



# A Summary of Military and Veterans' Education Benefits

Prepared by the Nevada System of Higher Education – January 2016

While in service, members of the military have access to a number of federal programs for tuition assistance. The centerpiece of armed services education benefits is the GI Bill<sup>1</sup>, which encompasses several Department of Veterans Affairs education programs including the Post-9/11 GI Bill, the Montgomery GI Bill for Active Duty and Veterans, Montgomery GI Bill for Selected Reserves, Reserve Education Assistance Program, Veterans Education Assistance Program, Spouse and Dependents Education Assistance, and the Vocational Rehabilitation and Education program. You may be eligible for more than one educational benefit. Knowing which is best for your situation can save you money and ensure you get the most out of your benefits.

In addition to the numerous federal education benefits available to active duty members of the U.S. Armed Forces, the State of Nevada offers the following benefits that you may also wish to consider.

## ***Non-Resident Tuition Exemption – Out-of-State Veterans – State Law***

Veterans who were honorably discharged within five years preceding the date of matriculation (first day of instruction in the semester or term in which enrollment of the student first occurs) at an NSHE institution shall not be charged non-resident tuition (Title 4, Chapter 15, Section 3 of the Board of Regents *Handbook* [*Handbook*] and *Nevada Revised Statutes* [NRS] 396.540).

## ***Non-Resident Tuition Exemption – 2014 Choice Act – Federal Law***

Under Section 702 of the Veterans' Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 (PL 113-146, "Choice Act"), public institutions of higher education that charge qualifying veterans and their eligible family members tuition and fees in excess of the rate for resident students will lose federal veteran educational assistance dollars under the Post-9/11 GI Bill and Montgomery GI Bill-Active Duty. Qualifying veterans must enroll in the institution within three years of discharge from a period of active duty service of 90 days or more, and a similar time-frame applies for qualifying family members. Section 702 applies to terms beginning after July 1, 2015.

In March 2015, the Nevada Board of Regents approved a policy under which veterans and certain family members who enroll at an NSHE institution within three years of the veteran's discharge or release from military service shall not be charged tuition. The Board's policy extends this benefit to other "covered individuals," including individuals using benefits under the Fry Scholarship who enroll within three years of the service member's death in the line of duty, and individuals using benefits under the Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance (DEA) program who enroll within three years of the transferor's discharge from or service member's death in the line of duty (Title 4, Chapter 15, Section 3 of the Handbook).

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<sup>1</sup> GI Bill® is a registered trademark of the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The absence of the registration symbol ® does not constitute a waiver of the VA's trademark rights in that phrase.

### ***Non-Resident Tuition Exemption – Active Duty Members, Spouse and Dependents***

Active duty members of the Armed Forces of the United States stationed in Nevada, as well as their spouses and dependent children, are eligible for in-state tuition (*Title 4, Chapter 15, Section 3* of the *Handbook* and NRS 396.540). This provision also applies to active duty members stationed at the Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center at Pickle Meadows, California. For active duty service members who have a permanent change of duty station to a state other than Nevada, spouses and dependent children remain classified as Nevada residents for tuition purposes so long as they remain continuously enrolled at an NSHE institution.

The Department of Veterans Affairs currently limits, on an annual basis, the amount of tuition and fees that can be paid to private schools on behalf of students using the Post-9/11 GI Bill. That limit does not apply to public educational institutions. Therefore, choosing a public institution in Nevada in which to pursue your higher education degree could potentially be more affordable thanks to the combination of federal and state benefits available to you.

### ***Non-Resident Tuition Exemption – Veterans – Active Duty Stationed in Nevada when Discharged***

Veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States who were honorably discharged and who on the date of discharge were on active duty stationed in Nevada (including the Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center at Pickle Meadows, California) are considered residents of the state for tuition purposes and are eligible for in-state tuition (*Title 4, Chapter 15, Section 3* of the *Handbook* and NRS 396.540).

### ***Grant-In-Aid for the Family of a Member Killed in the Line of Duty***

The financially dependent child (or children) and spouse of an active duty member of the U.S. Armed Forces killed in the line of duty while permanently stationed in Nevada may be eligible for a grant-in-aid, a financial award that does not require repayment (*Title 4, Chapter 18, Section 2* of the *Handbook*).

### ***National Guard Fee Waiver***

Active members of the Nevada National Guard are eligible for a fee waiver that will permit such Guard members to register for courses without a registration fee (e.g. resident tuition) (*Title 4, Chapter 17, Section 12* of the *Handbook* and NRS 396.544). This waiver will also pay for laboratory fees associated with certain courses. (The programs associated with the William S. Boyd School of Law, the University of Nevada School of Medicine, and the UNLV School of Dental Medicine are not eligible for the waiver.)

### ***National Guard Fee Waiver for Children and Spouse***

The child (or children) and spouse of a person who was killed while performing duties as a member of the Nevada National Guard are also eligible to register for courses without a registration fee (e.g. resident tuition), including certain laboratory fees (*Title 4, Chapter 17, Section 12* of the *Handbook* and NRS 396.5442). The child of a person who was killed while performing duties as a member of the Nevada National Guard may use the waiver for ten years after he or she attains the age of 18 or, if he or she enrolls prior to age 18, for ten years after the date of enrollment. The spouse may use this benefit for up to ten years from member's date of

death. (The programs associated with the William S. Boyd School of Law, the University of Nevada School of Medicine, and the UNLV School of Dental Medicine are not eligible for the waiver.)

### ***POW/MIA Benefits for Children and Spouse***

The child (or children) and spouse of a person who was a member of the U.S. Armed Forces permanently stationed in Nevada who has been identified as a prisoner of war or declared missing in action while performing duties as a member of the Armed Forces are eligible to register for courses without a registration fee (e.g. resident tuition), including certain laboratory fees (*Title 4, Chapter 17, Section 12 of the Handbook* and NRS 396.5445). The child may use the waiver for ten years after he or she attains the age of 18 or, if he or she enrolls prior to age 18, for ten years after the date of enrollment. The spouse may use this benefit for up to ten years from the date on which the member was identified as a prisoner of war or missing in action. (The programs associated with the William S. Boyd School of Law, the University of Nevada School of Medicine, and the UNLV School of Dental Medicine are not eligible for the waiver.)

### ***Completing the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)***

It is recommended that all prospective and current students complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid), available online at <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov>. With this single application students apply for a variety of federal and state financial assistance, including grants, loans and work study. The FAFSA is an annual application, with a new version available every January 1 for the following academic year. Although the FAFSA can be completed any time during the academic year, it is important for students to check with their institution of choice regarding priority deadlines and additional information that may be necessary before a financial aid award can be made.

### ***The Millennium Scholarship***

Governor Guinn Millennium Scholarship recipients may access their awards for up to six academic years after their high school graduation date. However, for those recipients who have served on active duty as a member of the United States Armed Forces, an extension equal to time served, but not to exceed six years, may be granted upon appeal to the Nevada System of Higher Education (*Title 4, Chapter 18, Section 9.6.4 of the Handbook*). The *Application for Extension of Scholarship Expiration Date* is available online at <https://nevadatreasurer.gov>.

### ***Institutional Resources***

Each NSHE institution has an office of financial aid that is at your disposal to answer any financial aid questions you may have. In addition, each institution includes a veteran services office or coordinator who will be your liaison to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs for certification of your education benefits. They provide support for applying for and receiving education benefits, including submitting forms, certifying classes, and education benefit advising. Contact information for these offices at each campus is attached.