

## Fry Scholarship / Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance (DEA) Update

Colleagues and Fellow Veterans,

Everyone knows VA provides many programs for veterans and their families to assist with life after the military, but did you know that VA has GI Bill programs that offer education assistance to survivors and dependents of veterans? There are many wonderful nonprofit organizations that offer scholarships to the families of our heroes. We honor and encourage all of them, but want everyone to ensure they do not accept them *in lieu of what the VA provides*. Families have earned the programs discussed below – it is not an either or situation.

[The Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship \(Fry Scholarship\)](#) is available for children and spouses of Service members who died in the line of duty while serving on active duty on or after September 11, 2001. Children may use benefits until their 33<sup>rd</sup> birthday; and spouses' eligibility ends at the earlier of 15 years from the date of death or the date of remarriage. See our [fact sheet](#) for more detailed information.

Eligible beneficiaries attending school may receive up to 36 months of benefits. This includes full in-state tuition & fees for public schools, and private or foreign school tuition & fees are capped at a statutory maximum amount per academic year. Additionally, students may receive a monthly housing allowance and stipend for books & supplies. We've worked hard to support and implement laws that make programs like this available. On December 16, 2016, a new provision of the law extended the benefit eligibility period to January 1, 2021, for the spouses of Service members that died between September 11, 2001 and December 31, 2005. This provides surviving spouses with additional time to use the Fry Scholarship benefits. Check out our [letter to spouses](#) for more information on what has changed. Federal law also requires schools to charge [in-state tuition and fee](#) amounts to qualifying dependents using the Fry Scholarship at a public institution of higher learning located in the state where they currently live. We're working to ensure that all states come into compliance, and the public can track our progress through the use of a [map](#) available on our website.

[Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance \(DEA\)](#) offers education and training benefits to the spouses and children of veterans who are permanently and totally disabled due to a service-related condition, veterans who died while on active duty, or who died as a result of a service-related condition. Children must generally use benefits between the ages of 18 and 26; and spouses generally have a 10 year period in which to use benefits, or a 20 year period for spouses of Service members who die on active duty or veterans that receive a permanent and total rating effective within 3 years of release from active duty. Benefits may be used for degree and certificate programs, apprenticeships, and/or on-the-job training. See our [DEA pamphlet](#) for more detailed information.

Sometimes it can seem as though the VA is a giant government organization that only processes claims. However, the majority of our employees here are either veterans or the family member of a veteran. In fact, many of us use or have used these benefits ourselves. We assure you that each day we're working hard to provide the best care and benefit programs and upholding the VA motto, "*to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow, and his orphan.*"

Very Respectfully,

Curtis L. Coy  
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**VA Core Values: Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect, Excellence ("I CARE")**