

VETERANS EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS

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Veterans First Program (Building 1310)

The mission of the Veterans First Program at Las Positas College is to facilitate service members' transition from military to college life, and to assist them with educational, financial and other forms of support. The program's foundation is built on a basic principle of service.

Since the establishment of the Veterans First Program in 2007, Las Positas College has continued to expand its services to support the student success of veterans enrolling at the College. The primary program goal is to provide comprehensive services that recognize the unique experiences and needs of our veterans as they pursue their educational and career objectives. The Veterans First Program also provides services and programs for active duty members, reservists, and spouses and/or dependents of Veterans.

The Veterans First Program staff serve as liaisons to the United States Department of Veterans' Affairs and the state of California Veterans Affairs, and they will make every effort to provide speedy educational benefit payment with a minimal amount of difficulty.

Las Positas College is approved to offer instruction to service persons, reservists, and other eligible persons under Title 38, U.S. Code and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) regulations. Eligibility for benefits under any of these programs is determined by the appropriate federal or state agency, and not by the College. In addition, we provide other resources and contacts, such as the ones listed below:

1. Comprehensive 2000 square foot Veterans Resource Center with study room, computer room, lounge, reception area, and offices.
2. Veterans Learning Community – Mission READY
3. VA Educational benefits application, process, and certification.
4. Veteran Emergency Book Loan / Text Book Borrowing Program.
5. Dedicated Veterans First team, including a fulltime Veterans Counselor and Veterans Specialist.
6. Priority Registration for Veterans, Active Duty, Reserves, and National Guard.
7. Scholarships for Veterans, military members, and their family.
8. Veterans Affairs Work Study program.
9. Operation Gateway – Transition program for returning Veterans 2-day orientation geared to support Veterans' college success.
10. Health care services on campus provided by nationally recognized Palo Alto VA Health Care Representatives.
11. CA State Fee Waiver program for Veteran spouse & dependents.
12. On campus workshops and events – VA Educational Benefit Programs, Honoring Veterans Day, Honoring Women Veterans, Resume Writing for Veterans, Internships, etc.
13. Individualized and group academic subject support.
14. Financial Planning workshops and appointments.

We encourage Veterans, military members, and/or their family attending Las Positas College to contact the Veterans First Program in-person, by phone, or by e-mail with questions pertaining to their education, veteran affairs, educational benefits, or anything else.

Principles of Excellence

Las Positas College is a member of White House Executive Order 13607 – Principles of Excellence for Educational Institutions Serving Service Members, Veterans, Spouses, and Other Family Members.

The Principles ensure that these educational institutions provide meaningful information to service members, veterans, spouses, and other family members about the financial cost and quality of educational institutions to assist those prospective students in making choices about how to use their Federal educational benefits; prevent abusive and deceptive recruiting practices that target the recipients of Federal military and veterans educational benefits; and ensure that educational institutions provide high-quality academic and student support services to active-duty service members, reservists, members of the National Guard, veterans, and military families.

Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act (VACA)

The VACA Act (38 U.S.C. 3679(c)) requires the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to disapprove programs of education under the Montgomery GI Bill®-Active Duty (MGIAB-AD) and Post-9/11 GI Bill® education benefit programs (Chapters 30 or 33, respectively, of Title 38, U.S. Code) at institutions of higher learning if the school charges qualifying veterans and dependents ("covered individuals") tuition and fees in excess of the in-state rate for resident students. A "covered individual" is defined in the VACA Act as:

1. A Veteran who lives in the state in which the institution of higher learning is located (regardless of formal state of residence) and discharge from a period of active duty service of 90+ days.
2. A spouse or child entitled to transferred education benefits who lives in the state in which the institution of higher learning is located (regardless of their formal state of residence) and enrolls in the school within 3 years of the transferor's discharge from a period of active duty service of 90 days or more.
3. A spouse or child using benefits under the Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship (provides Post-9/11 GI Bill® benefits to the children and surviving spouses of service members who died in the line of duty while on active duty) who lives in the state in which the institution of higher learning is located (regardless of their formal state of residence) and following a period of active duty service of 90 days or more.
4. A student who initially qualifies under the applicable requirements above will maintain "covered individual" status as long as they remain continuously enrolled (other than during regularly scheduled breaks between courses or terms) at the institution, even if they enroll in multiple programs and shall continue to be exempt from paying nonresident tuition & fees.

Veterans Benefits Eligibility for Certificate Programs

Pursuant to 38 CFR 21.7020(b)(22), a vocational objective is one that leads to an occupation. It may include educational objectives essential to prepare for the chosen occupation. When a program consists of a series of courses not leading to an educational objective, these courses must be directed toward attainment of a designated professional or vocational objective. To be in compliance with Federal regulations noted in 38 CFR 21.4252 (b)(4), LPC is required to provide data to support the student's gainful employment upon completion of their certificate educational objective. Without this data, the certificate may not be deemed as eligible for Veterans Affairs (VA) educational benefits. Please contact the Veterans First Program for information on which programs are eligible for VA educational benefits.

Certification Process

New students should first enroll in the College and register into courses, following the regular matriculation process for all students. Once enrolled, students may apply for VA benefits by completing a VA Application for Educational Benefits (available from the Veterans Office) and an Enrollment Certification Request form; and they must submit a DD214 if the veteran served on active duty. Students must request enrollment certification each semester. Students must notify the VA if their enrollment, major, or address changes. The VA will make necessary certifications of enrollment, changes in enrollment, and progress. For Chapters 31 and 35, students receiving VA educational benefits must verify term enrollment to ensure timely receipt of housing allowance. Visit <https://www.gibill.va.gov/wave>.

Evaluation of Prior Education and Training

By the third semester, all students receiving veterans educational benefits are required to: (1) have submitted to the Veterans Office or the Admissions and Records Office, official academic transcripts from each school previously attended; (2) have submitted a DD214 if they were on active duty; and (3) complete a "Veterans Evaluation" with a College counselor, which establishes a personalized education plan based on prior education and training and the student's current academic objective. The institution will conduct an evaluation of all previous education and training and will grant appropriate credit, shorten the veteran's or eligible person's duration of the

intended course proportionately, and will notify the VA Regional Center and the student accordingly, in compliance with Title 38 regulations.

Veteran Evaluations can be approved for multiple degrees on one Evaluation of Course Requirements, but cannot be approved for more than two majors on a single Veteran Evaluation. Dual majors pursued under an academic policy that defines the dual major's requirements can be certified if both majors are approved. Only courses required to complete the dual major can be certified. During VA site visits, or during compliance surveys, if VA reviews a case for a student who is pursuing dual majors, the Veterans Office must ensure the student is not enrolled in courses outside either major and that the courses are approved. A student may want to pursue a dual objective. For example, a student may want to concurrently pursue two different degrees or pursue a degree and a certificate. A program of education may lead to more than one educational, professional, or vocational objective if all objectives pursued are generally recognized as being reasonably related to a single career field. The objectives do not necessarily have to be on the same professional or technical level.

Course Restrictions for Certification

Courses will NOT be certified for benefits after the second semester until the Veterans Evaluation is complete. Only courses that meet requirements or their prerequisites for the major and degree objective as indicated on the evaluation will be certified for payment. If the academic objective is changed, the student must complete a new evaluation accordingly. The College can only certify for Certificate, AA, or AS majors listed in the college catalog, or for transfer majors for which official articulation has been completed between Las Positas College and the intended transfer college.

Veterans will be permitted to enroll into work experience courses under the Parallel Plan as practical training for their major.

There are individual academic programs and courses listed in the Catalog that may not meet VA approval for educational benefits. Contact the College Veterans Office to determine if your intended program is approved for benefits.

Note: Programs previously approved are subject to change as determined by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Students may pursue multiple degrees such as associates, certificates, and transfer degrees to accredited institutions at the same time.

Waiver of Wellness with DD214 w/ Honorable Discharge

Student Veterans with a copy of their DD214 w/ Honorable Discharge in the Veterans Office will have the waiver of area of Wellness for Associates in Arts (AA) Degree or area of Kinesiology for Associates in Science (AS) Degree and be granted 3 elective units towards their degree plan.

Credit for Military Courses - Joint Service Transcript (JST) and Community College of the Airforce Transcript (CCAF)

Credit may be earned by students who satisfactorily pass military courses on their Joint Services Transcripts (JST) and Community College of the Airforce (CCAF) Courses accepted. Courses accepted from JSTs must be determined by faculty in the specific discipline. Student must request their JST on <https://jst.doded.mil/official.html>

Dependents of Veterans

A student who is a dependent of a veteran with a service connected disability or who died of a service-connected cause may be eligible to receive a waiver of tuition and registration fees through the California Dependents of Veterans College Fee Waiver Program.

Application forms and additional information may be obtained by contacting the local county veterans service officer, listed in the telephone directory under county government, or by calling (916) 653-2573. Approved authorization forms may be submitted directly to the Financial Aid Office for a fee waiver.

Eligibility for Programs

Eligibility for VA educational benefits can be extended to veterans, reservists, and children of service-connected deceased or disabled veterans under the following programs:

Forever GI Bill® – Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act

The President signed into law the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act also known as the "Forever GI Bill®," which will bring significant changes to Veterans educational benefits. The law is named after the American Legion national commander who wrote the original GI Bill® Language in 1944, and will allow more Veterans to use the GI Bill® and more time to use it. Some of the changes will go into effect immediately, most will not. The majority of the changes enhance or expand educational benefits for Veterans, Service members, Families, and Survivors.

The Montgomery GI Bill® (Chapter 30)

Enlistment after July 1, 1985 is required. The service-person must have participated in the pay reduction program. The monthly payment rate will vary with the length and type of service. Monthly "self-certification" is required to insure benefit payments.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E) (Chapter 31)

This program is available to certain veterans who have a service-connected disability of 20 percent or greater. It provides a monthly stipend and also covers the cost of tuition, books, supplies, and tutorial or special assistance. Although the date of entry to active service is not considered, students should use this benefit within twelve years of the date of discharge. Eligibility is determined on a case-by-case basis.

Post-9/11 GI Bill® (Chapter 33)

A new education benefit program for individuals who served on active duty on or after September 11, 2001. Eligibility is determined by length of service and entitles the veteran to a percentage of the following: Cost of tuition and fees, monthly housing allowance, and a yearly stipend for books and supplies up to \$1,000.

Dependents ' GI Bill® (Chapter 35)

A child or spouse of a service-connected deceased or 100-percent – permanently disabled veteran may be eligible for VA educational assistance. The marital status of a dependent child is not a factor in determining eligibility. Benefits may be used until the dependent has reached the age of twenty-six or for eight years from the date that eligibility is determined, whichever is later.

Reservists Montgomery GI Bill® (Chapter 1606)

Enlistment or extension for six years of reserve duty after July 1, 1985 is required. This program does not require a contribution by the service member, but the reservist must be actively drilling.

Minimum Grade Point Average Requirements

The Veterans Administration (VA) requires students on educational benefits maintain satisfactory progress. If the student on VA benefits falls below 2.0 grade point average (GPA) over two semesters, this is reported to the VA as unsatisfactory progress and benefits are suspended. To reinstate benefits, students must complete one semester with a 2.0 or higher GPA. Las Positas College is required by law to have and to enforce standards of progress and conduct in order for their programs to be approved for VA benefits.

General Information for Veterans

The Las Positas College Veterans Information brochure and the college catalog provides information on basic eligibility requirements, student responsibilities, evaluation of prior credit, declaring academic objectives, variable-unit courses, withdrawal from classes, and repetition of courses.

Las Positas College Veterans First - Mission Ready Learning Community

Mission Ready is a Veterans learning community for camaraderie, equity, leadership, and support for students.

Veterans, military members, and their family members who attend LPC can now meet, study, take classes together, and offer support to one another in this new learning community.

Some Resources/Services Available for Mission Ready students:

- Designated academic/career counselor
- Financial support
- Text books covered for Mission Ready Classes
- Mission Ready: English 1A - Dedicated professors
- Tutoring services (one-on-one and group)
- Alumni & student Veterans mentoring/networking
- Career/Major planning
- Connecting with other student Veterans
- Social events - Hikes, sporting events, and other activities

Students interested in Mission Ready should visit <http://www.laspositascollege.edu/missionready/index.php>

Priority Registration for Veterans

At Las Positas College, in order to be assigned priority registration, veterans, reservists, and active duty members must complete the college's orientation, assessment tests, student educational plan (SEP), and provide a copy of their DD-214, NOBE, or military orders to the LPC Veterans First Program.