STUDENT VETERANS HANDBOOK
ROCK VALLEY COLLEGE VETERANS SERVICES OFFICE

Mission Statement
RVC Veterans Services Office is committed towards serving the educational and training needs of prospective and/or enrolled service members, veterans, their dependents, or survivors.

Students are assisted with the following resources:
• Providing support in regards to military educational benefits
• Resource referral services for other veterans resources
• Credit for military experience
• Priority registration
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1. **ENROLLMENT FORM**
   New and transfer students need to fill out the Rock Valley College application. Returning/continuing students need to ensure information is up to date.

2. **ACADEMIC ADVISING**
   All students using military educational benefits are required to meet with an Academic Advisor to obtain a veterans mapping. This is a mandatory one-on-one academic advising appointment to map out your educational program. A copy of this signed mapping must be turned into the school certifying official prior to certifying you for benefits.
   Call (815) 921-4100 to make a “veterans mapping appointment” with an advisor.
   - **Academic Transcripts** - You are required to turn in all transcripts from prior schools. No exceptions.
   - **Military Transcripts** -
     - Army, Navy, Marines, Coast Guard - [https://jst.doded.mil](https://jst.doded.mil)
     - Transcripts will be sent to the RVC Records Office electronically
     - Air Force - go to: AirUniversity.af.mil/Barnes/CCAF
     - Bring the unopened, official copy of your transcripts to the RVC Records Office
   - **Per the new Credit for Military Experience Act** - (HB3701) Rock Valley College will use the military guide provided by the American Council of Education (ACE) to conduct and facilitate academic review of military courses and occupations.

3. **APPLY FOR BENEFITS**
   - **Federal VA Education Benefits (Chapters 30, 31, 33, 35, 1606):** all active duty military, veterans, spouse, and/or dependents eligible to receive federal VA benefits must apply online at - VA.gov. Provide the School Certifying Official with a copy of your Certificate of Eligibility. Review page 6 - for a brief description of types of benefits.
     - Transfer students who have used their benefits at other institutions must submit a Change of Program/Place of Training Form. Go online to: VA.gov.
   - **Tuition Assistance (TA)** - This is a Department of Defense (DoD) program. TA rules will vary between military branches. Students using TA benefits must submit their approved, semester-specific TA form to the Program Manager located on the second floor of the Student Center prior to the start of the semester. Refer to page 7 for a brief description of this benefit and how to apply.
   - **State Educational Benefits** -
     - **Illinois Veterans Grant (IVG)** - This program is available through the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC). Benefits may only be used at Illinois public colleges or community colleges. This grant pays for tuition, activity fees, service fees, registration fees, and technology fees. It does not pay for lab fees, Internet fees, or books.
     - **Illinois National Guard Grant (ING)** - Eligible students must be currently active in the Illinois National Guard. You must apply every academic year. Refer to page 8 for more details.
   - **Illinois MIA/POW State Grant** - The program is available through the Illinois Department of Veteran Affairs (IDVA). This grant pays for tuition and some fees. Once you have been approved by IDVA, you must turn in your letter of eligibility to the RVC Veterans Services Office.

4. **APPLY FOR FINANCIAL AID**
   In addition to using your military benefits, you can also apply for financial aid by going online to: Fafsa.gov. The school code for Rock Valley College is 001747. Once you have submitted your information, the RVC Financial Aid Office will contact you with your next steps.
GETTING STARTED STEPS USING MILITARY BENEFITS (continued)

5. VETERANS CERTIFICATION REQUEST FORM (VCR)
   This form must be turned into the School Certifying Official for each semester you wish to use your benefits. Failure to turn in this form could result in your classes being dropped for non-payment. Forms can be found in the Financial Aid Office, located on the second floor of the Student Center.
   - **New students:** Turn in the VCR along with all copies of your Certificate(s) of Eligibility (COE) or approval letters.
   - **Continuing Students:** Turn in your VCR (reminder if using National Guard you must update your letter of eligibility each year; Tuition Assistance (TA) approvals have to be submitted every semester.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

LETTERS OF ELIGIBILITY
If you have the Illinois Veteran Grant, the Illinois National Guard Grant, or the MIA-POW Grant, you must present your letter of eligibility to our office before your grant will be activated.

**IMPORTANT:** You must fill out a Veterans Certification Request (VCR) Form every semester once you have registered for classes. Turning in this signed form authorizes the School Certifying Office to process your benefits and to apply these benefits towards your bill. Failure to turn in this form could result in your classes being dropped for non-payment.

STANDARDS OF ACADEMIC PROGRESS
Students must be in good academic standing to use their state and federal grants. RVC follows the same standards and academic procedures for all students (including students using VA educational benefits). This is explained in the “Getting Started” section of the Rock Valley College Catalog under the heading “Financial Aid.” Students with unsatisfactory academic progress will be ineligible to use their state and/or federal benefits.

DROP WITH A REFUND
Every fall and spring semester, the last day to drop a class for a refund is the 10th day after classes begin [for late starting classes or summer classes, please refer to your syllabus or contact the Records Office at (815) 921-4250]. If you drop classes during this period of time, you will not be charged for these courses. However please note that it is your responsibility to notify the School Certifying Official immediately should you make any adjustments to your class schedule. Classes dropped after the drop date, are processed as a withdrawal and you will be responsible for any resulting bills. Refer to “Withdrawing From Classes” (below).

WITHDRAWING FROM CLASSES
It is your responsibility to notify the School Certifying Official immediately should you make any adjustments to your class schedule. If you need to withdraw from your classes, go to the Records Office and complete the withdrawal slip. Please note that you are still responsible for any charges that may be applied to your bill and be aware that it could result in an overpayment and a debt to the VA or to the school.

NON-ATTENDANCE DUE TO MILITARY SERVICE
All students must make arrangements with their instructors if military service will cause you to miss class. If the instructor determines that the amount of time missed will result in the unsuccessful completion of the course, then the student should withdraw due to military service. Contact the School Certifying Official for more information.

PRIORITY REGISTRATION
Per Public Law 115-48, section 303 Rock Valley College offers priority enrollment to all veterans, servicemembers, spouse, and dependents regardless of whether military benefits are being used. Proof of status must be verified for those not using military benefits. See the School Certifying Official for more information.
Montgomery GI Bill® – Chapter 30
• Must have completed initial obligation period of active duty
• Honorably discharged
• If eligible you would receive up to 36 months of eligibility
• Eligibility of benefits lasts 10 years from date of discharge
• To apply go to: VA.gov

Montgomery GI Bill® – Chapter 1606 – Selected Reserve/National Guard
• Must have enlisted, reenlisted, or extended an enlistment in the Selected Reserve or National Guard after July 1, 1985 so there is an obligation to serve for a period of not less than six years
• If eligible you would receive up to 36 months of eligibility
• To apply go to: VA.gov

Montgomery GI Bill® – Chapter 1607 – REAP
• Veterans under the Reserve Educational Assistance Program must have been activated after September 10, 2001 (9/10/01)
• May be eligible for increased benefits
• If eligible, entitled to 36 months of eligibility
• Important – This GI Bill® is no longer offered as of November 25, 2015. RVC will continue to process this benefit for students already enrolled in the program and who have been deemed as “still eligible” by the VA until November 25, 2019.

Post 9/11 GI Bill® - Veterans Education Assistance – Chapter 33
• Served at least 90 days of active duty after September 10, 2001 (9/10/01)
• If eligible, entitled to 36 months of eligibility
• NEW – If your last discharge or release from active duty is on or after January 1, 2013 there is no time limitation
• Pays tuition and fees to the school (based on eligibility rating)
• Monthly Housing Allowance paid to the student (must be enrolled more than half-time to qualify)
• Pays up to $1,000/year book stipend to the student
• To apply go to: VA.gov

– Transfer of Entitlement
• Service members have the option to transfer benefits to a spouse or dependents. To learn more about this benefit, go to: Benefits.VA.gov/gibill/post911_transfer.asp.

– Fry Scholarship
• Benefit is available to the children and surviving spouses of services members who died in the line of duty after September 10, 2001
• If eligible, entitled to 36 months of benefits at the 100% level
• Not eligible for the Yellow Ribbon Program
• To learn more about this benefit or to apply, go to: VA.gov
Survivors & Dependents Educational Assistance Program – Chapter 35
- Spouses and dependent children (age 18 to 26 years) of deceased veterans or 100% disabled veterans are eligible. The veteran’s death or injury must be service connected
- NEW - if approved for this benefit on or after August 1, 2018, entitlement is for 36 months
- To apply go to: VA.gov and fill out VA Form 22-5490

Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment (VR&E) – Chapter 31
- Must be entitled to receive compensation for a service-connected disability at a rating of 10% or greater for veterans, 20% or more for active duty service members.
- Must have been discharged from active duty under condition other than dishonorable.
- Counselors in the VR&E program are in the Chicago, Peoria, and/or the Iowa offices.
- Complete a Veterans Certification Form of enrollment every semester.
- To apply for benefits or get more information go to: VA.gov

Tuition Assistance (TA)
Tuition Assistance (TA) is a Department of Defense (DoD) program. TA rules will vary between military branches. Service members are able to use a Federal VA Education benefit and Federal Student Aid in combination with TA. You cannot use Federal TA and your Chapter 1606/1607 for the same class. Students using TA benefits must submit their approved, semester-specific TA form to the Program Manager located on the second floor of the Student Center prior to the start of the semester.
- **Army** (to include National Guard and Reserves): GoArmyEd.com
- **Navy** (to include Reserves): NavyCollege.Navy.mil
- **Air Force** (to include National Guard and Reserve): My.af.mil/gcss-af/USAF/ep/home.do
- **Marines** (to include Reserves): Manpower.usmc.mil

For students using Chapters 30, 1606, & 1607 - Once you have been approved for benefits, turned in all required documents, AND completed your Veterans Certification Request (VCR) form with the School Certifying Official, you must remember to certify your enrollment status with the VA at the **end** of every month in order to receive your monthly benefits. Refer to page 2, “Enrollment Verification.”

For Further information on Federal Educational Benefits, go to: VA.gov.
SNAPSHOT OF BENEFITS - STATE

Illinois Veteran Grant (IVG)
This program is available through the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC). Benefits may only be used at Illinois public colleges or community colleges. This grant pays for tuition, activity fees, service fees, registration fees, and technology fees. It does not pay for lab fees, Internet fees, or books.

• Must have entered the service from the state of Illinois.
• Served at least one full year of active duty. (Note: length of service not regarded if veteran was assigned to active duty in a foreign country in a time of hostilities in that country)
• Returned to Illinois within six (6) months after discharge.
• Received an Honorable discharge.
• Grant pays tuition cost and mandatory fees to the school.
• Application available at: ISAC.org

Illinois National Guard Grant (ING)
Eligible students must be currently active in the Illinois National Guard. You must apply EVERY academic year.

• Must have been participating in an Illinois National Guard unit for at least one year.
• Grant pays tuition and some fees to the school.
• Must apply EVERY academic year at: https://StudentPortal.ISAC.org

Illinois MIA-POW State Grant
The program is available through the Illinois Department of Veteran Affairs (IDVA). This grant pays for tuition and some fees. Once you have been approved by IDVA, you must turn in your letter of eligibility to the RVC Veterans Services office.

• Dependents of a service member who was a resident of Illinois upon entering the service, and whose status is or has been that of a prisoner of war/missing in action, killed while in the service, died or is 100% disabled as a result of a service-connected disability.
• Grant pays tuition and some fees to the school.
• Information: (217) 782-3564
• https://www2.illinois.gov/veterans/Pages/default.aspx
CALLED UP TO ACTIVE DUTY

RVC will not deny readmission to a person who is a member of, applies to be a member of, performs, has performed, applies to perform, or has an obligation to perform, service in the uniformed services on the basis of that membership, application for membership, performance of service, application for service, or obligation to perform service.

Students who perform military service under Federal authority for a period of more than 30 consecutive days must provide written notification of military service to the Rock Valley College Veterans Office, via written military orders.

Notifications of intent to return must be provided by the student in written form within three (3) years after the completion of the period of service.

Readmission requirements do not apply to a service member’s absence from class to attend training.

READMISSION REQUIREMENTS

I. Statement
RVC will not deny readmission to a person who is a member of, applies to be a member of, performs, has performed, applies to perform, or has an obligation to perform, service in the uniformed services on the basis of that membership, application for membership, performance of service, application for service, or obligation to perform service.

II. Requirements of Student
Students who perform military service under Federal authority for a period of more than 30 consecutive days must provide written notification of military service to the Rock Valley College Veterans Coordinator, via written military orders.

Notifications of intent to return must be provided by the student in written form within three (3) years after the completion of the period of service.

Readmission requirements do not apply to a service member’s absence from class to attend training.

III. Termination of readmission eligibility.
(i) A student’s eligibility for readmission to an institution under this section by reason of such student’s service in the uniformed services terminates upon the occurrence of any of the following events:
(ii) A separation of such person from the Armed Forces (including the National Guard and Reserves) with a dishonorable or bad conduct discharge.
(iii) A dismissal of a commissioned officer permitted under section 1161(a) of title 10, United States Code by sentence of a general court-martial; in commutation of a sentence of a general court-martial; or, in time of war, by order of the President.
(iv) A dropping of a commissioned officer from the rolls pursuant to section 1161(b) of title 10, United States Code due to absence without authority for at least three months; separation by reason of a sentence to confinement adjudged by a court-martial; or, a sentence to confinement in a Federal or State penitentiary or correctional institution.

IV. Requirements of Rock Valley College
Rock Valley College will promptly readmit eligible students with the same academic status as the student had when the student last attended. Important: Contact the Veterans Office at (815) 921-4163 or email Milana Herman at M.Herman@RockValleyCollege.edu to review policy regarding eligibility for readmittance.
V. Tuition and Fees
Rock Valley College will not assess any more than the tuition and fee charges that other students in the program are assessed for that academic year if the student is admitted to a different program, and for subsequent academic years for student admitted to same program. However, if a student is utilizing VA, State, or DOD benefits in which there will be no additional cost to the student, RVC will charge tuition based on the existing tuition and fees associated with the current Academic Year.

VI. Programs with limited admission requirements AND/OR requirements associated with the specific program itself will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
If you are called up for active duty or need more information on readmission/limited admission requirements, contact the Veteran Office at (815) 921-4163 or email Milana Herman at M.Herman@RockValleyCollege.edu.

ENROLLMENT STATUS

Fall & Spring semesters:
- Full-time: 12 credit hours or more
- Three-quarter time: 9, 10, 11 credit hours
- Half-time: 6, 7, 8 credit hours
- Less than one-half: 5 or less credit hours

Summer semesters:
- Full-time: 6 credit hours or more (Summer Session II)
- Three-quarter time: 5 credit hours
- Half-time: 3 credit hours
- Less than one-half: 1, 2 credit hours
(Summer semester sessions are reported according to the dates of enrollment - Summer I & II)

HOW TO GET INVOLVED - STUDENT VETERANS ASSOCIATION

The Student Veterans Association at Rock Valley College is a chapter member of the Student Veterans of America National Organization. The club meets once a month for fellowship and to plan outreach programs that support student veterans and active duty members and their survivors, but also the local community.

To see what your club is up to, check out their webpage at: https://orgsync.com/92408/chapter.
MILITARY & VETERAN STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

ON CAMPUS – DEPARTMENTS

**RVC Academic & Transfer Advising** - (815) 921-4100
Student Center-Second Floor | RockValleyCollege.edu/Advising
Advisers are available to assist with helping you choose the educational path that is right for you. Make your appointment today.

**RVC Career Services, Advising, & Placement** - (815) 921-4100
Student Center-Second Floor | RockValleyCollege.edu/CareerServices
Not sure what career interests you? The Career Services team is here to provide career counseling, assessments, and career specific academic advising. They will also assist with resume writing and job/internship searches.

**RVC Disability Support Services** - (815) 921-2371
Student Center-Ground Floor | RockValleyCollege.edu/DisabilityServices
This office is responsible for ensuring that all students have equal access to educational opportunities. Services can be requested for communication needs as well as assistive technology.

**RVC Math Lab** - (815) 921-3510
JCSM-Ground Floor-Room 0210 & 0212 | RockValleyCollege.edu/MathLab
Staffed by Math faculty and RVC math students, this lab provides an excellent resource for students to study and receive assistance with math assignments.

**RVC Personal & Success Counseling** - (815) 921-4091
Student Center-Second Floor | RockValleyCollege.edu/PersonalCounseling
Offers counseling to students who may be having feelings of anxiety, depression, inadequacy, or various other personal concerns. This office also offers success counseling in the form of academic goal setting, identifying learning styles, and individualized study techniques.

**RVC Testing Center** - (815) 921-2380
Student Center-Ground Floor | RockValleyCollege.edu/Testing
The central location on campus for the administration of testing programs and services offered at Rock Valley College.

**RVC Trio/Student Support Services** - (815) 921-4280
Student Center-Ground & Second Floor | RockValleyCollege.edu/Trio
Provides holistic, comprehensive advising and instructional support to eligible students. Check out their webpage to see if you qualify for this program.

**RVC Tutoring Center** - (815) 921-2370
Student Center-Ground Floor | RockValleyCollege.edu/Tutoring
Free tutoring services offered to all students. If you are struggling with a particular topic, make a standing appointment with one of our peer tutors.

**RVC Writing Center** - (815) 921-2370
Student Center-Ground Floor | RockValleyCollege.edu/WritingCenter
This is a space used to promote an environment that fosters a creative and productive writing atmosphere. Make an appointment for individualized attention.
ON CAMPUS – RESOURCES

• Behavioral Intervention Team (B.I.T.) - (815) 921-4284
  Dean of Students Office, Student Center-Second Floor
  RockValleyCollege.edu/BIT
  The BIT coordinates a response to a student behavior/s of concern as reported by students, staff, or faculty.

• RVC Student Veteran Association - (815) 921-4163
  A student veteran club that fosters ties to the veteran community and believes in giving back. The club provides opportunities for like-minded individuals with shared experiences to meet and support one another.

OFF CAMPUS

• Rockford VA Clinic and other surrounding VA medical resources,
  816 Featherstone Road, Rockford, IL 61107 | (815) 395-1276
  go to: Madison.VA.gov/Locations/Rockford.asp

• Rockford Vet Center - (815) 395-1276
  7015 Rote Road, Suite 105, Rockford, IL 61114
  For assistance after hours, weekend, & holidays call:
  1-877-WAR-VETS (1-877-927-8387)

• Carpenter’s Place Transitional Housing - (815) 964-4105
  1149 Railroad Avenue, Rockford, IL 61104
  CarpentersPlace.org

• Veterans Crisis Line - 1-800-273-8255, press 1
  VeteransCrisisLine.net

• Veterans Drop-in Center - 1539 S. 4th Street, Rockford, IL 61104 | (815) 713-8843

• Veterans Assistance Commission-Winnebago County -
  555 N. Court Street, Rockford, IL 61101 | (815) 516-2850

• Veterans Assistance Commission - Boone County -
  130 S. State Street, Suite 212, Belvidere, IL 61008 | (815) 544-6464

• William S. Middleton Memorial Veterans Hospital -
  2500 Overlook Terrace, Madison, WI 53705 | (608) 280-7076

CAREERS

• Feds Hire Vets: FedsHireVets.gov
  Site that houses federal employment information for transitioning service members and their families, veterans, and federal hiring officials.

• Rock Valley College Career Services: RVCjobs.com
  Career Services educates and provides academic and career resources to Rock Valley College students and alumni in reaching their career goals.

• USAjobs.gov:
  This website was created to help individuals connect with federal employment all over the world.
USEFUL RESOURCES

Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs – Illinois.gov/Veterans

AmVets Department of Illinois – ILAmVets.org
An organization that fights for the right for all who served honorably in the US military, including the Reserve and Guard.

Veterans Assistance Commission of Winnebago County – WinCoIL.us/Departments/Veterans-Assistance-Commission
This organization exists to assist the neediest of honorably discharged veterans residing in the county of Winnebago with shelter, utilities, and personal/household hygiene.

Veterans Assistance Commission of Boone County – VACBC.org/index.html
Designed to assist with temporary financial support in cases of emergency for students living in Boone County.

College resources for Military Service Members – GiJobs.com -or- BestColleges.com/Resources

Financial Aid Resources
- FAFSA.gov - The free application for federal student aid
- College Scorecard - CollegeScorecard.ed.gov
  Helps students using veterans educational benefits evaluate options in choosing a school.
- College Navigator - https://NCES.ed.gov/CollegeNavigator
  Provides demographic, financial, retention, graduation rates, and more for all schools.
- Paying for College - ConsumerFinance.gov/paying-for-college
  Students can enter information for up to three (3) schools and receive detailed financial information.

Get answers to general questions such as, “How do I get a copy of my DD214/military records?,” -or- Do I have to file taxes on my military education benefits?”

GI Bill® comparison tool – VA.gov
Find out which GI Bill® is right choice for you.

Department of Veterans Affairs – VA.gov
The official website for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affair. Get information on Health Care, Benefits, Burials, and Memorials, and various other resources.
Military.com
Visit this site for the latest military news, information on benefits, military life, jobs, and even discounts.

Illinois Joining Forces - IllinoisJoiningForces.org
A database created to assist veterans and family members with all of the available resources in the State of Illinois. Resource information ranges from housing and employment to legal services and volunteerism.

Student Veterans of America (SVA) - StudentVeterans.org
This is a national organization consisting of student-veteran groups. SVA strives to ensure that veterans across the globe are informed about the veterans educational benefits and about opportunities for employment. They have a strong presence in Washington, DC and their voice carries weight. Rock Valley College is one of the over 1,300 schools that is a chapter member.

Illinois Department of Employment Security - IDES.illinois.gov
Find out information about local job fairs, job openings and use the comprehensive database for your job searches. Search for the closest office in your city. Most offices have a dedicated veterans representative.

Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA) - Benefits.VA.gov
This act explains the various legal protections afforded to active duty servicemembers, reservists, and members of the National Guard who get called up for active duty.

Military Transcripts
- Army, Navy, Marines, Coast Guard
  To request military transcripts go to: https://jst.doded.mil.
  When you log on to this website, you will need to indicate that you want your transcripts to be sent to Rock Valley College electronically.

- Air Force
  To request military transcripts go to: AU.AF.Mil/AU/Barnes/ccaf/Transcripts.asp and request an official copy of your transcripts. Bring the unopened copy of your transcripts to the Records Office, located on the second floor of the Student Center.
NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATION

It is the policy of Rock Valley College to provide equal opportunity in its admissions, employment, and educational programs and activities consistent with federal and state law.

Discrimination is prohibited on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, citizenship status, sex, age, physical or mental disability, marital status, order of protection status, sexual orientation, veteran status, or unfavorable military discharge, use of lawful products while not at work, genetic information, or other legally protected categories.

Inquiries regarding compliance with state or federal nondiscrimination requirements may be directed to the:

Terrica Huntley  
Dean of Students and Title IX Coordinator  
Rock Valley College  
3301 N. Mulford Road  
Rockford, IL 61114-5699  
or  
(815) 921-4187 | T.Huntley@RockValleyCollege.edu

DISCLAIMER

The information in this RVC Student Veterans Handbook is subject to change without prior notice or obligation.

VETERANS STUDENT HANDBOOK ACRONYMS

AmVets      American Veterans  
COE         Certificate of Eligibility  
IDES        Illinois Department of Employment Security  
ISAC        Illinois Student Assistance Commission  
IVG         Illinois Veteran Grant  
MIA         Missing In Action  
NOBE        Notice Of Basic Eligibility  
POW         Prisoner Of War  
VA          Veterans Affairs  
VACBC       Veterans Assistance Commission of Boone County  
VCR         Veterans Certification Request  
VR&E        Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment  
WAVE        Web Automated Verification of Enrollment