GI Bill application changes?**

You are responsible for notifying the School Veterans Certifying Official at your college if there are changes to your residency, marital status, or to other items reported on your application for WI GI Bill benefits.

## ***What WI GI Bill benefits are available?***

### **What costs are covered by the WI GI Bill remissions?**

If you are eligible for the WI GI Bill, you qualify for 100% remission of program fees/tuition and material fees for most courses. However, you must pay material fees (but not program fees/tuition) for community service/avocational courses (600 level) even if you are eligible for the WI GI Bill.

### **Are there costs that are not covered by the WI GI Bill? Do I have to pay these?**

There are costs at each college that you will need to pay because they are not covered by the WI GI Bill. For example, material fees for community service/avocational courses are not covered and WTCS colleges charge all students some fees, such as student activity fees for things like parking or technology fees. These additional fees are not covered by the WI GI Bill.

Students who are eligible for the WI GI Bill are responsible for paying any costs or fees not covered by the WI GI Bill. You also must pay any late charges that may result if you do not pay any fees or costs not covered by the WI GI Bill by the required due date established by the college you attend.

For more information, contact the School Certifying Official at the campus you plan to attend for specific information about costs that you will need to pay even if you are eligible for the WI GI Bill.

### **How many credits can I take using my WI GI Bill eligibility?**

Under the WI GI Bill, eligible veterans, spouses and dependents qualify for up to 128 credits or 8 semesters, whichever is longer. The 128 credits includes any credits taken at any WTCS college or University of Wisconsin institution for which you did not pay program fees/tuition because they were remitted while you were using the WI GI Bill or the federal Post-9/11 GI Bill.

### **What is the difference between 128 credits and 8 semesters?**

The law that created the WI GI Bill grants eligibility for up to 128 credits or 8 semesters, whichever is longer. This means that you can attend for more than 8 semesters if you have not yet taken 128 credits. If you take 128 credits in less than 8 semesters, you can continue to use the WI GI Bill through the end of your eighth qualifying semester.

### **If I drop a course, does it count against the 128 credit maximum?**

If you drop a course before the semester begins, it will not count. If you receive a grade for the course that appears on your transcript, it will count toward the 128-credit maximum, including course grades of A-F, pass/fail, audit, or withdraw.

### **If I withdraw from college during the semester, will it count against the WI GI Bill limits?**

If you withdraw after the semester begins, the semester will count against your eight semesters of eligibility as will any credits that appear on your transcript.

### ***Using the WI GI Bill if you are eligible for the federal Post-9/11 GI Bill (Chapter 33)***

**This section only applies to veterans who have active duty military service since **September 10, 2001** or to spouses or children who had federal Post-9/11 benefits transferred to them.**

### **What is the relationship between the WI GI Bill and the federal Post-9/11 GI Bill?**

The federal Post-9/11 GI Bill applies to veterans with active duty service since September 10, 2001. As of January 2010, any veteran who has active duty service since September 10, 2001 must apply for the federal Post-9/11 GI Bill and present either their federal Post-9/11 GI Bill Certificate of Eligibility (COE) or their denial letter to their school certifying official before they can use the WI GI Bill.

Veterans who are eligible for the federal Post-9/11 GI Bill **must elect** to use their Post-9/11 benefits in order to use the WI GI Bill as of January 2010. Veterans who are eligible for the federal Post-9/11 GI Bill but who do not elect to use this federal benefit are not eligible for the WI GI Bill. Credits completed by veterans attending a WTCS or UWS institution under the WI GI Bill or the Post-9/11 GI Bill are deducted from the maximum total 128 credits or 8 semesters available under the WI GI Bill.

### **What if I do not want to use federal Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits?**

If you are eligible for federal Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits but choose not to use them, you are not eligible to receive WI GI Bill tuition remission until you elect to use your federal Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits.

### **What exceptions exist to the requirement that I apply for the federal Post-9/11 GI Bill before I can use the WI GI Bill?**

**Veterans who have fewer than 12 months** of eligibility remaining under the Montgomery GI Bill (Chapter 30), Selected Reserve or REAP (Montgomery GI Bill Chapter 1606 or 1607) as of the first day of the academic term in which they want to use the WI GI Bill are not required to switch to the federal Post-9/11 GI Bill.

**Veterans who do not have active duty service since September 10, 2001** but who have received transferred Post-9/11 benefits from a parent or spouse are not required to use the transferred Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits in order to use the WI GI Bill.

**Spouses and children who are eligible for the WI GI Bill based on their relationship to a veteran** and who also are eligible for the Post-9/11 GI Bill based on their own active duty military service are not required to switch to the federal Post-9/11 GI Bill and can continue using the WI GI Bill.

**I am eligible for less than 100% of tuition and fees under the federal Post-9/11 GI Bill. Can I use the WI GI Bill for the remaining amount of tuition and fees?**

The federal VA determines your eligibility for the Post-9/11 GI Bill, which you must apply for before you can use the WI GI Bill if you have active duty service after September 10, 2001. If the federal VA determines that you are eligible for less than 100% of tuition and fees (based on your length of active duty service), you can use the WI GI Bill to pay the remaining portion of eligible tuition and fees.

For example, the federal VA determines you are eligible for the federal Post-9/11 GI Bill at 70%. You can use the WI GI Bill for the remaining 30% portion of qualifying program fees/tuition and material fees. All credits you take and semesters you use count toward the maximum WI GI Bill benefit of 128 credits or 8 semesters.

**What if switching to the federal Post-9/11 GI Bill reduces my overall federal VA education benefits?**

Students who elect to use the federal Post-9/11 GI Bill instead of other federal VA education programs (Chapter 30 Montgomery GI Bill, Chapter 1606 Selected Reserve or Chapter 1607 REAP) so they can qualify for the WI GI Bill may be eligible for an additional WI GI Bill benefit known as a supplemental payment. The supplemental payment is paid to you by the WTCS or UWS institution you attend.

The supplemental payment approximates the difference between the benefits (other than tuition) you would have received from Chapter 30, 1606 or 1607 and those you will receive after relinquishing another federal benefit to enroll in the Post-9/11 GI Bill.

**Will all veterans using the WI GI Bill qualify for the supplemental payment?**

No. Only students eligible for and using the federal Post-9/11 GI Bill may qualify for a supplemental payment. In addition, students who receive the same or more benefits under the federal Post-9/11 GI Bill or who have exhausted their Chapter 30 benefits will not qualify for a supplemental payment. Finally, students using Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits transferred from a parent or spouse are not eligible for a supplemental payment.

**Will spouses and children eligible for the WI GI Bill qualify for a supplemental payment?**

Spouses and children may qualify for a supplemental payment if they switch from Chapter 35, 1606 or 1607 to use the federal Post-9/11 GI Bill transferred to them by a parent or spouse. Spouses and children who switch from Chapter 30 are not eligible for a supplemental payment.

## **Do I need to provide information other than my WI GI Bill application to get a supplemental payment?**

To get a supplemental payment, you will need to provide several documents to your school certifying official so that they can determine if you are eligible for a supplemental payment and calculate the supplemental payment amount. The documents you need to provide are:

- Federal VA Certificate of Eligibility (COE) or your current federal VA award letter for the Post-9/11 GI Bill
- Your most recent DD-214 (certificate of release or discharge from active duty)
- Papers that show any “kickers” for which you are eligible
- Papers or receipts that show any “buy-up” contracts.

## **If I am attending more than one college at a time, how do I get the supplemental payment?**

You can only receive a supplemental payment from one college at a time. You are responsible for notifying the school certifying officials at each institution in which you are enrolled about any other colleges (UWS or WTCS) that you are attending in the same semester. The colleges will decide, based on several administrative factors, which colleges will pay you the supplemental payment.

If you do not notify each WTCS or UWS institution you are attending that you also are attending other schools, your supplemental payment may be too small or you may receive too large a payment. Receiving too large a payment could create a debt that you will need to repay.

## **When will I get my supplemental payment?**

The school certifying official at the WTCS institution you are attending can tell you when you will receive your supplemental payment.

## **How will I get my supplemental payment?**

The supplemental payment will be deposited into your student account according to standard campus business practices and is subject to any other outstanding financial obligations you may have to the WTCS institution issuing the supplemental payment.

## **Is the supplemental payment subject to taxes?**

In compliance with federal requirements, WTCS and UWS institutions provide students the 1098-T form. Neither WTCS nor UWS institutions provide personal tax advice or guidance to students. Students are responsible for working with a tax professional to assess the tax implications of the supplemental payment.

## **What happens to my veteran education benefits if my enrollment changes during the semester?**

You should be aware that there are **significant** financial consequences when dropping or adding classes under the federal Post-9/11 GI Bill. Adding classes, dropping classes or withdrawing may result in you being required to repay any federal VA benefits you received during that term and repay the supplemental payment you may have received under the WI GI Bill. You should carefully consider the financial consequences of enrollment changes.

## ***Special Information for Spouses and Children using the WI GI Bill***

### **Are spouses and children eligible for the WI GI Bill?**

*Spouses and Children of veterans* may qualify for WI GI Bill remission if they are Wisconsin residents and they are the surviving spouse or child of an eligible Wisconsin veteran who:

- died in the line of duty
- died as the result of a service-connected disability
- died in the line of duty while on active or inactive duty for training purposes or
- has a service-connected disability with a combined rating by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) of 30% or greater

*Spouses and unremarried surviving spouses* of an eligible deceased or disabled Wisconsin veteran generally can use the WI GI Bill for 10 years from the date of a qualified veteran's death or initial federal VA determination of at least 30% disability. The Wisconsin DVA will inform the college in which you enroll of the official date, which the college uses to calculate the 10-year eligibility end date. The qualified spouse or unremarried surviving spouse will be eligible to receive the benefits for an academic term if the eligibility end date does not occur before the first day of instruction for the semester established by the college, as long as all other eligibility requirements are met.

The eligibility period for an unremarried surviving spouse of an eligible veteran who had a child with the eligible veteran is the longer of 10 years after the death of the eligible veteran or 10 years after the date that the youngest child the spouse had with the veteran reaches or would have reached 18 years of age.

*Children* of eligible deceased or disabled Wisconsin veterans must be at least 17 years old but not yet 26 years old on the first day of the academic term established by the college to receive WI GI Bill remission for that academic term. This means that, if you turn 17 after the academic term begins, you must wait until the next term to use the WI GI Bill. If you turn 26 during an academic term, your WI GI Bill eligibility continues until the end of that term as long as all other eligibility requirements are met.

## **How do I prove that I qualify for the WI GI Bill as the eligible spouse or eligible unremarried surviving spouse?**

You must provide documentation, including a government issued photo I.D. (driver's license, state identification, passport, etc). If you are an eligible spouse you also must provide a copy of your marriage certificate. If you are an unremarried surviving spouse, you must provide a copy of your marriage certificate and your most recent federal or state income tax return.

## **How is “child” defined under the WI GI Bill provisions?**

The WI GI Bill defines an eligible child as “any biological child, any adopted child, any stepchild, or any other child who is a member of the veteran’s household, or any nonmarital child if the veteran acknowledges paternity or paternity has been otherwise established.”

## **How do I prove that I qualify for the WI GI Bill as an “eligible child”?**

You must provide appropriate documents (photocopies are acceptable) to show that you are the child of an eligible deceased or disabled Wisconsin veteran, including your government issued photo I.D. (driver license, state I.D., passport, etc). Additional required documents depend on your relationship to the eligible Wisconsin veteran and include:

***Biological Child:*** A copy of the student’s Birth Certificate or similar official documents that identify parentage.

***Adopted Child:*** A copy of the student’s Adoption Certificate.

***Stepchild:*** A copy of the student’s Birth Certificate and a Marriage License that demonstrates the eligible veteran has married a biological parent of the student, or a copy of the Certificate of Eligibility for Federal VA benefits that indicates recognition as a stepchild.

***Other Child Who is a Member of the Veteran’s Household:*** A copy of the veteran’s most recent state and federal income taxes where the student is listed as a dependent and the student’s permanent address is the same as the veteran’s household address.

***Nonmarital Child:*** A copy of a certificate of paternity.

Alternative documentation may be accepted on a case-by-case basis.

## **How do I apply for the WI GI Bill as an eligible spouse, surviving spouse or eligible child?**

You must complete the application forms as described above under the section on “how do I apply for the WI GI Bill.”

## ***Other Important Information about using the WI GI Bill***

### **Do I need to meet college enrollment requirements if I am eligible for the WI GI Bill?**

Yes, you must comply with all other college enrollment requirements and procedures. Contact the college in which you want to enroll for more information about specific college enrollment and program admission requirements.

### **What happens if I transfer to another college?**

Your enrollment (both number of semesters and credits) at any WTCS or University of Wisconsin System (UWS) is combined to determine your maximum WI GI Bill eligibility of 128 credits or 8 semesters, whichever is longer. This means the credits and semesters of WI GI Bill eligibility that you have used move with you if you transfer to another WTCS or UW institution.

If you transfer to a Wisconsin independent college or any college not based in Wisconsin, the WI GI Bill does not apply.

### **What happens if I enroll in more than one Wisconsin Technical College or a UW institution at the same time?**

If you are enrolled at more than one college/institution, you can use your WI GI Bill benefits at each college but you must apply for the WI GI Bill at each Wisconsin Technical College and UW institution you attend. You should notify each college where you are receiving WI GI Bill benefits of any other college in which you are also enrolled. You have a maximum of 128 credits or 8 semesters regardless of the number of institutions that you attend at the same time.

### **Do I have to be a Wisconsin resident to use the WI GI Bill?**

Yes, you must be a Wisconsin resident to be considered an eligible veteran when you submit your application for the WI GI Bill to the Wisconsin DVAs. In addition, eligible spouses and dependents must meet WTCS requirements as residents for tuition purposes. The college that you attend will determine if you are a resident for tuition purposes.