

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS SERVICES

2011 ANNUAL REPORT

TO

GOVERNOR ROBERT McDONNELL

AND

THE VIRGINIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

ON THE

**VIRGINIA MILITARY SURVIVORS
AND DEPENDENTS EDUCATION PROGRAM**

October 1, 2011



Serving those who served.

**Department of Veterans Services
2011 Annual Report on the
Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program**

Background

Under the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program (VMSDEP), tuition and required fees are waived at Virginia public colleges and universities for the qualified survivors and dependents of certain military service members. Through the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Fund (VMSDEF), a stipend is provided to offset the costs of room, board, books, and supplies. The amount of the stipend is determined by the Virginia General Assembly, the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV), and the availability of Commonwealth general funds.

A “qualified survivor and dependent” is defined as the spouse, or child between the ages of 16 and 29, of a military service member who, while serving as an active duty member in the United States Armed Forces, United States Armed Forces Reserves, the Virginia National Guard, or Virginia National Guard Reserve, during military operations against terrorism, on a peacekeeping mission, as a result of a terrorist act, or in any armed conflict subsequent to December 6, 1941, was killed or is missing in action or is a prisoner of war, or of a veteran who, due to such service, has been rated by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs as totally and permanently disabled or at least 90 percent disabled, and has been discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable. Domiciliary requirements also apply and are detailed in the Code of Virginia.

As required by the Code, the Commissioner of the Department of Veterans Services must report annually to the Governor and the General Assembly on the agency’s policies and strategies relating to dissemination of information about the Program. The report must include the number of current beneficiaries, the educational institutions attended by beneficiaries, and the completion rate of the beneficiaries.

Information Dissemination

During the past year, revisions were made to the VMSDEP Application. Personnel in DVS’ State Approving Agency for Veterans Education and Training continue to provide information about the program.

As in the past, DVS continued to review all new rating decisions for Virginia veterans promulgated by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) Roanoke Regional Office. In Fiscal Year 2011, approximately 1,436 veterans were identified whose period of service and level of disability met VMSDEP requirements, making their spouse and qualifying children eligible for VMSDEP and VMSDEF benefits. DVS has notified the veterans and offered assistance with the VMSDEP application process.

Current Beneficiaries and Institutions Attended

A total of 968 unique students used VMSDEP benefits during the Fall 2010 and Spring 2011 semesters. This represents a 6.0 percent increase over the number of unique students using VMSDEP benefits in 2009-10. Of these 968 students, 407 (42 percent) attended a four-year institution, while 572 (59 percent) attended a two-year college or community college.

Of the four-year institutions, Old Dominion University had the highest participation (95 students), followed by Virginia Commonwealth University with 67 students. Tidewater Community College led all schools with 207 students. Thomas Nelson Community College was second among community colleges with 53 students. More detailed information is presented in Appendix A. A comparison of participants during 2009-10 and 2010-11 is presented in Appendix B.

Completion Rates

The Department of Veterans Services continues to work with the State Council of Higher Education (SCHEV) to track each student's eligibility and use of benefits. Students, as well as institutions, are advised accordingly. DVS continues to provide SCHEV with updated eligibility reports.

APPENDIX A
2010-2011 Number of Recipients and Amount Awarded

	Fall 2010		Spring 2011		Total	
	Number	Dollars	Number	Dollars	Unique #	Dollars
Four-Year Publics						
Christopher Newport University	11	7,095	11	6,880	11	13,975
College of William and Mary	9	5,805	10	6,450	10	12,255
George Mason University	26	16,125	27	16,770	29	32,895
James Madison University	20	12,685	17	10,105	22	22,790
Longwood University	9	5,805	10	6,450	11	12,255
Norfolk State University	39	24,080	36	21,608	43	45,688
Old Dominion University	80	48,375	80	48,590	95	96,965
Radford University	22	13,975	18	11,395	23	25,370
University of Mary Washington	9	5,160	7	4,300	9	9,460
University of Virginia	10	6,235	11	6,880	11	13,115
University of Virginia's College at Wise	8	4,945	6	3,826	8	8,771
Virginia Commonwealth University	60	37,625	55	33,755	67	71,380
Virginia Military Institute	5	3,225	4	2,580	5	5,805
Virginia State University	38	24,080	35	22,145	39	46,225
Virginia Tech	26	16,340	28	17,845	28	34,185
Four-Year Public total	372	\$231,555	355	\$219,579	407	\$451,134
Two-Year Publics						
Richard Bland College	4	2,635	4	2,580	5	4,945
Two-Year Public total	4	\$2,635	4	\$2,580	5	\$4,945
Community Colleges						
Blue Ridge Community College	12	6,450	10	6,235	15	12,685
Central Virginia Community College	12	6,020	15	7,310	17	13,330
Dabney S. Lancaster Community College	0	0	0	0	0	0
Danville Community College	2	1,290	4	2,365	5	3,655
Eastern Shore Community College	1	645	1	430	1	1,075
Germanna Community College	20	10,750	17	9,245	23	19,995
J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College	11	6,450	12	6,880	15	13,330
John Tyler Community College	24	14,620	28	16,125	34	30,745
Lord Fairfax Community College	8	4,085	9	4,300	10	8,385
Mountain Empire Community College	22	12,685	22	13,330	28	26,015
New River Community College	4	2,580	7	3,440	9	6,020
Northern Virginia Community College	39	20,210	34	18,490	45	38,700
Patrick Henry Community College	5	2,365	6	3,655	7	6,020
Paul D. Camp Community College	5	2,580	4	1,935	5	4,515
Piedmont Virginia Community College	3	1,720	6	3,440	6	5,160

	Fall 2010		Spring 2011		Total	
	Number	Dollars	Number	Dollars	Unique #	Dollars
Rappahannock Community College	6	3,010	3	1,720	6	4,730
Southside Virginia Community College	8	4,515	7	4,300	10	8,815
Southwest Virginia Community College	19	10,965	14	8,815	19	19,780
Thomas Nelson Community College	38	20,210	40	20,855	53	41,065
Tidewater Community College	170	96,750	167	94,385	207	191,135
Virginia Highlands Community College	9	4,730	12	6,665	13	11,395
Virginia Western Community College	25	12,255	22	12,255	31	24,510
Wytheville Community College	6	3,655	8	4,515	9	8,170
Community College total	449	\$248,540	448	\$250,690	567	\$499,230
Total	825	\$482,460	807	\$472,849	968	\$955,309

Term award amounts	
Full-time enrollment	\$645
Half-time enrollment	\$430
Less than Half-time enrollment	\$215

Source: SCHEV

APPENDIX B

Number of Recipients and Amount Awarded 2009-2010 and 2010-2011

	2009-10 Total		2010-11 Total	
	Unique #	Dollars	Unique #	Dollars
Four-Year Publics				
Christopher Newport University	10	11,925	11	13,975
College of William and Mary	7	8,100	10	12,255
George Mason University	19	20,025	29	32,895
James Madison University	25	31,275	22	22,790
Longwood University	10	13,500	11	12,255
Norfolk State University	49	56,025	43	45,688
Old Dominion University	89	100,800	95	96,965
Radford University	20	21,896	23	25,370
University of Mary Washington	11	10,350	9	9,460
University of Virginia	11	13,725	11	13,115
University of Virginia's College at Wise	12	10,234	8	8,771
Virginia Commonwealth University	67	77,625	67	71,380
Virginia Military Institute	5	6,075	5	5,805
Virginia State University	36	42,300	39	46,225
Virginia Tech	28	33,300	28	34,185
Four-Year Public total	396	\$457,155	407	\$451,134
Two-Year Publics				
Richard Bland College	5	5,400	5	4,945
Two-Year Public total	5	\$5,400	5	\$4,945
Community Colleges				
Blue Ridge Community College	18	17,100	15	12,685
Central Virginia Community College	17	12,150	17	13,330
Dabney S. Lancaster Community College	2	2,025	0	0
Danville Community College	5	5,850	5	3,655
Eastern Shore Community College	1	675	1	1,075
Germanna Community College	16	13,050	23	19,995
J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College	15	13,500	15	13,330
John Tyler Community College	20	19,575	34	30,745
Lord Fairfax Community College	12	10,350	10	8,385
Mountain Empire Community College	24	25,200	28	26,015
New River Community College	3	1,800	9	6,020
Northern Virginia Community College	35	31,050	45	38,700
Patrick Henry Community College	9	6,075	7	6,020
Paul D. Camp Community College	10	9,000	5	4,515
Piedmont Virginia Community College	5	3,825	6	5,160
Rappahannock Community College	5	5,850	6	4,730

	2009-10 Total		2010-11 Total	
	Unique #	Dollars	Unique #	Dollars
Southside Virginia Community College	11	11,925	10	8,815
Southwest Virginia Community College	20	21,375	19	19,780
Thomas Nelson Community College	50	40,500	53	41,065
Tidewater Community College	193	180,225	207	191,135
Virginia Highlands Community College	18	16,875	13	11,395
Virginia Western Community College	20	21,150	31	24,510
Wytheville Community College	7	8,775	9	8,170
Community College total	512	\$477,900	567	\$499,230
Total	913	\$940,455	968	\$955,309

Source: SCHEV

APPENDIX C

Code of Virginia, § [23-7.4:1A](#)

§ [23-7.4:1](#). Waiver of tuition and certain charges and fees for eligible children and spouses of certain military service members, eligible children and spouses of certain public safety personnel, and certain foreign students.

A. There is hereby established the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program. Qualified survivors and dependents of military service members, who have been admitted to any public institution of higher education or other public accredited postsecondary institution granting a degree, diploma, or certificate in the Commonwealth of Virginia, upon certification to the Commissioner of the Department of Veterans Services of eligibility under this subsection, shall be admitted free of tuition and all required fees.

The Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program shall be implemented pursuant to the following:

1. For the purposes of this subsection, "qualified survivors and dependents" means the spouse or a child between the ages of 16 and 29 of a military service member who, while serving as an active duty member in the United States Armed Forces, United States Armed Forces Reserves, the Virginia National Guard, or Virginia National Guard Reserve, during military operations against terrorism, on a peacekeeping mission, as a result of a terrorist act, or in any armed conflict subsequent to December 6, 1941, was killed or is missing in action or is a prisoner of war, or of a veteran who, due to such service, has been rated by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs as totally and permanently disabled or at least 90percent disabled, and has been discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable. However, the Commissioner of the Department of Veterans Services may certify dependents above the age of 29 in those cases in which extenuating circumstances prevented the dependent child from using his benefits before the age of 30.

2. Such qualified survivors and dependents shall be eligible for the benefits conferred by this subsection if the military service member who was killed, is missing in action, is a prisoner of war, or is disabled (i) was a bona fide domiciliary of Virginia at the time of entering such active military service or called to active duty as a member of the Armed Forces Reserves or Virginia National Guard Reserve; (ii) is and has been a bona fide domiciliary of Virginia for at least five years immediately prior to the date on which the admission application was submitted by or on behalf of such qualified survivor or dependent for admission to such institution of higher education or other public accredited postsecondary institution; (iii) if deceased, was a bona fide domiciliary of Virginia on the date of his death and had been a bona fide domiciliary of Virginia for at least five years immediately prior to his death; (iv) in the case of a qualified child, is deceased and the surviving parent had been, at some time previous to marrying the deceased parent, a bona fide domiciliary of Virginia for at least five years or is and has been a bona fide domiciliary of Virginia for at least five years immediately prior to the date on which the admission application was submitted by or on behalf of such child; or (v) in the case of a qualified spouse, is deceased and the surviving spouse had been, at some time previous to

marrying the deceased spouse, a bona fide domiciliary of Virginia for at least five years or is and has been a bona fide domiciliary of Virginia for at least five years prior to the date on which the admission application was submitted by such qualified spouse.

3. From such funds as may be appropriated and from such gifts, bequests and any gifts, grants, or donations from public or private sources, there is hereby established the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Fund for the sole purpose of providing financial assistance for board and room charges, books and supplies, and other expenses at any public institution of higher education or other public accredited postsecondary institution granting a degree, diploma, or certificate in the Commonwealth of Virginia for the use and benefit of qualified survivors and dependents.

Each year, from the funds available in the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Fund, the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia and its member institutions shall determine the amount and the manner in which financial assistance shall be made available to beneficiaries and shall make that information available to the Commissioner of the Department of Veterans Services for distribution.

The State Council of Higher Education for Virginia shall be responsible for disbursing to the institutions the funds appropriated or otherwise made available by the Commonwealth of Virginia to support the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Fund and shall report to the Commissioner of the Department of Veterans Services the beneficiaries' completion rate.

The maximum amount to be expended for each such survivor or dependent pursuant to this subsection shall not exceed, when combined with any other form of scholarship, grant, or waiver, the actual costs related to the survivor's or dependent's educational expenses allowed under this subsection.

4. The Commissioner of the Department of Veterans Services shall designate a senior-level official who shall be responsible for developing and implementing the agency's strategy for disseminating information about the Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program to those spouses and dependents who may qualify. The Department of Veterans Services shall coordinate with the United States Department of Veterans Affairs to identify veterans and qualified survivors and dependents. The Commissioner of the Department of Veterans Services shall report annually to the Governor and the General Assembly as to the agency's policies and strategies relating to dissemination of information about the Program. The report shall also include the number of current beneficiaries, the educational institutions attended by beneficiaries, and the completion rate of the beneficiaries.