



October 23, 2017

WDVA Bulletin No. 1058

TO: County/Tribal Veterans Service Offices

SUBJECT: Wisconsin GI Bill Expanded Eligibility for Dependents/Spouses of Veterans

The purpose of this bulletin is to clarify the changes imposed by 2017 Wisconsin Act 59 on Wisconsin Statutes sections 36.27 (3n) and 38.24 (7), regarding expanded eligibility for children, spouses, and unremarried surviving spouses of certain Veterans for the Wisconsin GI Bill Tuition Remission Program.

Prior to these changes, a child, spouse, or unremarried surviving spouse of a Veteran who the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs awarded a combined service-connected disability rating of at least 30% under 38 USC 1114 or 1134 was ineligible for the Wisconsin GI Bill if the Veteran was *not* a resident of Wisconsin at the time of entry into active service. The changes enacted by 2017 Wisconsin Act 59 address this issue.

As a result of these changes, a child, spouse, or unremarried surviving spouse of a Veteran who the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs has awarded a combined service-connected disability rating of at least 30% is now eligible to request certification for the Wisconsin GI Bill, even if the Veteran was not a resident of Wisconsin at the time of entry into active service, as long as the Veteran resided in Wisconsin for at least *five* consecutive years immediately preceding the beginning of the semester or session for which the child or spouse enrolls at an institution. Under the new law, the child, spouse, or unremarried surviving spouse requesting certification must also have resided in Wisconsin for at least *five* consecutive years immediately preceding enrollment at an institution.

In order for a child, spouse, or unremarried surviving spouse of a Veteran to qualify for the Wisconsin GI Bill under the expanded eligibility requirements, *all* of the following conditions must be met:

- The Veteran must have served on active duty under honorable conditions;
- The Veteran must have been awarded a combined service-connected disability rating of at least 30% by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs;
- The Veteran must have resided in Wisconsin for at least five consecutive years immediately preceding the start of the semester or session;
- The student (child, spouse, or unremarried surviving spouse of the Veteran) requesting certification must have resided in Wisconsin for at least five consecutive years immediately preceding enrollment;
- Insert age limitations for child of veteran.

2017 Wisconsin Act 59 also addresses eligibility for a child or unremarried surviving spouse of a Veteran who was *not* a resident of Wisconsin at the time of entry into active service but who, while a resident of Wisconsin, died on active duty, died as the result of a service-connected disability, or died in the line of duty while on

active or inactive duty for training purposes. As part of the changes, a child or unremarried surviving spouse of a deceased Veteran to whom these conditions apply, may be eligible for the Wisconsin GI Bill if the Veteran resided in Wisconsin for at least five consecutive years after turning 18 **and** if the child or unremarried surviving spouse has resided in Wisconsin for at least five consecutive years immediately preceding enrollment.

The documentation that may be accepted as proof that a Veteran has resided in Wisconsin for at least five consecutive years immediately preceding the start of the semester or session will remain the same and includes the following:

- Wisconsin income tax filings;
- State/County/Municipal voting records;
- Wisconsin resident hunting/fishing license;
- Legible copy of a valid Wisconsin driver's license (if issued in 2007 or after);
- WDVA 1805 (Veterans Residency Affidavit) signed before a Notary Public.

The WDVA 2030 (Request for Certification for Wisconsin GI Bill) has been updated and may be accessed in Word or .pdf form on WDVA's Toolkit webpage (<http://dva.state.wi.us/Pages/newsMedia/WDVAToolKit.aspx>).

The eligibility determination for the Wisconsin G.I. Bill is a two-part process. The WDVA determines if the veteran meets the definition of an eligible veteran, and the school determines if the student meets the requirements of an eligible student. Students should be advised to contact the School Certifying Official at their educational institution for details regarding implementation of these changes for their particular session of enrollment at that institution.

If you have any questions, please contact Brian Jones by phone at (608) 267-1782 or by email at Brian.Jones@dva.wisconsin.gov.