



**Department of
Veterans Affairs**

Office of Public Affairs
Media Relations

Washington, DC 20420
(202) 461-7600
www.va.gov

News Release

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Secretary Shinseki Orders Emergency Checks to Students Awaiting Education Benefits *Thousands of Checks to Alleviate Student Financial Burden*

WASHINGTON – Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki announced the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has authorized checks for up to \$3,000 to be given to students who have applied for educational benefits and who have not yet received their government payment. The checks will be distributed to eligible students at VA regional benefits offices across the country starting Oct. 2, 2009.

“Students should be focusing on their studies, not worrying about financial difficulties,” Secretary Shinseki said. “Education creates life-expanding opportunities for our Veterans.”

Starting Friday, Oct. 2, 2009, students can go to one of VA’s 57 regional benefit offices with a photo ID and a course schedule to request advance payment of their education benefits. Because not all these offices are located near students, VA expects to send representatives to schools with large Veteran-student bodies and work with Veteran Service Organizations to help students with transportation needs.

A list of those VA regional offices is available at www.vba.va.gov/VBA/benefits/offices.asp.

“I’m asking our people to get out their road maps and determine how we can reach the largest number of college students who can’t reach us,” VA’s Under Secretary for Benefits Patrick Dunne said. “Not everyone has a car. Not everyone can walk to a VA benefits office.”

Although VA does not know how many students will request emergency funds, it has approximately 25,000 claims pending that may result in payments to students.

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GI Bill 2/2/2/2

The funds VA will give to students now are advance payments of the earned benefits for education. This money will be deducted from future education payments.

VA officials said students should know that after this special payment, they can expect to receive education payments on the normal schedule -- the beginning of the month following the period for which they are reimbursed.

“This is an extraordinary action we’re taking,” said Shinseki. “But it’s necessary because we recognize the hardships some of our Veterans face.”

More than 27,500 students have already received benefits for housing or books under the new Post-9/11 GI Bill, or their schools received their tuition payments.

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