

Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E) Program (Chapter 31)

Since the passage of the original GI Bill in 1944, the federal government has continued to adopt and implement laws to help veterans transition to the civilian workforce. Through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), these programs offer a range of education and career training benefits for service members and their families to pursue postsecondary pathways. These programs:



Create incentives for service member retention and recruitment



Reward and honor individuals and their families for their service to the country



Increase social mobility and provide smoother transitions into civilian life

The Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E) Program, often referred to as Chapter 31, offers a path to career stability and independence for veterans with service-related disabilities as well as for their eligible dependents.¹ The program's largest group of beneficiaries are disabled veterans in their prime working years: 22 to 50 years in age.

HOW IT WORKS

Chapter 31 assists eligible veterans and dependents in obtaining employment, including through postsecondary education opportunities ranging from undergraduate and graduate degrees to vocational, technical, and apprenticeship programs. To participate in this program, veterans are paired with a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC) to develop an individualized plan to meet their employment goals. For veterans pursuing postsecondary education or training as part of their plan, VR&E covers 100% of tuition, books, fees, necessary supplies, and a monthly stipend for up to 48 months.

Nearly \$2.8 billion in beneficiary payments were made through the VR&E program in fiscal year 2025, with funds roughly split between monthly stipends and educational expenses. The program provides monthly stipends for living expenses based on number of dependents. Additionally, it can be combined with Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance (DEA) benefits for those eligible.

VR&E BY THE NUMBERS²



154,989 veterans participating in VR&E in FY 2025



102,364 participants enrolled in undergraduate or graduate education



62% of participants have a serious employment handicap



\$68,674 average salary for VR&E program completers



68.6% program completers with careers in management, social science, business, and computers/mathematics

- ¹ This program, formerly known as Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment, dates to the Soldier's Act of 1918. In 2020, it was renamed Veteran Readiness & Employment to emphasize the career and employment focus of the program. The program is codified in Title 38 U.S.C., Chapter 31.
- ² U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Benefits Administration. (2025). *Annual Benefits Report Fiscal Year 2025: Veteran Readiness and Employment*. <https://www.benefits.va.gov/REPORTS/abr/docs/2025-veteran-readiness-employment.pdf>.