

Veterans & Dependents of Veterans:

*What you need to know about
GI Bill Benefits at SMCC*

Benefit Application Process • Frequently Asked Questions



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**SOUTHERN
MAINE
COMMUNITY
COLLEGE**

For more information visit www.smccME.edu/veterans
e-mail veterans@smccME.edu or call 207- 741-5926

How to Apply for VA GI Bill Benefits:

Please follow the Application Process below

1. Go to www.gibill.va.gov to apply.
 - For Veterans: VA Form 22-1990
 - For Dependents of Veterans: VA Form 22-5490
2. Save and print a copy of your application for VA Benefits and submit it to Office of Student Success or OR e-mail the application as a document to veterans@smccME.edu.
3. Apply for Financial Aid at www.fafsa.ed.gov. SMCC's FAFSA school code is 005525. Your VA payments can be delayed for 2 months at the start of each semester. You do not have to be full time to receive financial aid.
4. Dependents of Veterans can apply for the State of Maine Tuition Waiver. An application and instructions are available at www.maine.gov//dvem/bvs/educational_benefits.htm. Students need to print out the application and send required documentation to the state of Maine.

Students who are eligible for State of Maine Tuition Waiver MUST apply for Financial Aid each year and provide any additional information and documentation that is needed. If the student is eligible for a Pell Grant, State of Maine Grant, or any other grant – those grants will be applied to the Student Bill FIRST. Once that has been applied, should there be any remaining amount that is needed for Tuition and Mandatory Fees, the State of Maine Tuition Waiver will then be applied to the Student Bill.

SMCC VA Certifying Official:

- Certifies Veterans and Dependents for GI Bill programs
- Verifies courses are required for your degree program or certificate
- Advises Veterans and Dependents on GI Bill benefits and allowances
- Is not your Academic Advisor – students are assigned an Academic Advisor
- Is employed by SMCC, not the VA, and does not have information on when checks are issued or mailed.

Student Responsibilities:

1. Once you receive your VA certificate of eligibility, bring it to the Office of Student Success.
2. Only courses **REQUIRED** for your degree program or certificate will be paid for by the VA. Certification is made at the end of the Add/Drop Period every semester. Meet with your Academic Advisor every semester to choose courses prior to registration. Courses not required for your degree will not be paid for by the VA. This can affect your BAH eligibility/amount and the amount paid to SMCC.
3. You must inform the VA Certifying Official ASAP of any changes in your class schedule, degree program, address, phone number, and email address. Failure to do so could result in overpayments by the VA for post 9/11, which will be billed to the student. This may not be reflected for a considerable time (as much as one year).
4. Veterans in chapter 30, 1606 or 1607 must check in with the VA on the last day of each month to get paid. You can do that at: 1-877-823-2378 OR <http://www.gibill.va.gov/wave>.
5. For questions such as: “when will I receive my check?” or “how will changing my credit load change my monthly check?” call 1-888-442-4551 OR <http://www.va.gov>.



Frequently Asked Questions

Do I need to be accepted to SMCC to apply for Veterans Benefits?

NO. You should apply for VA GI Bill Benefits as soon as you can because it takes a few months to get processed.

What is full time at SMCC? 12 credits

Do I need to be enrolled in an approved program in order to receive Veterans Benefits? YES

How does the VA know that I am enrolled in classes and should be receiving VA Benefits?

The certification process informs the VA that you are attending classes. In order to be certified, you must be enrolled in an approved program and enrolled in courses that are required for that program. If you are new to SMCC, you must inform the CO that you have registered for courses. Certification takes place AFTER the Add Drop period is over for each semester. Consider participating in Priority Certification – this will certify you in the VA system earlier. However you can only participate in this by signing off on a form available from the CO indicating that you are NOT going to change your schedule in any way. Your account is put on hold so that you will not be able to make any changes, etc. More details on this are on the form that you fill out.

I am a Dependent of a 100% Disabled Veteran and I am eligible for the State of Maine Tuition Waiver. Does the State of Maine pay the college?

NO. The state of Maine provides the College with a certificate of your eligibility to receive the waiver. The waiver only covers tuition and mandatory fees. The Waiver does not cover the College Health Insurance, parking fee, room, board, or books. Students must pay for the College Health Insurance and parking fee or waive them on the SMCC website prior to the published deadlines.

Financial Aid grants such as the Pell Grant will be applied to the student bill first. If there are still charges for courses and mandatory fees, the

Waiver will cover the remaining amounts of those courses and fees. If the student is denied Financial Aid, the Waiver will be applied to the courses and mandatory fees.

I am a Post 9/11 (CH-33) GI Bill Veteran. What does the VA pay for?

The Post 9/11 GI Bill covers tuition and mandatory fees directly to the school, based on the percentage granted in your Certificate of Eligibility. The VA does not cover College Health Insurance and parking fees. The Insurance coverage and parking fee can be waived on the SMCC website, if eligible, by published deadlines. If not waiver eligible, the student can pay for them at the Student Billing Office, or on line, by payment deadline.

The VA provides monthly housing stipend (BAH), while school is in session. BAH is pro-rated, based on the student's eligibility percentage. Students must be enrolled in a minimum of 7 credits for the entire semester to be eligible for BAH, and 12 credits to receive 100% BAH.

The VA provides a book stipend of \$1,000 per academic year (usually no more than \$500 per semester). SMCC has set up a book allowance for all Post 9/11 Veterans due to the fact that we know you will not receive your book stipend before classes start. Should you decide to use this book allowance, you just need to pay the college back at the Student Billing Office once you receive funds from the VA. If you choose to not use the SMCC book allowance, the credit will come off of your student account.

I am a Voc Rehab – CH 31 Veteran. What should I do to receive payments?

Meet with your counselor at Togus who will issue both yourself and the College a 1905 form for certification. The VA pays the College for your tuition, fees, books, supplies and parking. The VA will NOT pay for the College Health Insurance. You are responsible for knowing what is on your bill and either paying for or waiving the College Health Insurance. The Certification process is different for this Chapter, therefore you will need to contact the VA Certifying Official once you have registered for classes and will not be making any changes of your courses. You may e-mail veterans@smccME.edu or call 741-5926 and let us know. Certification will happen after you have notified us of your final schedule.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I change my major?

YES. You need to change your major with both the College and the VA. “Change of Major” and “VA Change of Major” forms are available in the Office of Student Success. There are different forms to use for Veterans and Dependents of Veterans, so you need to make sure you pick up the correct VA form. VA forms need to be filled out and returned to the CO in the Office of Student Success.

I looked at my bill and there is no charge for the College Health Insurance, why?

If you are taking fewer than 9 credits, you will not be billed for this insurance. If you paid or waived it in the Fall, you do not have to pay or waive it in the Spring. If you are a new student in the Spring, the insurance will be on your bill at a reduced rate as long as you are registered for 9 credits or more. Occasionally, a paper bill will be printed and mailed before a charge is generated on your student account. If there is a change expected on your bill, you’ll want to check your portal bill daily.

I am a CH 30, 1606 or 1607 Veteran, how does the College get paid?

The VA pays the student directly. You are responsible for making your own payments to the College. The College will not wait for you to receive a check from the VA; therefore, it is suggested that you complete the “Deferred Payment Plan” or pay in full prior to the semester start.

Post 9/11 GI Bill Benefit Tiers

All Post 9/11 GI Bill benefit payments are based on the amount of creditable active-duty service each veteran has since September 11, 2001. If you are an active-duty, National Guard, Selected Reserve member, or a veteran who has served on active-duty for 90 or more days since Sept. 10, 2001, the following table applies:

Post-9/11 Service	Percentage of Maximum Amount Payable
At least 36 cumulative months (Includes Entry Level or Skills Training time)	100%
At least 30 continuous days on active duty and discharged due to service-connected disability (Includes Entry Level or Skills Training time)	100%
At least 30 cumulative months (Includes Entry Level or Skills Training time)	90%
At least 24 cumulative months (Cannot include Entry Level or Skills Training time)	80%
At least 18 cumulative months (Cannot include Entry Level or Skills Training time)	70%
At least 12 cumulative months (Cannot include Entry Level or Skills Training time)	60%
At least 6 cumulative months (Cannot include Entry Level or Skills Training time)	50%
90 aggregate days (Cannot include Entry Level or Skills Training time)	40%

Counseling and Referral Services for Veterans and Their Families

COMBAT CALL CENTER
1-866-644-5371; open 24/7

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LEWISTON VET CENTER
29 Westminster Street
Lewiston, ME 04240
207-783-0068

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PORTLAND VET CENTER
475 Stevens Avenue
Portland, ME 04103
207-780-3584
www.va.gov/rcs

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SANFORD VET CENTER
628 Main Street
Springvale, ME 04083
207-490-1513

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<http://archives.gov/veterans/>
www.maine.gov/dvem/bvs/



INSTRUCTIONS

REGISTER, DEGREE AUDIT, SCHEDULE & STUDENT ID#

To logon to the portal:

- Go to the SMCC website: www.smccME.edu
- Select the My SMCC box in the upper right hand corner
- Log in. Directions are provided in the right hand box

To register for courses:

- Select “Course Schedule & Registration” in the left side menu
- Select “Add/Drop Courses” in the middle window
- Scroll down to specify Course Search, Select “Search”
- Select the course by clicking a “✓” in the checkbox
- Upon completion, go “To find your schedule” section below to print

To find your advisor:

- Go to the SMCC website www.smccME.edu
- Select MY SMCC and log into your account.
- Select the “MY MAINE GUIDE” tab in the green bar at the top.
- Select the “My Degree” tab on the left column.
- Select “My Degree Audit” in the middle of the screen.
- Select “View All Details.” Your “Advisor” is found in the first box. Select “i” for office hours, location, email/telephone #.

To find your schedule:

- Select the “MY MAINE GUIDE” tab option at the top of the screen.
- Select the “My Degree” tab to the left of the screen.
- Scroll down to find “Student Schedule” in the middle of the screen.
- Select “View Details” inside the “Student Schedule” box.

To find your Degree Audit:

- Select the “MY MAINE GUIDE” tab at the top of the screen.
- Select the “MY Degree” tab to the left of the screen.
- Select the “My Degree Audit” tab in the middle of the screen.
- Select “View All Details”

To apply for Graduation:

- You must apply to graduate in order to get your degree, whether you participate in commencement ceremonies or not.
- Select the “MY MAINE GUIDE” tab at the top of the screen.
- Select the “My Degree” tab to the left of the screen.
- Scroll down to see the “Graduation & Commencement” link in the middle of the screen, click on this link.
- Select the “Graduation Application” link to the right of the screen in the “Graduation Forms and Information box.”



www.smccME.edu/veterans