



NYC STUDENT VETERANS WELCOME PACKET

Fall 2018

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Student Veterans Welcome Packet



Dear Student Veteran,

Welcome back! Whether you're a new student just starting out or simply starting a new semester, we are glad you're here. At the New York City Department of Veterans' Services (DVS), we recognize that adjusting to life out of uniform can be quite the challenge. My name is Gabriel Ramos, I'm the Deputy Press Secretary at DVS, and a fellow veteran. I want to share a bit about my own journey which I hope will encourage you as you move ahead with your studies.

Shortly after separating from the Marine Corps in 2008, I found myself back in a classroom for the first time in over six years. The enthusiasm I felt upon first walking on campus, however, would soon give way to exasperation. I found myself growing frustrated with fellow classmates, most of whom were fresh out of high school but seemed to think they knew all there was to know about the world. I deemed coursework trivial and unimportant, convinced that my five years in the military should somehow entitle me to evade group work and the uninteresting parts of a syllabus. And I resented professors for not valuing my veteran status, viewing me as just another freshman at best, or at worst, a potential liability who should be handled with kid gloves lest I fly off the handle. I lasted one semester.

This was all, of course, a failing of my own perceptions. My 18-year-old classmates acted as most 18-year-olds act in new surroundings around unfamiliar people – brash and overconfident – much like I did as an 18-year-old private checking into my first unit in the Marine Corps. My coursework was not unlike what you'd find on most freshman syllabi: at times tedious, but necessary for establishing a foundation for future learning. And while my professors challenged my worldview, they respected my experiences just as they did for others, neither placing me on a pedestal nor treating me like a wounded lamb.

What made this adjustment seem so daunting was a combination of factors, all of which stemmed from my initial approach coming in: an unhealthy inclination to isolate myself and avoid asking for help; a misplaced sense of privilege about what I was owed as a result of having served; a lack of clear direction with what I wanted to do with my post-military life. It all made for a confusing and ultimately overwhelming transition.

After four years of working in the private sector, I decided to come back to school, only this time with a new purpose and different mindset. I was open to people with different experiences and more humble about my own. I was intentional about building routines and making the best use of my time. I sought out the student veteran office and leaned on them for guidance. I found folks who helped me with everything from efficient use of my GI Bill to which professors to avoid and everything in between. These people provided me with a network that opened doors to volunteer and career opportunities, which would ultimately lead me to where I am today.

This isn't to say I didn't have struggles the second time around or that I had a career path all figured out – I would go on to change my major twice. Rather, with just a few small changes to my attitude and expectations, my experience going back to school the second time was completely different than the first time. Because I sought the guidance of others, veteran and civilians alike, I was better equipped to deal with whatever hurdles I came across. I'm confident if you do the same, you'll be all the better for it.

In service,

Gabriel I. Ramos

Deputy Press Secretary, NYC Department of Veterans' Services

MENTORING



Whether you're a native New Yorker, or here just for school, we value what you bring to the City: your experience, your strength, your courage, and your talent. However, we recognize that New York City can be a tough place to adjust to – especially if you've just gotten out of the highly-structured environment of the military.

While you may have received some initial guidance through TAPS, we've recognized that the most successful veterans are the ones who have ongoing support – especially those that can rely on mentors for guidance. Seeking guidance from mentors – veteran *and* civilian – is an important part of everyone's professional & personal development. By taking advantage of the opportunity to connect with experienced professionals, you'll be putting yourself in a position to make more informed decisions about your career and education, and you'll be set up with the networks you'll need to succeed beyond school. In short, you will be set up to thrive in New York City and beyond.

So sign up for a mentor! Go to nyc.gov/vets or call **212-416-5250** to learn more about how to find your mentor today.

PARTICIPATING MENTORING ORGANIZATIONS



AMERICAN
CORPORATE
PARTNERS

[American Corporate Partners](#)

Mentoring program connects veterans and service members to

corporate professionals to provide resume and interview preparation, career exploration, and networking skills.



[COMMIT](#) Foundation provides

veterans one-on-one transition assistance, corporate education, and mentoring workshops.



[Blue Star Families](#) provides free deployment resources, career services, and recreational

opportunities to veterans and their families through various partnerships.



[Edge4Vets](#) offers veterans a

"Prep and Connect" system that

combines an online prep course with HR mentorship to prepare veterans for the workforce.



[Brooklyn Veterans Treatment Court](#) matches veterans with a

community based veteran mentor as a supportive component to existing substance abuse and mental health services.



[FourBlock](#) offers a Career Readiness

Program to post-9/11 veterans and active duty service members

pursuing or having completed an

undergraduate or graduate degree program.



[G.I. Jobs](#) provides military transition services to active duty service members and veterans using education and employment tools and resources.



[ProVetus](#) is a trained, peer mentoring program that helps Veterans successfully transition within five critical domains.



[Institute for Career Development](#) offers a job-support program that helps veterans identify transferable skills and develop a job search plan.



[Service to School](#) provides military veterans free college-application counseling, test prep advice, interview prep, and networking opportunities.



[Job Path](#) supports people with developmental disabilities with customized employment, job development, on-site training and employee orientation, and ongoing support.



[Stand Beside Them](#) provides coaching in career development, relationships, business development, veteran' benefits, and other reintegration issues.



[Marine for Life Network](#) connects transitioning Marines and their family members to education resources, employment opportunities, and other veterans' services.



The [Resilience Center](#) for veterans & families at Columbia University's Teachers College provides research on human emotional resilience and therapist-led clinical training.



[Paralyzed Veterans of America](#) helps veterans with disabilities file VA benefits claims; provides support for VA caregivers; represents claimants in court; and provides vocational counseling and job placement assistance to any veteran, active duty service member, spouse, or caregiver.



[Institute for Veterans and Military Families](#) at Syracuse University offers service members, veterans, and their families programs in career, vocational and entrepreneurship education and training.



[Project for Return and Opportunity in Veterans' Education \(PROVE\)](#) offers student veterans community and transitional support through mentors and social work interns.



[United War Veterans Council](#) coordinates a series of programs providing therapeutic benefits to veterans; Support and promote wide range of initiatives providing vital services.



[Veterans in Global Leadership](#)

provides student veterans formal mentors and networking and educational events.



[Veterati](#) provides a platform for veterans to choose their own volunteer mentors.



[Workforce Opportunity](#)

[Services](#) connects companies to professionals



[Veterans on Wall Street](#) is

dedicated to honoring former and currently military personnel by facilitating career and business opportunities in the financial services industry



[Warrior Scholar Project](#)

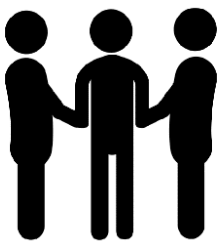
offers immersive one to two weeklong academic boot camps hosted at America's top universities during summer breaks.

TIPS / RESOURCES



Use student veteran organizations: Whether it's an [SVA](#) chapter, veteran resource center, or student veteran club, your school should have an organization dedicated to veterans. Lean on the student veterans who have been through the process. They'll have valuable school-specific information about everything from help with using your GI Bill and registering for classes, to navigating campus and even which professors to avoid. It's a good place to connect with like-minded folks who've shared similar experiences and a good way to stay connected to a community. If your school doesn't have one of these groups, take the initiative and start one yourself. Find an advocate in the school's administration and convince them of why they need one.

Stay involved: Whether you're a full-time student or taking classes while working, you might find yourself wanting to stay isolated. Don't. Find an organization and get involved. Be active. Volunteer. It will give you a sense of purpose and belonging and will plug you into a network that you can continue to lean on for both personal and professional pursuits. Find a cause or something about which you're passionate and volunteer. Your higher purpose didn't end when you took your uniform off. There are so many ways in which you can continue to serve.



Make civilian friends: Your military identity is an important part of who you are, but it isn't everything. You might find yourself naturally gravitating towards fellow veterans, but try to branch out and connect with other students as well. Doing so will help you in the classroom and lead to a fuller transition experience overall. They may not be able to relate to certain aspects of your experiences, but that's ok -- not everyone will. Try to give them the benefit of the doubt, you'll be the better for it.

Give your life structure: One of the most daunting aspects of transition comes with losing the structure of military life. What at first may seem like blissful freedom can soon become overwhelming and maladaptive if you're not careful. You can ease this process by setting a schedule for yourself and sticking to it. Keep yourself accountable by intentionally building routines for classwork, studying, working out, and leisure time.



FOREVER GI BILL

There's no longer an expiration date.

- Previously, veterans had to use their Post-9/11 GI Bill within 15 years of their last 90-day period of active-duty service. That requirement is going away
- This portion of the law will apply to anyone who left the military after January 1, 2013
- It will also apply to spouses who are receiving education benefits through the Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship for family members of service members who have been killed in the line of duty since Sept. 10, 2001

Purple Heart recipients get more benefits.

- The new GI Bill allows anyone who has received a Purple Heart on or after Sept. 11, 2001 to receive 100 percent of the benefits offered under the Post-9/11 GI Bill
- This includes coverage of tuition costs at a public school's in-state rate or a max. of \$23,671.94 tuition and fees for 36 months and stipends for textbooks and housing
- This provision is effective as of **August 2018**

More people are eligible for Yellow Ribbon.

- The Yellow Ribbon Program is a voluntary agreement between schools and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to split school costs not covered by the GI Bill, reducing or eliminating the amount students must pay themselves
- The Forever GI Bill expands eligibility to surviving spouses or children of service members as of **August 2018** and active-duty service members in **August 2022**

There's some extra money — and time — for STEM degrees.

- Some college degrees in science, technology, engineering and math fields take longer than four years to complete, which is why the new law authorizes an additional school year of GI Bill funds on a first-come, first-serve basis
- Scholarships of up to \$30,000 are available for eligible GI Bill users as of **August 2018**
- Only veterans or surviving family members of deceased service members are eligible for this scholarship — not dependents using transferred benefits

Vets hurt by school shutdowns will get benefits back.

- There is a provision which restores benefits to victims of school closures
- This provision retroactively applies to GI Bill users whose schools abruptly closed since January 2015, for credits earned at the shuttered institutions that did not transfer to new schools
- Provision includes the thousands of student veterans who attended the national for-profit chains Corinthian Colleges and ITT Technical Institute when they closed in 2015 and 2016, respectively
- It would also provide a semester's worth of reimbursement for GI Bill users affected by future school closures, as well as up to four months of a housing stipend

The VA will measure eligibility for benefits differently.

- Starting **August 2020**, this bill changes the way the VA uses time in service to calculate eligibility
- Previously, service members with at least 90 days but less than six months of active-duty service would be eligible for up to 40 percent of the full GI Bill benefits. Under new regulations, the same 90-days-to-six-month window is equal to 50 percent of benefits. Service members with at least six months and less than 18 months of service will be eligible for 60 percent of benefits
- This change may tend to benefit reservists more due to the nature of their service

Reservists can count more of their service toward eligibility.

- As of **August 2018**, members of the National Guard and Reserve are able to count time spent receiving medical care or recovering from injuries received while on active duty toward their GI Bill eligibility
- This will apply to all who have been activated since 9/11
- The Forever GI Bill also allows individuals who lost their Reserve Educational Assistance Program when the program ended in 2015 to credit their previous service toward their eligibility for the Post-9/11 GI Bill

Housing stipends will decrease slightly.

- The government will pay for the expansions represented in the Forever GI Bill through a 1 percent decrease in housing stipends over the next five years. This will bring veterans' housing stipends on par with what active-duty service members receive at the E-5 with dependents rate. (Veterans on the GI Bill currently receive a slightly higher housing allowance rate than active-duty E-5s with dependents)
- As of **August 2018**, housing stipends previously calculated based on the ZIP code of a student's school will be based on *where a student takes the most classes*
- As of **August 2018**, reservists will continue to receive their monthly housing allowance under the GI Bill on a prorated rate for any month during which they are activated, preventing them from losing a whole month's worth of funds

Benefits can get transferred after death.

- This new provision offers more flexibility with the transfer and distribution of benefits in case of death
- If a dependent who received transferred benefits dies before using all of the benefits, this provision gives the service member or veteran the ability to transfer remaining benefits to another dependent
- This went into effect as of **August 2018** and applies to all deaths since 2009
- This provision also gives dependents of deceased service members the ability to make changes to their deceased loved one's transferred benefits

Surviving family members will get more money, but less time.

- Surviving spouses and children of service members who are receiving benefits through the Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance Program will see their monthly education stipend increase by \$200
- The downside is that the same program has previously provided 45 months of education benefits that will decrease to 36 months as of August 2018 to bring it in line with the provisions of the GI Bill

COLLEGE LEVEL EXAMINATION PROGRAM (CLEP)

The College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) is a great way to expedite your path to a degree by knocking out general education requirements early. CLEP exams allow you to maximize your GI Bill benefits by earning college credits for the knowledge you gained in the military and through independent study.

Forever GI Bill covers the actual cost.

- Thanks to the Forever GI Bill, charges are now prorated so that only the actual amount of an exam and administration fee are billed.
- Under the original Post 9/11 GI Bill, an entire month of entitlement benefits were charged which served as a disincentive for veterans using standardized tests for college credit.
- This provision is effective as of **August 2018**

Incentives for taking CLEP exams:

- Passing an exam can get you up to 12 college credits
- You can maximize your GI Bill tuition benefits by applying them toward *needed* course work
- Accelerate your degree program by moving directly into higher-level courses
- Exams last approximately 90 minutes, are primarily multiple-choice, and are administered on computer, offering instant score reports

Be sure to check your school's credit-granting policy before taking an exam, and check with your VA adviser to confirm your benefit election and eligibility.



Learn more about CLEP exams for service members & veterans:

clep.collegeboard.org/military-benefits



Apply for exam fee reimbursement from the VA:

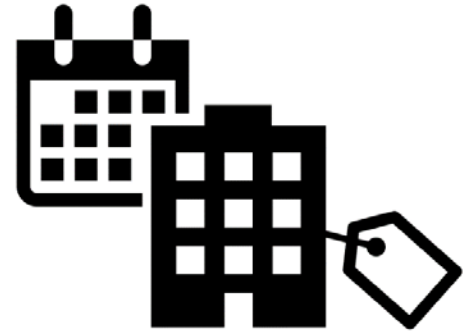
<https://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-22-0810-ARE.pdf>

HOUSING

Finding Housing: The housing & rental landscape in New York City can be quite daunting and familiarizing yourself with all you need to know can seem nearly impossible. From finding the right neighborhood, deciding if you want roommates, to dealing with [broker fees](#), it's easy to get overwhelmed. Here's a few things you'll want to know.

GI Bill BAH: The GI Bill is a lawful source of income for housing and it is illegal to be denied housing for using GI Bill BAH. Official documentation on this is included in this packet.

If you feel like you've been discriminated against you can [file a complaint](#) with the **Commission on Human Rights**.



Rentlogic

rentlogic.com

Rentlogic is an online platform that measures and rates the quality of landlords and residential buildings throughout New York City. Veterans can see how their past, present, or prospective landlord stacks up according to official city data, and leave reviews based on their own experiences. The site recognizes building owners and landlords who invest time and energy in to operating great buildings, and helps connect them with residents trying to navigate a difficult marketplace.



nyhousingsearch.gov

NY Housing Search is a free state service which allows you to search for affordable home and apartment rentals available in New York State and New York City.



<https://a806-housingconnect.nyc.gov/nyclottery/lottery.html>

NYC Connect is the City's online portal for finding affordable apartments. Learn about and apply for housing lotteries, as well as **Mitchell-Lama** rentals and co-ops.

HOUSING: GI BILL LANDLORD LETTER



**Commission on
Human Rights**

Carmelyn P. Malalis,
Chair/Commissioner

**Department of
Veterans' Services**

Loree Sutton, MD,
Commissioner

USEFUL INFORMATION ABOUT G.I. BILL HOUSING ALLOWANCES

Qualifying student veterans pursuing higher education in New York City may utilize G.I. Bill housing allowances to subsidize the cost of renting an apartment. The New York City Department of Veterans' Services and the New York City Commission on Human Rights aim to provide landlords and student veterans with helpful information about legal protections under New York law for tenants seeking to finance their rent with G.I. Bill housing allowances.

Here are some things that you should know:

Many student veterans receive housing allowances under the G.I. Bill.

Under the Montgomery G.I. Bill and the Post 9/11 [G.I. Bill](#), many student veterans receive monthly housing payments *guaranteed by the federal government*. Student veterans are eligible for such payments when they are enrolled in Department of Veterans Affairs-approved institutes of higher education, on-the-job training, or apprenticeship programs. Housing allowances under the G.I. Bill offer recipients a stable source of income to pay their rent. The current housing allowances set by the Department of Defense may be found at <http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/bahCalc.cfm>.

G.I. Bill housing allowances are considered a form of "lawful source of income," and NYC law prohibits landlords from discriminating against veterans who seek to finance their housing with such payments.

The G.I. Bill housing allowance is comparable to any other form of income that a landlord might accept from a civilian tenant and is protected as a "lawful source of income" under the New York City Human Rights Law enforced by the NYC Commission on Human Rights or through a state court action. That means it is unlawful to deny a rental unit to or otherwise discriminate against a student veteran using G.I. Bill housing allowances as payment for a rental unit. While student veterans and landlords are free to negotiate rental agreements which are mutually beneficial and lawful, a landlord may not, based on a veteran's reliance on a G.I. Bill housing allowance, deny a rental application, make misrepresentations about the availability of an apartment, or refuse to make or unreasonably delay making repairs to a residence because of the renter's use of the G.I. Bill housing allowance.

Uniformed service members are protected from discrimination by landlords and brokers based on their current or prior service.

In addition to protections based on lawful source of income, New York State and New York City law protects veterans and other past or current members of the uniformed services from discrimination based on their service. These protections were codified in the New York City Human Rights Law with Local Law 1192017.

You can find more information about how New York City is making a difference for all New Yorkers through the following resources:

New York City Department of Veterans' Services

Commissioner Loree Sutton, MD
1 Centre Street, Suite 2208
New York, NY 10007
212-416-5250 or 311
nyc.gov/veterans

New York City Commission on Human Rights

Commissioner/Chair Carmelyn P. Malalis
22 Reade Street
New York NY, 10007
(718) 722-3131
nyc.gov/humanrights

For more information about the G.I. Bill, visit <http://benefits.va.gov/gibill> or call the G.I. Bill Hotline at **1-888-442-4551**.

ABOUT NYC DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' SERVICES (DVS)

The New York City Department of Veterans' Services (DVS) is a stand-alone agency that provides a full range of benefits to New York City veterans and their families. DVS operates as a centralized hub able to put service members, veterans, and their families at the center of all our efforts. We coordinate services with agencies at the City, state, and federal level, as well as through public and private partnerships.

Our mission is straightforward -- **to foster purpose-driven lives for NYC service members, veterans, and their families** through:

- **effective connections** in the NYC community;
- **targeted advocacy** at local, state, and national level;
- **compassionate service**, ensuring we make it easier to access services and benefits they've earned

*We believe that service members, veterans, and their families are **extraordinary civic assets** whose strength and demonstrated commitment to public service will help NYC thrive*

PROGRAMS

Housing & Support Services

Housing Coordination Center: identifying housing opportunities and coordinating the rent-up process for owners and property managers

Peer coordinators: helping homeless veterans find and obtain safe, affordable housing

Aftercare & eviction prevention: assisting formerly homeless and at-risk veterans access the supports they need for housing stability

Veterans Success Network

Veterans on Campus: connecting with student veterans to ensure successful transitions to civilian life

Mentor-A-Veteran: creating connections to veteran & civilian mentors for all stages of life

Veterans Career Council: empowering veterans to find success in the public and private sector workforce

VetsThriveNYC

Core4 Whole Health Model: strength-based approach incorporating the power of culture and the arts, peer connection, community holistic services, and clinical care

Caregiver Network: support networks for service member and veteran caregivers

Mental Health First Aid: certification programs customized for those who interact with military and veteran population

CONNECT

We're here for you, across NYC. Connect with one of our Veteran Outreach Team members online at www.nyc.gov/vets, email us at info@veterans.nyc.gov, follow us on social media [@nycveterans](https://twitter.com/nycveterans), [sign up for our newsletter](#), or call us at **212-416-5250**.

VETERANS ON CAMPUS-NYC

Veterans on Campus-NYC (VOC-NYC) is a coalition of the City’s colleges & universities, corporations, and DVS. Our objectives are:

- To help academic institutions identify & adopt best practices that create supportive student veteran experiences
- To inspire transitioning service members and their families to pursue their higher education goals here in NYC
- To catalyze and promote academic research that will lead to deeper understandings and innovation
- To ensure successful transition to not only college and community life and educational achievement, but viable new careers and purpose-driven civilian lives

To learn more about how to become a participating school, contact info@veterans.nyc.gov or call 646-891-8637.

STEERING COMMITTEE

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