

New: Veterans—Post 9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008 or the Montgomery GI Bill, which is right for me?

The Post 9/11 GI Bill is a new education benefit program for individuals who served on active duty on or after September 11, 2001. The benefit becomes active August 1, 2009. There seems to be confusion as to how this program will be implemented and several Veterans are waiting around for August 1 to arrive.

If you are eligible for both the Montgomery GI Bill and the Post-9/11 Bill, the answer to which program is better depends on several factors including the type of education or training you plan to take.

The Post-9/11 GI Bill is designed to assist the Veteran in attaining an academic degree and is fairly generous. However, the Post-9/11 GI Bill can only be used for programs taken at a college or university; it allows but one certification course and/or certification exam.

Alternatively, the types of training that can be taken under the current Montgomery GI Bill include college, certificate programs, on-the-job training, apprenticeship training, flight training, and non-college degree courses. Much more versatile, however, oftentimes not as generous as the Post-9/11 GI Bill academic education program.

Does this mean that I need to forgo my Montgomery GI Bill benefits if I plan to go to college? Does this mean that I can't use any Veterans education benefits for necessary, in some cases, mandatory, certification training for my job? The answer is no.

Get the best of both programs by getting your certification training out of the way first under the Montgomery GI Bill and then use the Post-9/11 GI Bill for college.

If you plan to work on a government network as either a federal employee or government contractor, you will be affected by the Federal 8570 Information Assurance mandate which requires designated certifications. A recommended strategy would be to get your CompTIA A+, Network+, Security+ and Microsoft Systems certifications out of the way before you elect to receive benefits under the Post-9/11 Bill. The election is one way and you can't return to the Montgomery GI Bill. Make sure you have your certs in place before electing to receive Post-9/11 benefits.

Give a call and set up a time to stop by the training center to lay out a certification track that meshes with your academic plans.

See http://www.gibill.va.gov/GI_Bill_Info/benefits.htm#CH33 for more complete information on the Post-9/11 GI Bill.