

Veteran Training Bulletin

New Education and Training Opportunities for Veterans

As July turned to August, two new programs that can help Illinois veterans acquire education, training and job skills went into effect. On July 31, the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) and Microsoft announced their partnership in the launching of the Elevate America program that will provide 51,000 vouchers for individuals to take e-learning courses in the use of Microsoft products. The next day, August 1, marked the first day that educational benefits took effect under the new GI Bill for vets who served more than 90 days since September 11, 2001.

We wanted to make a special effort to make sure our vets knew about the Elevate America program because of its time limits – registration concludes at the end of October – and because the vouchers will be issued on a first-come, first-served basis. At the same time, we also figured that a lot of you would be interested in information on the new GI Bill – or know a fellow Vet who might benefit.

For a final touch, we collected information on a little known and too often, little used scholarship program through the University of Illinois that provides tuition waivers for the children of Illinois Veterans that served in conflicts from WWII to Iraq and Afghanistan. Like the information on Elevate America, it's our hope that by letting our Vets know about this opportunity at through the U of I, more can take advantage of it.

Vets Can Upgrade Technical Skills with Elevate America

The Illinois-Microsoft Elevate America program is a public-private partnership between the State of Illinois and Microsoft. The purpose of the program is to provide a no-cost opportunity for individuals to increase their technology skills. This is a national program and, for our state, Microsoft is providing 51,000 vouchers to be redeemed by individuals to complete Microsoft online courses and Microsoft business certification exams.

Timeline: The distribution of vouchers takes place between July 31 - October 31, 2009. Individuals who are assigned online learning

vouchers during that period must "redeem" their vouchers online before October 31, but have 12 months to complete the online learning courses. Individuals who are assigned certification exam vouchers during the distribution period must complete their exam by October 31, 2009.

Courses and Exams: Individuals will choose specific voucher types to either complete select Microsoft online courses in two categories or to take Microsoft business certification exams. In each category there are many courses to pick from. A voucher is good for one set of courses, called a course

collection, for a selected Microsoft product. Individuals may wish to complete more than one course collection and, if so, will need a voucher for each collection. The estimated time to complete a course varies from a few hours to about five hours.

Accessing Elevate America: To access information about the program, online courses, and to find certification exam sites, go to www.illinoisworknet.com and click on Individuals. (See inset below right for more information about this website.)

Types of Vouchers

Business Worker Voucher (category 1)

These vouchers are used to complete online courses for Microsoft Windows XP, Office 2003, Windows Vista, or Office 2007 online courses. These courses are for individuals who use, or will use, these Microsoft products with their work. All of the courses are self paced, so individuals do not have to complete a course in one sitting. Upon completing a course, the individual may download and print a certificate of completion.

Technical Professional Voucher (category 2)

These vouchers are used to complete online courses for individuals who use, or will use, Microsoft professional information technology applications including server administration, web and application programming, and other professional technical areas. This series of online courses is specifically designed to provide the knowledge and skills necessary to pass Microsoft Technical Certification exams. Each collection of courses is focused on a single Microsoft product, such as Windows Server, SQL Server, Share-Point, and Visual Studio. In this category there are many courses offered and organized in Learning Areas. Individuals may need to be

issued several vouchers depending on how many courses in each learning area they want to complete. Upon completing a course, the individual may download and print a certificate completion.

Microsoft Business Certification Exams

These vouchers are used by individuals to redeem at locations offering Business Worker Certification exams. These exams may be prepared for by completing Business Worker courses. Technical Professional Certification exams are not part of this voucher program. A voucher can be used for one Business Certification exam attempt, and if needed, one retake. All vouchers issued to take Business Certification exams must be used before October 31, 2009.

About Illinois workNet

Illinois workNet offers a number of tools that can help Vets with job search, education and training. It includes links to various job search tools, from major job boards to local newspaper ads, as well as a handy resume creation tool that allows you to create up to 20 resumes that you can print, save to your own computer or email to employers.

To get the most out of workNet, be sure to register with the site. That way it will automatically provide you with employment information of local interest. There's also a special section for vets. Visit workNet at www.illinoisworknet.com.

New Post 9/11 GI Bill Now in Effect

Veterans and individuals currently serving in the Armed Forces now have new educational opportunities under the New Post 9/11 GI Bill. The bill, initiated on August 1st, offers education benefits to individuals that meet the established requirements. The benefits include:

- Coverage on any approved program at any school in the United States that offers an associate degree or higher.
- Up to \$2,000 for the reimbursement of one licensing or certification test.
- Individuals who transfer to the New Post 9/11 GI Bill from previous versions of the GI Bill may also be able to receive coverage for flight training, apprenticeship, on-the-job training, and correspondence courses.

Eligibility Requirements

The bill requires individuals to have served at least 90 days of active duty since September 10, 2001 OR 30 continuous days of active duty since September 10, 2001 in conjunction with a discharge for a service-related disability.

Additional eligibility requirements do exist. For further information about eligibility requirements visit the Department of Veterans Affairs Post 9/11 GI Bill website at www.gibill.va.gov.

Basic Benefits

Benefits are distributed based on length of active duty service. To be eligible for 100% coverage of benefits an individual must have a combined 36 months of qualifying active duty service OR 30 continuous days of qualifying active duty service in conjunction with a discharge for a service-related disability. These terms of service are limited to service after September 10, 2001.

Individuals with lesser amounts of active duty service will be eligible for a certain percentage of coverage. For more information, visit www.gibill.va.gov.

Basic Benefits Include:

- Cost of tuition and fees equal to the cost of the most expensive in-state undergraduate tuition at a public university or college
- Monthly housing allowance
- Yearly book and supply stipend of up to \$1,000

Yellow Ribbon Program

At participating schools, individuals who qualify for 100% coverage of benefits may be eligible to take advantage of the Yellow Ribbon Program. This program can help pay for education expenses that exceed the maximum coverage.

Transferring Benefits to Dependents

Individuals who have served at least 6 years in the Armed Forces and agree to serve an additional 4 years are allowed to transfer benefits to their spouses. Individuals who serve at least 10 years can transfer benefits to any dependent.

For more information on transferring benefits, visit the Department of Defense website at www.defenselink.mil/home/features/2009/0409_gibill/.

To Find Out More

For a further explanation of eligibility requirements and benefits, information on approved education programs, and additional information visit www.gibill.va.gov.

University of Illinois Offers Children of Veterans Tuition Waiver

The University of Illinois is offering tuition waivers to children of veterans who served in one or more of the following:

World War II: service between September 16, 1940 and July 25, 1947

The Korean Conflict: service between June 25, 1950 and January 31, 1955

The Vietnam Conflict: service between January 1, 1960 and May 7, 1975

The Southwest Asia Conflict: must have received the Southwest Asia Service Medal for service between August 2, 1990 and November 30, 1995

Operation Enduring Freedom: must have received the Afghanistan Campaign Medal or the Global War on Terrorism Medal on or after October 21, 2001

Operation Iraqi Freedom: must have received the Iraqi Campaign Medal or the Global War on Terrorism Medal on or after March 19, 2003

Every year there will be a maximum of six waivers per Illinois county awarded; one for each of the listed conflicts. If no applicant is available for a particular tuition waiver, that waiver will expire.

The tuition waivers cover four consecutive years of tuition for either undergraduate, graduate, or professional studies at the University of Illinois. They are accepted at all University of Illinois campuses (Urbana-Champaign, Chicago, Health Sciences Center, Springfield, and Global Campus). To apply for one of these

waivers, a candidate must fill out the Children of Veterans Tuition Waiver Application and submit it to the University of Illinois by the priority deadline of March 1st. Candidates will be notified if they have received a tuition waiver by April 1st.

To be considered for a tuition waiver:

- Each applicant must be a resident of the state of Illinois and a permanent resident of the county from which he or she is applying.
- Each applicant must have applied to or have been admitted to the University of Illinois by March 1st to be considered for the first round of awarding.
- If a candidate should receive a tuition waiver, the waiver must be used the first semester after the candidate's eligibility for the waiver has been confirmed.
- Each applicant must be the natural or legally adopted child of a veteran.
- A copy of the veteran parent's DD Form 214 must be submitted along with the application as proof of that parent's veteran status.
- Proof of each candidate's ACT scores must be submitted along with the application.

- This must be the first time for a candidate to receive and use a Children of Veterans Tuition Waiver.

Further details regarding eligibility requirements and selection criteria is included on the Children of Veterans Tuition Waiver Application which can be found by visiting the University of Illinois Office of Student Financial Aid website at www.osfa.illinois.edu. The application can be accessed from this page by searching for "Children of Veterans Tuition Waiver" in the search bar located on the top right of the page. For further information regarding the Children of Veterans Tuition Waiver, interested applicants can contact the Office of Student Financial Aid at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign by calling (217) 333-010.



IDES Announces

2009 Patriots Day Career Fair

Noon - 4:00 PM, September 11, 2009

**US Cellular Coliseum
101 S. Madison Street, Bloomington, IL**

Over 80 employers and Veterans Service Organizations registered
Military displays available for viewing

Note: The Career Fair will be followed by a moving tribute to our military personnel, policeman and firefighters who have given their lives in the line of duty.

For more information, please visit the Patriots Day website, www.patriots-day.us