

STATE OF ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
ADMINISTRATIVE CODE

CHAPTER 920-X-2
VETERANS BENEFITS

920-X-2-.02 Alabama GI Dependents Scholarship.

(1) Administered by the Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs (ADVA), the Alabama GI Dependents Scholarship education benefit provides qualifying dependents of disabled Alabama veterans tuition, required books, and instructional fees at qualifying universities, community colleges, and technical schools.

(2) Definitions

(a) Covered Expenses

1. Expenses for Tuition, Books, and Fees are covered by the Scholarship subject to legal limitations. Depending on the law current when the dependent filed their Scholarship application these limitations may include, but are not limited to, undergraduate work, in-state tuition rates, application of other grants and scholarships first, and maximum spending caps.

2. Tuition is the amount charged by the School as tuition for the Covered Class(es).

3. Covered Classes are college-level classes taken by the Eligible Dependent at the School approved for that academic period.

(i) Only expenses for college-level classes are covered; expenses for remedial coursework and courses not for credit are not included.

(ii) Whether the Eligible Dependent passes the class or has previously attempted the class is not considered in determining whether it is covered.

4. Books are the textbooks and other similar material required by the School for the Covered Class. This includes, among other things, ebooks and access codes providing access to required resources. This does not include:

(i) Materials that are only suggested or recommended and

(ii) Materials not specifically required for the instruction of a particular class such as equipment.

(iii) Replacement of textbooks that are lost or stolen will be the financial responsibility of the Eligible Dependent.

5. Fees are expenses assessed by the School that directly relate to the instruction of the particular Covered Class such as laboratory fees. This does not include non-instructional fees such as registration fees, building fees, student activity fees, etc.

(b) Dependent - natural born or adopted child, stepchild, spouse, or un-remarried widow(er).

(c) Eligible Dependent - a Dependent who has been determined to be eligible for the Scholarship and who remains eligible. This excludes those whose circumstances at the time of school attendance do not meet the eligibility requirements, those who have exhausted their benefit, and those whose benefits have expired.

(d) Qualifying Service- The most recent separation from active service as defined in statute must have been honorable.

(e) School - the qualifying school for which the dependent was last issued a Certificate of Eligibility.

(3) Eligibility determinations are made by considering the totality of the evidence presented and known to the evaluator at the time of the determination. The individual seeking benefits bears the burden of proving eligibility.

(4) The veteran or dependent must include a copy of the veteran's disability award letter or a disability rating verification letter obtained from the US Department of Veterans Affairs as part of their application package for benefits. The letter must be dated no more than six (6) months prior to date of application. If veteran's disability rating was received as a result of a Medical Evaluation Board and/or a Physical Evaluation Board (MEB/PEB) evaluation, a copy of the MEB/PEB evaluation must be submitted in

lieu of the disability award letter or disability rating verification award letter.

(5) Permanent Alabama residency prior to entry into service may be shown for any period of qualifying service where there was at least a one (1) year break between periods of service.

(6) The ADVA will only seek tax record information as evidence of the veteran's current permanent residency where the applicant's good faith effort to prove residency by other means has failed.

(7) Where the dependent is a stepchild:

(a) The veteran and the child's parent must marry prior to the child's 19th birthday.

(b) A Stepchild verification must be completed by the veteran or widow/er and included in the student's application package for benefits in the Alabama G.I. Dependent Scholarship Portal.

(8) All Dependents are required to complete and submit a Declaration of Citizenship or Alien Status for the Alabama G.I. Dependents Scholarship Benefits as part of their application. Where the form indicates the Dependent is not a citizen or national of the United States, supporting documentation of the Dependent's lawful presence must be submitted such that it can be verified using the federal SAVE (Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements) program.

(9) Duration of Benefit

(a) Eligibility is effective as of the date the approvable application for benefits is submitted through the Alabama G.I. Dependent Scholarship Portal.

(b) The amount of benefits expended is based on the number of credit hours for which the Eligible Dependent is officially enrolled using the following formula:

1-5 hours = $1/4$ (0.25) of a semester

6-8 hours = $1/2$ (0.50) of a semester

9-11 hours = $3/4$ (0.75) of a semester

12 hours or more = 1 semester

(c) An Eligible Dependent's unused eligibility expires six (6) to eight (8) years after their initial application depending on their status. The ADVA may grant an extension of that time due to serious accident, prolonged illness, or military service that may have interrupted the Eligible Dependent's progress.

1. Medical - To request an extension due to medical conditions, the Eligible Dependent must provide a signed medical statement from the attending physician for any prolonged illness or involvement in a serious accident. The medical statement must clearly identify the inclusive dates of the period that the Eligible Dependent was unable to attend school due to medical reasons. Medical records are not accepted as the staff is not qualified to interpret the medical notations.

2. Military Service - Extensions may be granted due to military service completed after the Eligible Dependent initiated his/her training under this program. Military service performed prior to approval of the Eligible Dependent's application will not be considered.

3. Extensions do not alter the number of semesters the Eligible Dependent is eligible to receive under this program.

4. The ADVA has no authority to consider any extension of the educational benefits after the maximum entitlements have been expended.

5. The ADVA has no authority to consider any extension of the educational benefits for a child or stepchild beyond the child's 38th birthday except that a child or stepchild of a partially disabled veteran cannot be extended past the child's 34th birthday.

6. All requests for extensions should be received at the ADVA Headquarters Office in Montgomery at least 90 days prior to the Eligible Dependent's certificate expiration date. Any requests for training extension received after the Eligible Dependent's expiration date will not be honored. Exception: Those Eligible Dependents whose training period was interrupted due to military service and whose certificate of eligibility expired after the start of that service may request an extension of

training time up to one (1) year after separation from military service.

(10) Termination of Benefits

(a) Spouses and stepchildren are no longer eligible to receive benefits once the spouse and the qualifying veteran are no longer legally married.

(b) Spouses and stepchildren of deceased qualifying veterans are no longer eligible to receive benefits once the surviving spouse remarries.

1. Where the surviving spouse remarries, eligibility based upon the deceased qualifying veteran's service cannot be regained regardless of the surviving spouse's marital status thereafter.

2. Eligibility of a natural or adopted child is not altered by the marital status of the qualifying veteran nor a subsequent marriage of the surviving parent.

(c) Marriage certificates, divorce decrees and death certificates must be forwarded to the ADVA Headquarters Office in Montgomery as soon as possible to avoid an overpayment payable to the ADVA by the dependent.

(11) Application Process

(a) In order to be eligible, the student must complete and submit an approvable application to include all supporting documentation through the Alabama G.I. Dependent Scholarship Portal. The Portal may be accessed by visiting the program's webpage at <https://va.alabama.gov/dependents-scholarship/>.

(b) All applicants under the age of 18 at the time of application must also have a legal parent or guardian sign/initial, as appropriate, the required forms.

(c) Those currently eligible to receive benefits who wish to attend a different institution must submit an approvable transfer request through their active account in the Alabama G.I. Dependent Scholarship Portal.

(d) ADVA staff will review the package and make an eligibility determination.

(e) All students who submit an application will be notified of their approval, denial or the need for additional

information through the email listed in their account in the Alabama G.I. Dependent Scholarship Portal. The qualifying college listed on their application will also receive the approval notification through email. This information will also be available to the student in their account in the Alabama G.I. Dependent Scholarship Portal. Denial notifications will also be mailed to the student at the address listed in their account. Schools will invoice the ADVA for the expenses covered under the program and invoice the Eligible Dependent for any remaining balance; Schools may waive remaining expenses at the sole discretion of the School.

(f) All Eligible Dependents and any parent or guardian signing the application or an associated form or who makes a sworn statement as evidence of eligibility are responsible to notify the ADVA of any changes that may affect eligibility.

(g) If benefits are paid for a student who was not eligible to receive benefits, it will result in an overpayment payable to the ADVA by the dependent.

(h) Providing false information or documents, to include failing to disclose a relevant fact or failing to report changes to a relevant fact, may result in denial of benefits, required repayment, and legal action up to and including criminal prosecution.

(12) Invoices received by the ADVA must only include Eligible Dependents who have current certificates of eligibility to their respective institution for the billable period.

(13) Invoices must be certified by an institution official verifying that:

(a) Invoices are correct

(b) Invoices are not in excess of those charged to other students

(c) Payment has not yet been received

(d) Amounts only include authorized expenses.

(e) Amounts only include the expenses remaining after all other grants and scholarships allowed by law have been applied to required educational expenses. Exceptions: Alabama National Guard Education Assistance Program benefits are not required to be applied prior to these benefits.

Additionally, payments by employers under registered apprenticeship programs are not considered grants or scholarships required to be applied.

(f) Textbooks furnished to the Eligible Dependents are prescribed and necessary for their courses of instruction.

(g) Each Eligible Dependent

1. Completed a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) for the applicable academic year,

2. Filed with the institution a completed Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) release form authorizing the institution to release personally identifiable information required to determine the Eligible Dependent's continued eligibility and as required for necessary reporting, and

3. Is in compliance with Standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) as defined by the institution.

(14) Invoices must be certified and signed by an authorized school invoice official in the Alabama G.I. Dependent Scholarship Portal.

(15) All invoices must contain an alphabetical listing of Eligible Dependent names and a grand total. For each Eligible Dependent, the invoices must contain the complete social security number, the actual inclusive dates of the semester, the number of credit hours for which the Eligible Dependent is officially enrolled, and a breakdown of tuition, textbooks, and instructional fees along with a total charge for each Eligible Dependent.

(16) If mandatory textbooks are not available through the campus bookstore and cannot be ordered in a reasonable amount of time, the School may allow the Eligible Dependents to purchase the required textbooks from an alternate location and provide proper itemized receipts to the institution for reimbursement through the program. Only the purchase price of the textbooks not to exceed the purchase price at the School's authorized bookstore will be covered by the Scholarship.

Author: Jeffrey L. Newton

Statutory Authority: Code of Ala. 1975, §§ 31-5-5, 31-6-1 through 31-6-17.

History: Filed September 30, 2000. **New Rule:** Filed January 4, 2001; effective February 8, 2001. **Repealed and New Rule:** Published September 30, 2025; effective November 14, 2025.