

Best Practices for Military and Veterans Programs

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COLUMBUS STATE

VETERANS SERVICES



Today's Topics

- ▶ Overview of Columbus State Military & Veterans Services
- ▶ Challenges Faced by Veteran Students and Families
- ▶ Strategies for Optimizing Service to Veterans
- ▶ Transition Support
- ▶ Financial Aid
- ▶ Important Partners on Campus



Agenda

- ▶ Webinar Purpose and Welcome
- ▶ Critical Program Design Decisions and Activities
 - ▶ Outreach
 - ▶ Case Management
 - ▶ Accessing VA Benefits
 - ▶ Accessing Mainstream Benefits
 - ▶ Other Supportive Services/Temporary Financial Assistance
- ▶ Closing Thoughts



Inter-Departmental Cooperation



- ▶ The importance of cooperation and coordination between departments.
- ▶ **Financial aid**, and student accounting; and an explanation of the batch posting model and financial reconciliation process of returning monies to the VA under the Post 9/11 GI Bill.
- ▶ **Disability Services** - due to their service and related injuries or illnesses, veterans tend to have more appointments. Disability Service Advocates can assist with difficulties that arise when appointments conflict with classes.
- ▶ **Academic Advising** - Initial interviews to assess education history, needs and desires, limitations and conflicts. Evaluation of military experience for acceptance for college credit.

Financial Aid

- ▶ We will go over the use of FAFSA loans and the Pell grant, explaining the application process for each. we will also discuss the residency requirements for military members and veterans.



The screenshot shows the FAFSA website homepage. At the top, it features the slogan "START HERE GO FURTHER FEDERAL STUDENT AID" and the "FAFSA Free Application for Federal Student Aid" logo. A navigation bar includes links for Home, About Us, Student Aid on the Web, PIN Site, Contact Us, and Browse Help, along with a search bar and language options for English and Español. The main banner area has a blue background with a photo of diverse students and the text "Get help paying for college" and "Submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)". A prominent orange "Start Here" button is present, along with a list of actions: "Start or continue your FAFSA", "Correct your FAFSA", and "Check the status of your FAFSA, and more...". Below the banner, there are sections for "Deadlines" (Information about your deadlines), "School Code Search" (Find your college's school code), "FAFSA Filing Options" (Learn about the other options for filing your FAFSA), "Announcements" (with two news items about recent changes and IRS data retrieval), and "Thinking About College?" (with two video thumbnails).



Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

- ▶ It is recommended that all students complete a *Free Application for federal Student Aid* (FAFSA) application to apply for financial aid.
- ▶ Coordinate with your Financial Aid Department to verify what their financial aid “**Priority Filing**” deadline is so that incoming students can file the FAFSA on time.
- ▶ By filing the FAFSA before the deadline, students can be considered for the maximum amount of Financial Aid for which they are eligible.
- ▶ **There are 4 Types of Financial Aid that can be awarded from the FAFSA:**
 - ▶ Scholarships (institutional)
 - ▶ Grants (federal, state and institutional)
 - ▶ Loans (issued in the name of the student - must be repaid by the student)
 - ▶ Federal Work Study (federal benefit)



Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) (continued)

- ▶ **Scholarships** - Some schools use the FAFSA application to award some scholarships
 - ▶ Do not have to be repaid by the recipient
 - ▶ Usually awarded based on specific criteria, i.e. *academic or athletic ability, membership or affiliations, etc.*
 - ▶ May be renewable (1, 2, 3, or 4 years)
 - ▶ Usually has criteria the student must meet to renew scholarship for each award period
 - ▶ Check with guidance counselor, religious affiliations, employer of parents and students, clubs, organizations, and *free* scholarship Web searches
- ▶ **Grants** - apply for federal and state grants with the FAFSA application (e.g., Pell Grant, SEOG and OCOG)
 - ▶ Do not have to be repaid by the recipient
 - ▶ Usually awarded based on financial *need*
 - ▶ May be renewable (1, 2, 3, or 4 years)
 - ▶ May have criteria the student must meet to renew grant for each award period

NOTE: *The State of Ohio Grant deadline for filing the FAFSA is generally October 1*

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Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) (Continued)



▶ Loans

- ▶ **Must be repaid!!!!**
- ▶ Loans taken out by the student must be repaid by the student!!!!
- ▶ Parents can apply for a parent loan that the parent repays. A separate application is needed for a parent loan.
- ▶ Federal Perkins Loan
- ▶ Federal Direct Stafford Loans (Subsidized and Unsubsidized)
- ▶ State Loans (e.g. Nursing Loans)
- ▶ Institutional and Private Loans (Alternative Loans - Bank or Credit Union)

Financial Aid - FAFSA

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- ▶ Veterans who do not receive assistance beyond tuition use FAFSA for fees and books.
- ▶ These are Title 38 USC Chapters 30 and 35 Benefits.

As A Reminder

- ▶ As stated earlier, it is **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED** that everyone complete a *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA) application to apply for financial aid.
- ▶ Each college or university sets their financial aid “**Priority Filing**” deadline.
- ▶ Timely filing must be stressed so that students can file the FAFSA on time. This helps them to be considered for the maximum financial aid award for which they are eligible.



First steps of FAFSA Processing

- ▶ The FAFSA application is processed by the Central Processing System (CPS). The CPS uses the application data to calculate the Expected Family Contribution ([EFC](#)). The CPS does a match against several databases: those of NSLDS, the Department of Defense, the Department of Justice, the Social Security Administration, and the Department of Veterans Affairs, as well as the Department of Homeland Security's database of noncitizens and the Selective Service System registration database.
- ▶ The CPS also checks the application for possible inconsistencies and mistakes.



FAFSA Processing

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- ▶ After the FAFSA processing is complete, the CPS produces output documents or records that show the information the student originally provided, the **EFC**, the results of the eligibility matches, and information about any inconsistencies identified through the CPS edits. If the CPS was unable to calculate an EFC, the output record will not show one
- ▶ Students receive a output document called a **Student Aid Report** (SAR) that gives them important information about their FAFSA application
- ▶ Students can also view and make corrections on their FAFSA application at www.fafsa.ed.gov

Student Receives SAR

The student receives their SAR in one of three ways

- ▶ Students who provide an **e-mail address**, whether on a paper FAFSA or an electronic application (FAA Access or FAFSA on the Web) or EDE, will receive an e-mail with a link to an online SAR that they can access by providing their SSN, date of birth, and first two letters of their last name.
- ▶ Students who do not provide an e-mail address and who apply with a paper application will receive a **paper SAR via postal mail**.
- ▶ Students who apply electronically and do not provide an e-mail address will receive a **SAR Acknowledgement via postal mail**, which has fewer and less detailed comments than the SAR and which cannot be used for corrections as the SAR can.

NOTE: If a student or parent signature is missing, students will receive a paper SAR via postal mail, which they must sign and return to the CPS for processing to continue. The address for mailing the signature to will be on the SAR.

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FAFSA Information Forwarded To Schools Identified by Student on FAFSA

After CPS processes the FAFSA the results are sent to the schools identified by the student on the FAFSA.

- ▶ The Expected Family Contribution (EFC) is a measure of your family's financial strength and is calculated according to a formula established by law. Your family's taxed and untaxed income, assets, and benefits (such as unemployment or Social Security) are all considered in the formula. Also considered are your family size and the number of family members who will attend college or career school during the year.
- ▶ The information you report on your Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is used to calculate your EFC. Schools use the EFC to determine your federal student aid eligibility and financial aid award(s).

Note: Your EFC is not the amount of money your family will have to pay for college nor is it the amount of federal student aid you will receive. It is a number used by your school to calculate the amount of federal student aid you are eligible to receive.

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Awarding Process Begins

Pell grant awards are based off of your EFC

The Pell grant award range for 2013-2014 was:

- ▶ Maximum Pell Grant award is \$5,645 (if EFC = 0)
- ▶ Minimum Pell Grant award is \$605 (if EFC = 5001)

NOTE: EFC range subject to change based on Congressional action.

***NEW* Aggregate Lifetime Limit:** Students may receive up to 12 full-time semesters of the Federal Pell Grant. This limit is for new and returning students!



Residency Information Affects Veteran Student's In-State Tuition

- ▶ If a student is designated as an out-of-state resident, he or she may qualify for in-state residency by meeting certain qualifications. The process to determine in-state residency for tuition purposes is very detailed and lengthy. Students will need to complete the [Residency Application](#) and submit the application, along with copies of the supporting documents, in the Residency Drop Box located in the lobby on the second floor of Madison Hall, near the Registration Windows.
- ▶ Application materials and appropriate supporting documentation must be submitted to Columbus State Community College prior to the start of the term of enrollment in order to be reviewed for the desired semester. Please note that students are expected to make full payment, (including non-resident fees), by the appropriate due date. Payment deadlines cannot be waived or extended while a student's residency is being reviewed. If a student fails to apply for residency reclassification prior to the start of the term of enrollment, their application will be given consideration for the next term of enrollment.



Veterans Need to Fill Out Residency Application Packet With:



▶ Section C4: VETERANS

- ▶ 1 Copy of Ohio Driver's License or State of Ohio ID card
- ▶ 1 Military DD-214 member 4 to prove *Honorable Discharge* or *Medical Separation* with a minimum of *1-Year of Active Service*
- ▶ 1 Proof of Ohio Domicile as of the first day of a term of Enrollment: Signed copies of Rental agreement, lease, and/or HUD settlement statement of property owned. If Student is NOT listed, a notarized statement from the person whom he/she is residing with is **ALSO REQUIRED**.
- ▶ 1 Additional documentation for dependents:
 - ▶ a. **SPOUSE**: Marriage Certificate as proof of marriage.
 - ▶ b. **DEPENDENT CHILD**: Veteran's Federal tax return
- ▶ Transcript* for the previous year

Ohio Residency Verification Application Packet



- ▶ **Fill out and turn in at Columbus State:**
 - ▶ Columbus Campus, Madison Hall
 - ▶ E-mail: residency@csc.edu
 - ▶ Voice Mail: 614-287-5533



Batch Posting Model and Financial Reconciliation Process (Post 9/11; Ch33 Beneficiaries)

- ▶ 1. Identification of Post 9/11 students and award percentages (DVA COE or eBenefits “Education Enrollment Status” screen)
- ▶ 2. Annotation in Colleague MINF and creation of VA Once BIO page
- ▶ 3. Immediate VA certification of credits/terms, but not tuition/fee charges (\$0.00 T/F initial certification) to provide earliest opportunity for VA to disburse book stipend and set up housing allowance.
- ▶ Possible Veteran/GI Bill beneficiary identification of student via Enrollment process and by **Admissions Department** application
- ▶ 4. Batch posting and AIDE award of future Post 9/11 funding with assistance by **Financial Aid Department**; completed approx. one week before drop deadline
- ▶ Colleague awards (CH33T, V3390, V3380, etc.) designed to “fund” only tuition/fee charges as reflected by registration changes up to the end of the 100% refund period.



Batch Posting Model and Financial Reconciliation Process (Post 9/11; Ch33 Beneficiaries) (Continued)

- ▶ 5. Veterans Services continue VA Once certification process until all student/beneficiary information has been transmitted to VA.
- ▶ Certification includes academic review (DARS) to ensure only require, pre-requisite & developmental course information used in VA benefits calculations.
- ▶ 6. Current reporting hampered by outdated and erroneous Colleague reports. XVMR (Veteran Registration Activity Report) does not contain “W” for web-classes, T/F charges & totals or chapter designations; XVDR/XVAD (drop/add) report does not reflect “NX” or “NA” changes, nor T/F information; XVIN (incomplete & failed courses) does not include LDA (last date of attendance) and chapter.
- ▶ 7. \$0.00 T/F (Zero Tuition/Fee) reporting also requires all Post 9/11, Chapter 33 students be reported/amended certified a second time to include tuition/fees and/or adjustments from previous certification. This is required for about 60% of all students certified, and has increased office workload proportionately.



Batch Posting Model and Financial Reconciliation Process (Post 9/11; Ch33 Beneficiaries) (Continued)

- ▶ 8. Students are required to report changes to initial registration schedule to VA Office (90+% do not) to provide more immediate and accurate adjustments of VA benefits by corrected certifications.
- ▶ All increases, decreases, terminations, changes of resident to on-line, term dates, net charges of T/F must be reported to VA (within 30 days of action item occurring). More than 25% of all beneficiaries have changes and adjusted certifications.
- ▶ 9. Any drops after the 100% refund period generates 'ghost charges' (reversal of credit given reflected as a course charge of tuition) in Colleague. This requires the first stage of reconciliation; manually crediting the students account for the 'ghost charges' since VA will pay the initial T/F's as reported to them (which satisfies the VA requirement to pay any refunds to the student to help satisfy the VA indebtedness generated by the dropped class) for all continuing/enrolled students.



Batch Posting Model and Financial Reconciliation Process (Post 9/11; Ch33 Beneficiaries) (Continued)

- ▶ 10. Second phase reconciliation occurs by **Student Accounting Department** following receipt and documenting actual VA funds deposited for the individual student. Initial T/F funds received and VA return of funds letters should equate to funds credited in the student's account. Any adjustments occurring (without AIDE VC33R code corrections for the term) due to dropped classes must be reported to VA Office to ensure proper re-certification. Without proper account reconciliation and review students will be erroneously double charged for classes dropped and receive excessive VA benefits (creating liability for both CSCC and the student).
- ▶ 11. Not formally completed as part of the certification term-cycle is a final review/audit of each beneficiaries account. This would ensure all adjustment reported, all amendments completed (and credited funds received) and the ability to determine whether or not the 30 day reporting requirement is being met.

Disability Services

- ▶ Veterans need to register with disability services for a variety of reasons.
 - ▶ Veterans who have any type of diagnosed condition that could potentially affect their ability to attend class or to learn need to be assessed by Disability Services. This is necessary to identify potential side effects of Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), pain medications or Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome.
 - ▶ Veterans who have not received a diagnosis should still register with Disability Services. It is common for veterans to develop service related illnesses after they are discharged. As injuries and illnesses occur, they require medical appointments. Those appointments are often scheduled months in advance and require the student to miss class to keep the appointment and potentially get the illness or condition treated.
 - ▶ Advocacy by Disability Services is a valuable asset for student veterans.
 - ▶ Disability Services has the ‘Corporate Knowledge’ of how to advocate for accommodations.



Disability Services

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▶ Intake Interviews

- ▶ The justification for having Disability Services involved with the enrollment process for student veterans is to give the veteran an opportunity to self-identify any issues or challenges they may have with the educational environment.
- ▶ Most veterans have attended formal schools during their time in the military. They know if they learn better through distance learning (online or blended classes) or through traditional classroom environments (lecture and interaction).
- ▶ Many veterans do not realize that they can explain this issue and receive accommodations from the school.
- ▶ Intake interviews would also give the veteran and the school an opportunity to understand the educational environment and the challenges it may present with the individual veteran. Are there underlying conditions or situations that may effect attendance, maybe need an active advocate that would work with instructors to help them understand the individual accommodations.

Outreach

- ▶ Who is your intended target:
 - ▶ Veterans who know they have benefits and have used them before.
 - ▶ Veterans who know they have benefits but need assistance applying for and obtaining them.
 - ▶ Veterans who think they have benefits and need assistance with researching available benefits and assistance with applying for those benefits.
 - ▶ Veterans who are not sure if they have benefits.
 - ▶ Veterans who do not think they have benefits.
 - ▶ Veterans who have been told by someone elsewhere that they have no benefits.
 - ▶ Veterans who have special needs, who need a record correction or other corrective action to be taken to help them secure their benefits.
 - ▶ Families and dependents of Veterans.



Outreach

(Continued)

- ▶ Where are you meeting your targeted audience?
 - ▶ Veterans events
 - ▶ Community Events
 - ▶ Family Day Events at local Guard/Reserve Units
 - ▶ Walk-in traffic at your offices
 - ▶ Phone traffic to your offices
 - ▶ Referrals by other veterans or dependents
 - ▶ Referrals by Veteran's Benefits Administration / Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Counselors
 - ▶ Referral by other agencies, i.e. Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS), County VSC, COWIC
 - ▶ Referrals by other schools who identify a need they cannot meet (2yr vs 4yr)



Outreach

(Continued)



▶ Focus

- ▶ Focus on what you have to offer and how you can help veterans to succeed.
 - ▶ Are you a two year school who can offer more individualized attention?
 - ▶ Can you help the veteran to re-integrate to civilian life and help them become a student focused on the classroom and the education environment?
 - ▶ Can you help that veteran student with the preliminary classes that will be needed to transfer to a four year school to complete their bachelors degree and possibly to go on after their graduate degrees if that is their ultimate goal.
 - ▶ Are you a four year school who can help veterans to achieve their life goal of obtaining a higher level education.
 - ▶ Can you help veterans to study in their chosen major? If not, are you willing to help that veteran with general education courses that will help prepare that veteran to pursue their education goals at a school that does offer their chosen major?

Outreach

(Continued)



- ▶ REMEMBER - STUDENT VETERANS ARE NON-TRADITIONAL STUDENTS.
 - ▶ Many Student Veterans have established families that they support. Student Veterans work part-time and/or full-time jobs in addition to attending school.
- ▶ Are you offering programs that are tailored to veterans?
 - ▶ Do you evaluate your veterans to see what their needs are?
 - ▶ Are Certificates or Technical Degrees offered for those veterans who are more interested in formal training in a trade.
 - ▶ Are your classes for those programs structured in such a way that students can work in the trade during the standard work day for that trade and attend classes/training around that work schedule?
 - ▶ Are your degree programs set up to accommodate veteran students?
 - ▶ Are classes offered in such a way that student veterans who are working have options to schedule school around work

Outreach

(Continued)



- ▶ Disability Services Intake Interview / Academic Counseling Process
 - ▶ During the initial processing of placement testing, do you offer or utilize initial intake interviews with Disability Services or Academic Counseling that allow the veteran to self-identify if they have a known educational limitation?
 - ▶ *“I can’t take online classes, I need lectures and classroom interaction to retain what I am taught.”*
 - ▶ These Veterans should only be scheduled for classroom instruction and the coursework for their major should be structured accordingly.
 - ▶ *“I cannot take classes on campus. I live too far away.”* or *“I cannot take classes on campus. I have difficulties that keep me from sitting still for long lectures.”* or *“I have mobility issues that limit my ability to get to some classrooms on this campus.”*
 - ▶ These Veterans should have the option to schedule a minimum number to classes on campus or in a classroom, as dictated by the education benefits they are utilizing. These Veterans should have the opportunity to take the bulk of their classes as either blended or online classes.

Outreach

(Continued)

- ▶ Are you tailoring your outreach to the programs being offered?

Program	Demographic	Additional Information
Chapter 30 Montgomery G.I. Bill (MGIB)	Veterans who enlisted prior to _____	Older veterans and retired Active Duty.
Chapter 31 Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment (Voc Rehab)	Veterans with 10% or Greater Service Connected Disability	All age ranges of veterans. Benefit must be used within 10 years of award of service connection.
Chapter 33 (Post 9/11 GI Bill)	Veterans who were on Active Duty during OIF/OEF/New Dawn	Younger veterans and those who convert MGIB or VEAP to Post 9/11.



Outreach

(Continued)

- ▶ Are you tailoring your outreach to the programs being offered?

Program	Demographic	Resource Information
Chapter 35 Dependent Education Assistance (DEA)	Dependents of 100% SC Disabled Veterans or Deceased Veterans	Spouses and children of veterans. Best contacted at family events.
Chapter 1606 Reserve G.I. Bill (RGIB)	Currently Drilling National Guard or Reserve Members. Tend to be younger and in their first enlistment.	Referred by their units.
Chapter 1607 Reserve Education Assistance Program (REAP)		

