



**VETERANS**  
EDUCATION SUCCESS

**INSIDE**

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Which GI Bill Educational Programs  
Have Beneficiaries Used Since 2009?

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What are the Cost and Enrollment  
Trends for GI Bill Programs?

# GI BILL PAYMENTS AND ENROLLMENT

## FISCAL YEARS 2009 TO 2018

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# FACT SHEET

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GI Bill Payments and Enrollment, Fiscal Years 2009 to 2018

Findings

- *Payments.* From Fiscal Years 2009 through 2018, GI Bill benefit payments from the seven programs available to veterans and eligible family members totaled \$105 billion, enabling more than 2 million new beneficiaries to pursue a postsecondary education or training.
- *Enrollment.* The number of beneficiaries using any GI Bill grew significantly with the introduction of the Post-9/11 benefit. In FY 2009, a total of 564,487 individuals were receiving benefits (see Figure 1). By Fiscal Year 2014, the total number of beneficiaries had nearly doubled, growing to 1,088,411. Since then, enrollment has declined. Fiscal Year 2018 enrollment was about 20% lower than peak enrollment. Figures 3 and 4 show payments and enrollment, respectively, for each GI Bill program over the 10-year period.
- *Post-9/11 GI Bill.* \$87 billion (83%) of the overall \$105 billion in payments from Fiscal Years 2009 to 2018 were for beneficiaries who were using the Post-9/11 GI Bill, which began paying benefits in August 2009. As shown in Figure 2, more than half of payments for the Post-9/11 GI Bill were for non-tuition related benefits, primarily the living and book stipends (55% over the 9 years for which we have data).

Current GI Bill Programs

Since Fiscal Year 2009, seven GI Bill programs enrolled and paid benefits to eligible beneficiaries.

GI Bill Programs Enrolling Beneficiaries, Fiscal Years 2009-2018

GI Bill	Enacted
VRAP (Veterans Retraining Assistance Program)	2011
Post-9/11	2008
REAP (Reserves Educational Assistance Program)	2005
Montgomery—Active Duty	1985
Montgomery—Selective Reserve	1985
VEAP (Post-Vietnam Era Veterans Educational Assistance Act)	1976
DEA (Survivors and Dependents Educational Assistance Program)	1956

Source: [Congressional Research Service \(CRS\)](#).

Note: [DEA](#) provides education benefits to the dependents of totally disabled veterans and to the survivors of servicemembers who died in the line of duty after September 10, 2001. The latter are also eligible to receive the Post-9/11 GI Bill. New enrollment in REAP ended in 2015 but beneficiaries already enrolled were allowed to finish their programs. VRAP was limited to 99,000 participants who could enroll in training programs designated as “high demand” by the Labor Department from July 2012 through March 1, 2014.

Eligibility requirements and benefit levels for each GI Bill program are described on p. 26 of this [CRS report](#).

Methodology

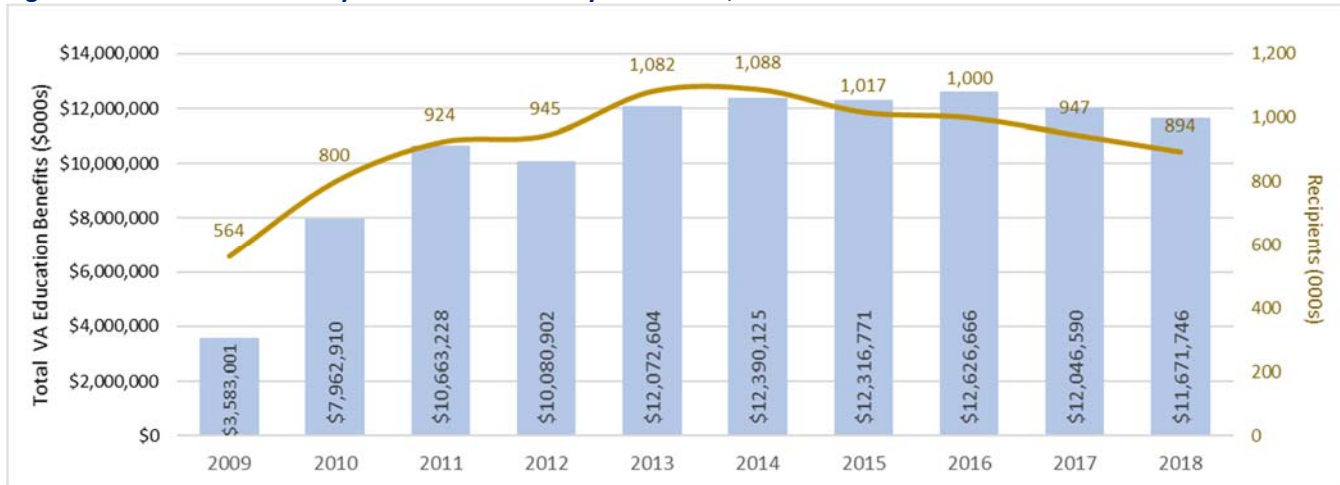
We extracted GI Bill beneficiary payment and enrollment data from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) annual benefits reports for Fiscal Years 2009 through 2018. The Post-9/11 GI Bill is the only educational benefit program that pays tuition and fees directly to the school and separate living and book stipends to the beneficiary. All other GI Bill benefit programs provide a lump sum payment to the beneficiary, who is responsible for allocating the funds between tuition and fees, books, and living expenses

Overall enrollment data by fiscal year may be overstated because, if beneficiaries used two different benefit programs during the year, they are counted twice. On the other hand, data on the number of new beneficiaries who enrolled in each Fiscal Year are understated because the Annual Benefits reports provide no data in Fiscal Years 2011 and 2012 for new Post-9/11 beneficiaries, the GI Bill program with the largest enrollment.

Data in the annual reports for the VEAP program contain a caveat—payment amounts include Sec. 901 programs but beneficiaries are not included. According to CRS, “Section 901 of the Department of Defense Authorization Act, 1981 (P.L. 96-342) authorized the Department of Defense to test the feasibility and effectiveness to recruitment and retention of a noncontributory educational assistance program, the Educational Assistance Test Program. The program was only eligible to individuals who enlisted or reenlisted for service on active duty after September 30, 1980, and before October 1, 1981. Certain individuals were permitted to transfer their entitlement to their spouses or children. The program is funded by DOD, but paid through the VA.”

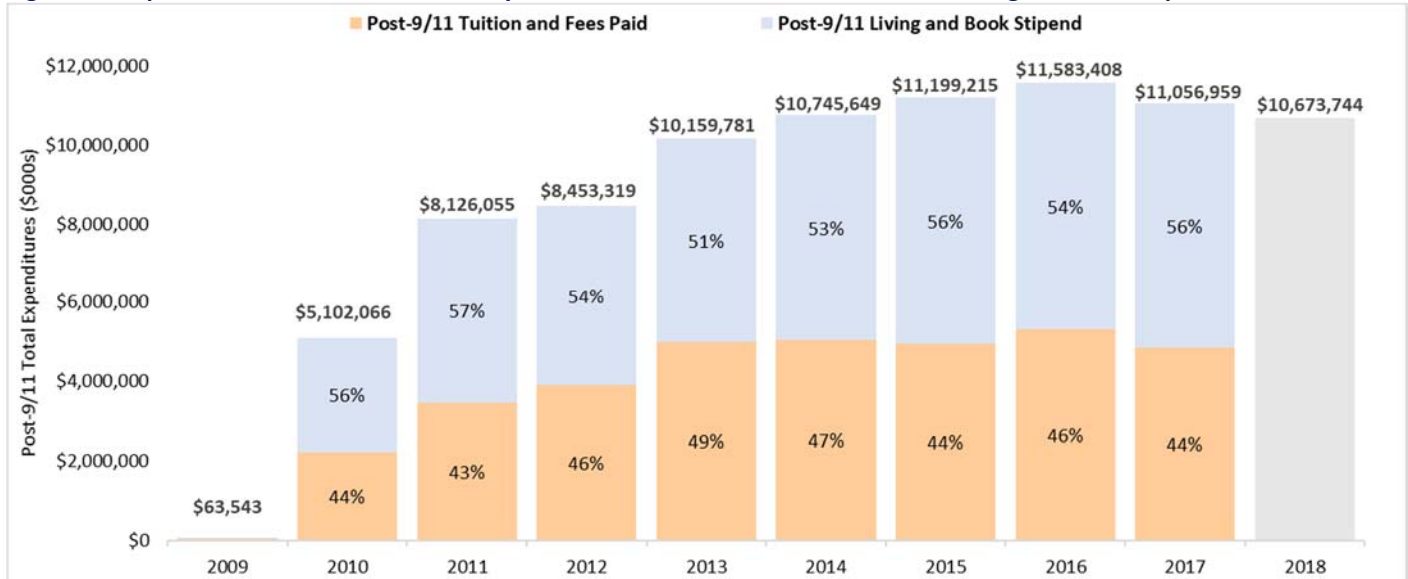
When creating an excel file with the data from the 10 individual Annual Benefits Reports, we found that there was a mismatch between our and VA’s calculations of total payments for 8 of the 10 fiscal years. Our rounding of annual payments for each GI Bill program does not account for these discrepancies, which were small given the extent of benefit payments. The largest discrepancy of about \$9 million was in Fiscal Year 2014. We excluded Fiscal Year 2018 payments (\$147,000) and enrollment (67) for VEAP “disenrollment,” which provides veterans with a refund of contributions they paid to receive the benefit.

**Figure 1: All GI Bill Benefits Payments and Beneficiary Enrollment, Fiscal Years 2009-2018**



Source: VA Annual Benefits Reports, Fiscal Years 2009-2018.

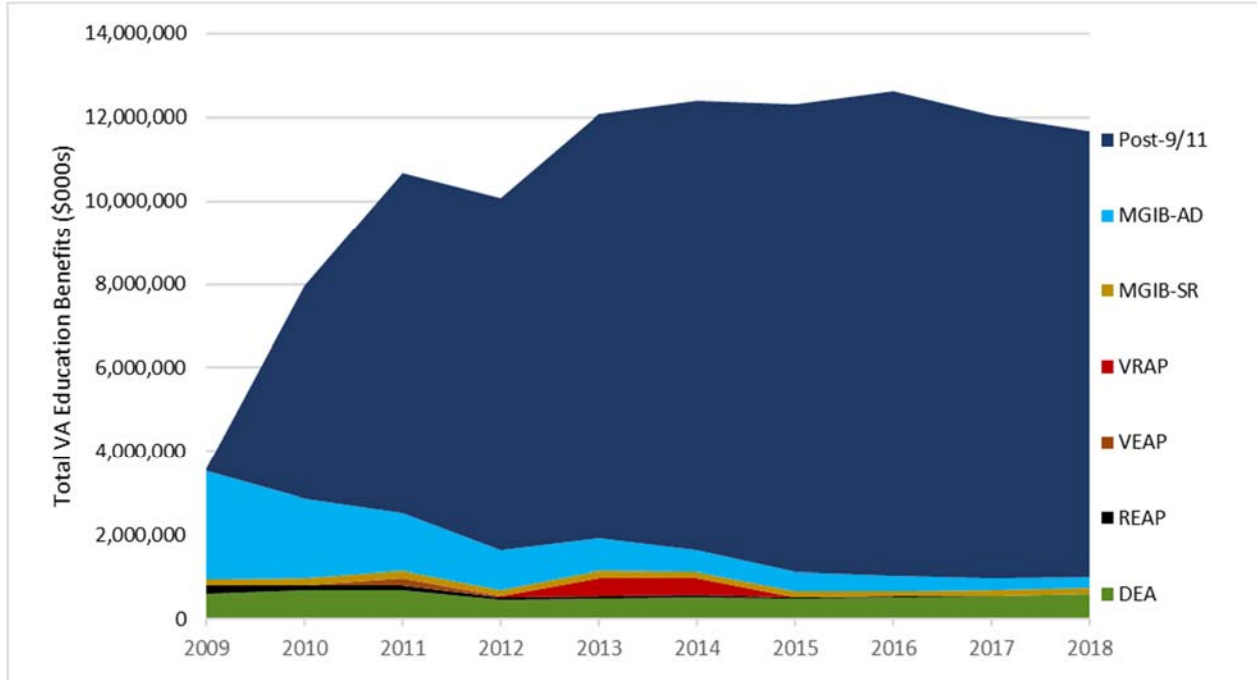
**Figure 2: Proportion of Post-9/11 Benefits Payments Allocated to Tuition and Fees vs. Living and Book Stipends**



Source: VA Annual Benefits Reports, Fiscal Years 2009-2018 and Post-9-/11 tuition and fee payments reported in 2018 as part of VA's GI Bill Transparency project.

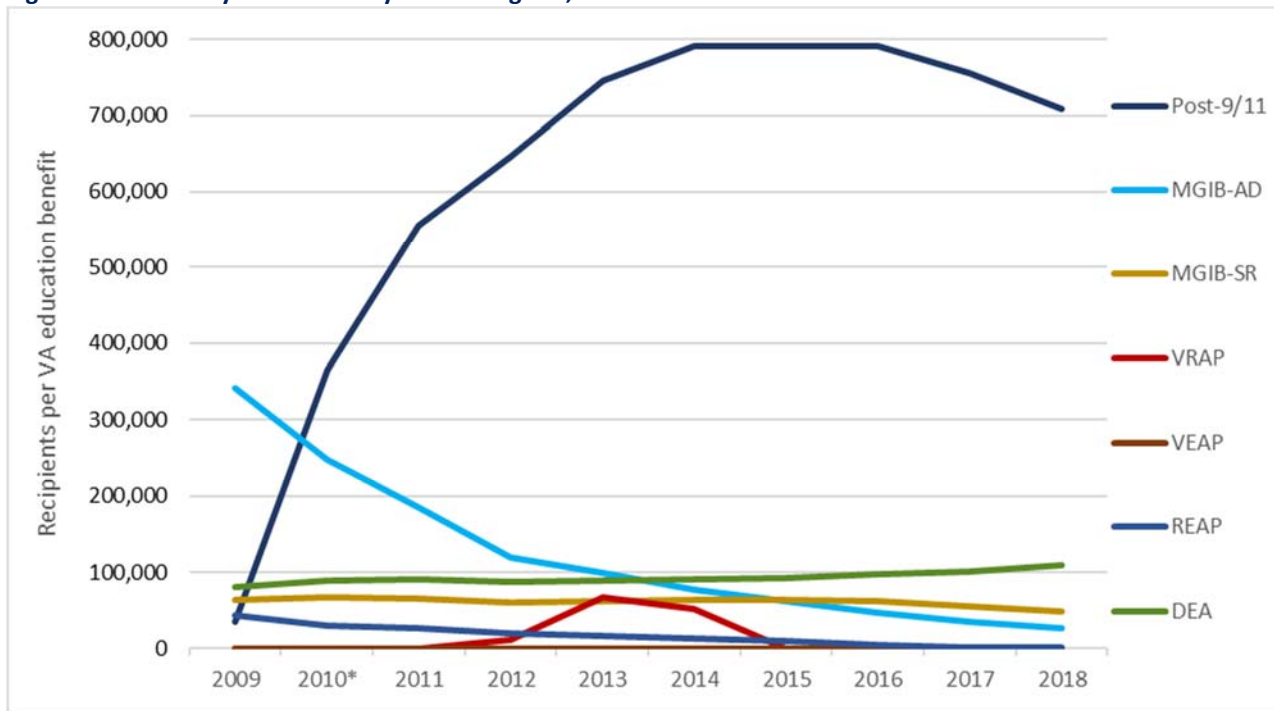
Note: We determined the proportion of benefits allocated to tuition and fees vs. stipends by subtracting VA Transparency project data on Post-9/11 tuition and fee payments from total benefits paid. The Transparency project data did not include data for Fiscal Year 2018. For Fiscal Year 2009, expenditures on tuition and fees were 43% compared to 57% for living and book stipends.

**Figure 3: Benefit Payments by GI Bill Program, Fiscal Years 2009-2018**



Source: VA Annual Benefits Reports, Fiscal Years 2009-2018.

**Figure 4: Beneficiary Enrollment by GI Bill Program, Fiscal Years 2009-2018**



Source: VA Annual Benefits Reports, Fiscal Years 2009-2018.