



*College Responsibilities for Implementing Wisconsin GI Bill Changes
As of August 5, 2009*

Colleges have several responsibilities for implementing new requirements for the Wisconsin GI Bill including:

- 1) **Determine the amount of the supplemental stipend payment.** This will require verifying veteran eligibility for the Post-9/11 GI Bill and what federal education benefit veterans relinquished when they applied for the Post-9/11 GI Bill. The WTC System Office is working with the University of Wisconsin System (UWS), the Higher Education Aids Board (HEAB), and the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) to develop a computerized Microsoft Excel tool that will help colleges determine the supplemental payment due to each veteran. Someone at each college will need to understand the tool and be available to enter the veteran data needed to calculate the supplemental payment. We anticipate that this tool will be available in August. The WTCS will be working with UWS to schedule training on how to use the computerized tool.
- 2) **Issue supplemental payments to qualifying veterans.** WTCS colleges will issue supplemental payments to qualifying veterans. The System Office is working to help colleges reach a decision about when during each semester to issue the supplemental payments. We hope to have these materials available by mid-August. Colleges must begin offering eligible veterans supplemental stipends for the fall 2009 semester. Beginning in January 2010, veterans must use Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits if eligible and receive supplemental payment if eligible.
- 3) **Inform veterans who have previously received Wisconsin GI Bill remissions that they will need to submit additional information to verify their continued eligibility for the remissions.** The System Office is working with the UWS and the WDVA to modify the form used to apply for Wisconsin GI Bill benefits; a new form is being developed to verify the status of veterans who are currently using the Wisconsin GI Bill. Veterans can find information about the required changes at a special website hosted by the UWS. The website is available at: <http://gibill.wisconsin.edu> .
- 4) **Collect from veterans their Post-9/11 certificate of eligibility or denial letter.** Colleges need this information to determine if veterans qualify for the supplemental payment and the Wisconsin GI Bill tuition remissions.
- 5) **Report to the System Office on remissions granted and supplemental stipend payments made to veterans.** The System Office will modify the current reporting

process used to gather information about Wisconsin GI Bill tuition remissions to collect this information. More detailed information on modified or new data requirements should be available by September.

- 6) **Report to federal VA on veteran student enrollment, completion and tuition and fee costs.** Federal VA representatives indicate that colleges must certify student eligibility for Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits one semester at a time. The System Office continues to work with federal VA representatives about these issues and advocate for improvements in federal reporting requirements that reduce the administrative burden on WTCS colleges. Federal VA representatives indicate that enrollment and completion reporting will be manual for at least the first 18 months of the program.
- 7) **Be prepared to receive electronic fund transfers from the federal Department of Veterans Affairs for tuition and fees costs of eligible veterans.** Preliminary indications are that the federal VA will make individual transfers for each qualifying veteran.
- 8) **Modify year-end information reported to students for tax purposes.** The supplemental payment represents a benefit to students and may have income tax ramifications. Colleges will need to provide students with data on total supplemental payments made, most likely on a 1099-Misc form or 1098-T (because it reduces the student's potential for education tax credits. The System Office is working to clarify the taxable status of the supplemental payment.
- 9) **Consider other areas of the college that will be affected by the Post-9/11 GI Bill.** Because this is a new federal program, a lag time seems likely between when veterans apply for Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits and when they receive their certificate of eligibility or denial. Colleges will need to consider how this lag time affects their policies and procedures on, for example, dropping students for nonpayment of fees, tracking changes in student enrollment, and the availability of short-term loans to help offset costs such as books until veterans receive the book stipend available under the Post-9/11 GI Bill.