

What Veterans Should Know About Returning to School

Returning to school is an excellent way for veterans to prepare for civilian life, but it has its challenges. If you're thinking about attending college after time in the military, take a look at these tips.

Consider Professional Development

One of the best ways to find a successful career is to build on skills you already have. For instance, many vets have experience with [information technology](#), giving them a solid foundation for further IT training. Another great example is medical coding. If you're already familiar with the field, [find the right medical coding online course for you](#) to quickly obtain certification and work for insurance companies or doctors' offices.

Pursue an Online Degree

If you're working while attending school, [going online may be the best option](#) due to the many benefits:

- No commuting
- No spending on transportation
- Flexible schedules
- Accessible anywhere

Utilize Your Veteran Affairs Educational Benefits

As a veteran, you have access to benefits under the GI Bill. One of these is educational benefits, which cover some higher education costs. The process for applying for these benefits varies by institution, though it usually involves forms of some kind. You may also need to test for placement in a particular course.

Research Grants and Scholarships

Since Veteran Affairs educational benefits probably won't cover all your college expenses, you'll have to look elsewhere. Fortunately, there are [many resources for veterans](#), including grants and scholarships.

[Grants are free funds](#) from a school, private organization, or government agency. You don't have to pay grants back, and most allow you to use the funds for tuition, housing, textbooks, and other expenses. You can earn grants by falling into a particular demographic, such as veterans, or demonstrating economic need.

Scholarships are usually merit-based; they may be awarded for excellent grades, athletic prowess, or community service, to name a few examples. You may need to keep a certain grade point average to continue to qualify.

The first step to finding this financial aid is submitting the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, commonly referred to as FAFSA. This form asks questions about your income, information colleges, and other institutions can access to evaluate your economic need. This one act can net you scholarships, grants, and loans, though you may be eligible for additional opportunities. You'll need to submit this data each year.

You can also find scholarships and grants through your college's Financial Aid Office. Additionally, many non-profit organizations offer educational funding; you may have to submit a form or essay to qualify.

Seek Support

Going back to school can be overwhelming, but there are resources to help you succeed. For example, if you're struggling in a class, you can [find tutoring services](#). Many colleges can connect you with a tutor, or you can hire someone from the private sector.

Most campuses also [offer mental health services](#). Many veterans struggle with the following conditions:

- Depression
- Post-traumatic stress disorder
- Anxiety

You can reach out to your school for help or utilize services through the VA.

You also have the right to [ask for accommodations](#). If you have triggers or a disability, you can ask teachers and the administration to work with you.

Finally, look for a supportive community. The [Cameron American Legion](#) and other veteran-focused groups provide a space where you can connect with people who share your experiences.

Getting a degree can open doors for veterans. With the proper support, you can complete a professional development course or earn a diploma.



Image via [Pexels](#)