

Giving Due Credit

A Guide to Military Credit for Prior Learning in New England

“Remember that time is money,” wrote Benjamin Franklin nearly three-hundred years ago. His aphorism remains as salient in 2020 as ever before—especially for today’s college students. Many students, when calculating their ability to complete a degree or certificate, must weigh a program’s duration and cost against their financial resources. In general, the longer it takes to complete a program, the greater the expense in the form of additional tuition and fees, class materials, and living costs.

Credit for prior learning (CPL), has garnered increasing attention in recent years as an effective means of reducing costs and accelerating attainment. CPL refers to a recruitment and retention strategy in which postsecondary institutions assess the prior learning of students—acquired through any combination of work, education and training, military, and/or other experiences—and often grant credit for the skills and knowledge acquired through these experiences toward the completion of a degree or certificate. At a time when every U.S. state is falling short of their [attainment goals](#), students are grappling with the [skyrocketing](#) cost of college, and institutions are seeing an [increasing diversity](#) of students who bring a wide range of histories and experiences to the classroom, CPL offers a viable way to harness student talent to help boost attainment and lower costs.



One particularly important form of CPL is the recognition of transferable competencies that many service members and veterans can acquire through their experiences in the military. Research shows that when service members transition to higher education and civilian employment following military service, they demonstrate a wide breadth and depth of technical and interpersonal skills ([McNally et al. 1996](#)). For many veterans, the ability to capitalize on and enhance their military-developed knowledge by pursuing a flexible, affordable postsecondary education is critical to their successful transition into civilian life.

A number of New England states have developed policies for the awarding of credit for military experience. This brief provides an overview of existing state, national, and institutional opportunities and challenges for the region’s military and veteran students in terms of assessing and awarding credit for their prior learning in the military. We will also highlight exemplary military CPL practices outside New England: most notably the three very different approaches of Texas, Minnesota, and the Multi-State Collaborative on Military Credit, as well as the family-inclusive policy in Kansas.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

- New England's **veterans comprise 8% of the region's adult population**, which is on a par with the share of all veterans nationwide as a portion of the total U.S. population (8%). While New England's veterans enjoy a slightly **lower unemployment rate** than the non-veteran population (5.1% and 5.6%, respectively), **veterans lag behind non-veterans in terms of educational attainment**: 39% of veterans do not have any education beyond high school, compared to 36% of non-veterans.
- **23 U.S. states** (5 of which are New England states) have legislation requiring a state agency, college system, or individual institutions to develop and adopt a policy on academic credit for a student's military occupation, military training, coursework, and experience, and to consult with institutions of higher education in implementing the policy: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, **Connecticut**, Florida, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana, **Maine**, Maryland, **Massachusetts**, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, **New Hampshire**, Ohio, Oregon, **Rhode Island**, Utah, Virginia, and Washington.

Half of New England States Lack a Uniform State-Wide Military CPL Policy

- Among existing military CPL policies in New England, Connecticut and Maine require **system-wide procedures**, whereas laws in Massachusetts and Rhode Island stipulate that such procedures ought to be **established by each individual institution**. Vermont does not have an official policy regarding military CPL. While New Hampshire's legislation on military CPL requires the Department of Education (NHDOE) to develop these procedures, the NHDOE determined that they did not have the jurisdiction to do so and deferred to the University and Community College Systems to create system-wide procedures.

The Region Lacks Clear Communication About Its Policies and Their Impact

- Maine stands out because it requires the community college system to **report annually to the legislature** to provide a status update on its CPL assessment policies. (*Report linked in text below.*)
- While all state- and system-wide policies are technically unrestricted documents open to the public, Rhode Island is the only New England state that has made its state-wide CPL policies **easily accessible to all online**. The policies of the other New England states are more difficult to track down and most must be requested at each individual institution, the system office, or the responsible state agency.

Affordability Remains Problematic

- While active and veteran service members have a number of opportunities for receiving college credit for their military learning and experiences, **many of these options can be costly**, and, in many cases, prospective students must pay in advance to have their learning assessed with **no guarantee that they will be accepted for credit**.

Texas and Minnesota Exemplify Clear, Affordable State-Wide Military CPL Policies

- **TEXAS**: The state launched **College Credit for Heroes** in 2011. By March 2015, more than **44,000** veterans had created accounts through the initiative's online portal; more than **7,300** had completed requests for transcripts. Evaluations through the portal resulted in an average of **25 credit hours awarded** per veteran.
- **MINNESOTA**: In 2010, the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System (MnSCU) launched the **Veterans Education Transfer System (VETS)**, which established an online user interface that allows veterans to understand how their skills/knowledge map to various educational opportunities. Between 2011 and 2015, MnSCU developed articulations to more than **18,000 military occupations** through looking at similarities between military occupations and course recommendations from ACE.

NEW ENGLAND'S VETERANS BY THE NUMBERS

The extensive training, technical skills, leadership abilities, and soft skills acquired by military service members make veterans a valuable resource for New England employers and the region's economy. Here's a brief snapshot of the region's veteran population.

815,926: Total Veteran Population, Aged 18 Years or Older (2017)

While New England's veteran population has significantly decreased in recent years (down from nearly 1,048,271 in 2010), this group continues to represent a sizable portion of the population—nearly **8% of New England's total adult population**. Among all veterans in New England, there are vastly more men (93.7%) than women (6.3%); by comparison, in the general populous, there is a roughly 50/50 split between men (48.1%) and women (51.9%).

Age Distribution of Veterans in New England, by State (2017)

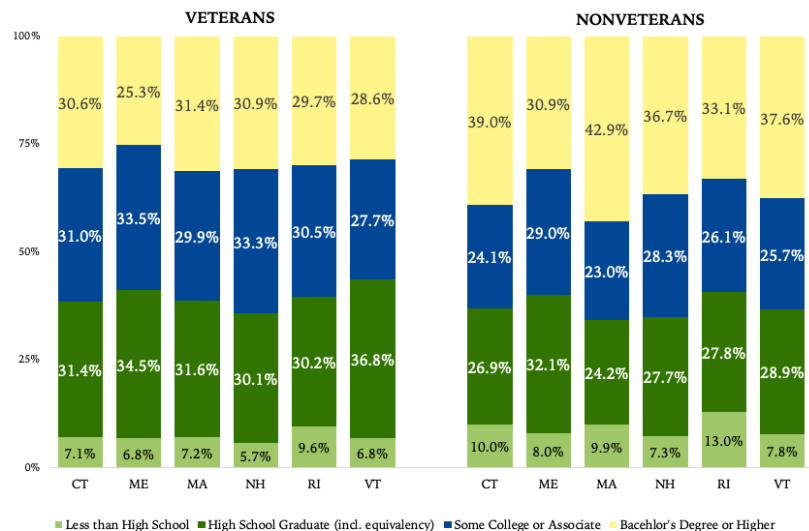
	Total 18 to 34 Years	% of Total Population 18 to 34 Years	Total 35 to 54 Years	% of Total Population 35 to 54 Years	Total 55 to 64 Years	% of Total Population 55 to 64 Years	Total 65 to 74 Years	% of Total Population 65 to 74 Years	Total 75 Years and Over	% of Total Population 65 to 74 Years	Total All Age Groups Combined
New England	51,196	1.7%	165,637	5.0%	142,659	7.9%	223,029	17.9%	233,405	23.7%	815,926
CT	11,226	1.4%	33,739	3.5%	29,294	5.9%	49,975	15.7%	55,877	21.7%	180,111
ME	6,434	2.4%	24,860	7.1%	21,469	10.3%	30,296	20.8%	27,303	26.2%	110,362
MA	21,447	1.3%	64,085	3.5%	54,093	6.0%	87,644	14.9%	98,030	21.3%	325,299
NH	6,073	2.1%	22,979	6.4%	19,433	9.6%	27,301	21.0%	24,688	27.6%	100,474
RI	4,120	1.6%	11,522	4.2%	10,148	7.0%	16,416	17.6%	17,329	22.6%	59,535
VT	1,896	1.4%	8,452	5.3%	8,222	8.5%	11,397	17.5%	10,178	23.0%	40,145

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Tables B21003 and S2101

315,178: Veterans Aged 25 Years or Older Without A Postsecondary Credential (2017)

In 2017 across New England, 315,178 veterans aged 25 years or older did not possess any education beyond high school (including GED equivalency). This group accounted for nearly **39%** of the region's veteran population. Among New England veterans, 250,236 (31%) had some college experience or an associate degree. There were 243,049 (30%) veterans in New England with a bachelor's degree or higher. By comparison, **36%** of the region's nonveteran population did not have any education beyond high school, **25%** had some college or an associate degree, and more than **39%** had at least a bachelor's degree.

Veteran and Nonveteran Status by Educational Attainment for the Civilian Population in New England, 25 Years and Older (2017)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B21003

5.1%: Veteran Unemployment Rate (2017)

Compared to the nonveteran population, the employment status of veterans is, on average, fractionally better. In 2017, New England’s veterans had a slightly lower rate of unemployment (5.1%) than the national average veteran unemployment rate (5.6%). Within the region, veteran unemployment during this same period was lowest in Vermont (3.0%) and highest in Connecticut (7.0%). Despite the [record veteran unemployment](#) rate in recent years and a [2019 report](#) indicating that 59.1% of employers think that veterans perform “better than” or “much better than” their nonveteran peers, [some experts warn](#) that veterans are at risk of being *underemployed*. By providing ample educational opportunities to veterans—especially ones that formally recognize their military-developed skills and knowledge—this population will be better positioned to find good-paying jobs that fully utilize their experiences and offer a reliable chance of career advancement.

Employment Status of Veterans/Nonveterans in New England, Civilian Population 18 to 64 Years (2017)

	% Unemployed Veterans	% Unemployed Nonveterans
United States	5.6%	6.5%
New England	5.1%	5.6%
CT	7.0%	7.0%
ME	4.3%	5.2%
MA	5.8%	5.9%
NH	4.9%	4.3%
RI	5.6%	6.8%
VT	3.0%	4.4%


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table S2101

NEW ENGLAND STATE APPROACHES TO CPL FOR MILITARY EXPERIENCE


Has Policy? Yes/No	Year Adopted	Description	State Policy <i>Note: Unless otherwise stated, all legislation linked below has been enacted</i>
CONNECTICUT			
✓	2014	Requires the board of regents for higher education and the board of trustees for the University of Connecticut to develop guidelines to award academic credit for military experience. The guidelines must include course equivalency recommendations from the American Council on Education or other similar organization.	HB 5207: An Act Concerning College Credit for Military Training UConn Credit for Military Service

New England Fast Facts

MAINE

	<p>2013</p>	<p>Recommends a) general transfer of CPL, b) credential review for credit for external training, c) the awarding of credit for military training and occupations, d) the allowance of transfer of portfolio credit, and e) acceptance of standardized test credit.</p>	<p>UMS PLA Task Force: Recommendations, Next Steps For PLA In The University Of Maine System</p>
	<p>2017</p>	<p>The community college system implemented Military Review, a Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) specifically aligned to the experiences of veterans. Veterans can also receive credit for learning demonstrated by formal service school training, such as Military Occupational Specialties, Navy Enlisted Classification, Marine Corps Enlisted Rating, and Coast Guard Rating, and off-duty educational activities, including basic training and military service school recommendations by the American Council on Education and U.S. Armed Forces Institute correspondence courses. Veterans can also work with the PLA coordinators at the colleges to develop a portfolio that demonstrates learning that is reflective of their unique military experience.</p>	<p>Maine Community College System Report to the 127th Legislature</p>

MASSACHUSETTS

	<p>2013</p>	<p>The Board of Higher Education encourages and expects public higher education institutions to award academic credit for students' previous military occupation, military training, coursework, and experiences towards degrees and certificates. The determination of academic credit is determined by the receiving institution. The Act also requires institutions to designate a single point of contact for student veterans to contact about the policy and who will also make determinations concerning the award of academic credit for prior military occupation(s), military training, coursework, and experience. The policy applies to all Massachusetts public higher education institutions.</p>	<p>SB 2254: VALOR Act Academic Credit Evaluation Policy</p> <p><i>(Not to be confused with the controversial Valor Act (2012), which aimed to help veterans dealing with substance abuse. This law was repealed by Gov. Baker in 2018).</i></p>
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New England Fast Facts

NEW HAMPSHIRE			
✓	2013	Requires that the Division of Higher Education in the Department of Education (NHDOE) develop and adopt a policy on academic credit for a student's military occupation, military training, coursework, and experience, and to consult with institutions of higher education in implementing the policy. NHDOE determined that they did not have the jurisdiction to comply with HB 519, so they worked with the university and community college systems to develop system-level military CPL policies.	HB 519 (adopted version)
RHODE ISLAND			
✓	2013	Requires public higher education institutions to adopt a policy and promulgate regulations to award educational credits to veterans for courses that were part of the student's military training.	S 0638
	2015	Pursuant to the 2013 law, the Rhode Island Council on Postsecondary Education adopted an official state-wide policy for awarding academic credit for military training/coursework. The policy requires each public postsecondary institution in Rhode Island to award credit for veterans' training, experience, and education. Awarding of credit is to be determined by each institution, but the process and rationale must be made clear to students and must be based on recommendations by the American Council on Education.	RI's Policy on Awarding Academic Credit for Military Service/ Training
VERMONT			
✗		Vermont does not have formal state-wide CPL policies. Since 2009, the Vermont State Colleges have centralized their CPL program as described in its manual of procedures. However, the policy is vague and does not specifically mention credit for military experience, education, or training.	Vermont State Colleges Policy No. 108

CPL OPPORTUNITIES FOR MILITARY FAMILY MEMBERS IN NEW ENGLAND

While some U.S. states extend CPL benefits to spouses or children of individuals who are or who have served in the U.S. military, none of the existing formal policies regarding military CPL in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island or the informal procedures in Vermont do. Even so, spouses and dependents of active and veterans military personnel residing in these states are eligible for other education benefits that help ease difficulties associated with the transfer of credit from multiple institutions due to the high mobility associated with military life, as well as complications posed by state residency requirements. In New England, these policies include:

Connecticut

- Connecticut ([Public Act No. 18-47](#)) requires that tuition at its public postsecondary institutions be waived for eligible veterans and certain dependents. This waiver extends to any tuition that exceeds that covered by the federal Post-9/11 Veteran Educational Assistance Act. Incidental costs—such as books, fees, parking, and room and board—are not waived. Additionally, the waiver cannot be applied toward summer, intercession, or Extension Fund courses at any of the twelve Connecticut community colleges. To qualify for the waiver, the veteran must 1) be honorably discharged or released under honorable conditions from active service, 2) have served a minimum of 90 or more cumulative days active duty in time of war, or, if the war, campaign, or operation lasted fewer than 90 days, service must have lasted for the duration, 3) be formally admitted at a Connecticut public college or university, and 4) reside in Connecticut at the time of acceptance. State residents who are children of a person in the Armed Forces who is declared to be either missing in action or a prisoner of war while serving in the military after January 1, 1960 also qualify for the waiver.

Massachusetts

- [The Massachusetts Soldiers Legacy Fund](#) (MSLF) is a charitable trust that provides educational grants to current and future college/university students who are the children of a Massachusetts' service member who was killed on deployment during Operations Enduring or Iraqi Freedom. The only requirement for recipients is that they must complete an application to establish their eligibility and demonstrate their enrollment status.
- The [Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014](#) requires all Massachusetts public institutions of higher education to charge veterans and their dependents in-state tuition and fee rate.

Maine

- [Title 37B, Chapter 7, Section 505\(2\)](#) provides a complete waiver of tuition and related fees for veterans' spouses and dependents (children, step children, and adopted children) who are enrolled in a certificate, associate, bachelor's or master's degree program at a [participating](#) postsecondary institution within the University of Maine System. Room and board may not be waived. Spouses may receive up to 120 credit hours of educational benefits and must complete the program within ten academic years of the date on which they were first admitted. For children of veterans, the waiver must be adjusted to ensure that it not exceed the total cost of education once it is combined with all other grants and benefits received by the student. Children have up to six academic years to complete 120 credit hours. All students must maintain a GPA of 2.0 or higher to maintain eligibility.

New Hampshire

- [Free Tuition for Children of New Hampshire Resident Service Members Declared Missing-in-Action or Prisoners of War](#): The child of a missing person who was domiciled in this State serving in or with the U.S. armed forces after February 28, 1961, is entitled to free tuition at vocational-technical college so long as said missing person is so reported/listed as missing, captured, etc. ([RSA 188-F:15](#)).
- [Free Tuition for Children of New Hampshire Resident Service Members Killed-in-Action or that Died from a Service- Connected Disability](#): Children of military members who die in service during wartime, and children of certain wartime veterans who die from a service-connected disability, may qualify for free tuition at New Hampshire public institutions of higher learning. A scholarship for board, room, rent, books and supplies up to \$2500 per year for a period of no more than 4 years at such educational institutions may be furnished to these children if they are in need of financial assistance. ([RSA 193:19](#), [RSA 193:20](#), [RSA 193:21](#)).

Rhode Island

- [Free tuition at any state college or university](#) is available for surviving spouses and children of Rhode Island National Guard Service members who are killed or died while in performance of their duty. This benefit covers tuition only. Surviving children must be between 16 and 21 years old to qualify. Aid is offered for a maximum of four years.

Vermont

- The [Vermont Armed Service Scholarship](#) was created by the state legislature to provide tuition-free education to families of Vermont National Guard and U.S. active reserve or active armed services members who have died while on active or inactive duty. To qualify for this benefit, the individual must be 1) a child, step child, or spouse of a service member in good standing who, since January 1 2001, has died while on active or inactive duty and who was a resident of Vermont at the time of his/her death; 2) enrolled at an [approved](#) certificate or undergraduate degree program at a Vermont university, college, or technical institute. Individuals who are interested in applying for the waiver may do so at:

All six New England states participate in the [Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission](#) (MIC3). MIC3 seeks to remove barriers to educational success faced by children of military families due to the transient nature of military life. It facilitates military children's timely enrollment and transfer of records, placement, and on-time graduation.

EXEMPLARY MILITARY CPL POLICIES OUTSIDE NEW ENGLAND

TEXAS – COLLEGE CREDIT FOR HEROES PROGRAM

In 2011, [SB 1736](#) formalized an initiative called **College Credit for Heroes** (CCH) between the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to develop transfer methods to maximize academic credit to veterans for military experience. The initiative's launch was supported by \$5 million in state Workforce Investment Act (WIA) funds that were allocated for a TWC Comprehensive Veterans Initiative.

In 2015, [SB 806](#) amended the Texas Labor Code make CCH permanent, and to continue developing curricula and running the evaluation granting webpage. The TWC must report to the legislature and governor yearly on the results of grants, best practices, and related measures that facilitate the entry of trained veterans into the workforce.

Phase I: Seven community colleges were selected to begin developing new programs and models that support the goals of CCH and could potentially be replicated or expanded to other institutions in the state. Phase I activities focused on the allied health professions, and a number of the selected institutions developed accelerated degree programs which were designed to streamline the transfer of military training credits and facilitate degree completion. Outcomes include:

- Several of the selected institutions developed accelerated degree programs designed to streamline the transfer of military training credits and facilitate degree completion.
- The development of an Individual Education Plan program, to promote the use of CPL options among student veterans.
- The creation of the Inter-College Council on Veterans, composed of representatives from each of the CCH partner institutions. They provide monthly opportunities to discuss successes and challenges and to share ideas.
- A comprehensive needs analysis of all of the community college-level allied health programs in the state, which highlighted gaps and opportunities in the state's training offerings and credit-transfer opportunities, as well as the barriers to degree completion experienced by military and veteran students.

- The launch of CCH website: www.collegecreditforheroes.org (developed by Central Texas College). This centralized web portal allows service members and veterans in Texas to request an official evaluation of their military training, which can potentially result in credit toward a civilian degree or credential. Users can have those evaluations sent to a Texas college of their choice. They are prompted to contact the advisor at their selected school to determine the potential credit awards resulting from their military training evaluation and to discuss their options for moving forward.

Phase II: In May 2013 eleven additional partner colleges were identified. They began implementing new veteran-focused, accelerated degree programs in high-growth fields such as information technology, manufacturing, and firefighting. A number of partner institutions have also established veteran resource centers to provide on-campus support for military and veteran students. In December 2013, all thirteen colleges in the Texas A&M University System were added as participating CCH institutions, which means that they all agree to accept credits recommended through the CCH system, where appropriate.

Phase III: In February 2015, CCH selected five additional institutions to create new accelerated degree models and work with partner institutions to replicate existing CCH programs.

Results to date include:

- As of March 2015, more than **44,000 veterans** had created accounts through the portal; more than **7,300** had completed requests for transcripts.
- Evaluations through the portal resulted in an average of **25 credit hours awarded** per veteran.
- As of April 2015, twelve Texas colleges and universities had completed thirteen accelerated curricula development projects resulting in **76 individual accelerated curricula** in fields such as emergency medical services, respiratory therapy, nursing, cyber security, information technology, firefighting, advanced manufacturing, wind engineering and oil field technology. On average, qualified veterans and service members can earn **over half of the credits needed** for completing these programs through their military training and experience.

Additional Materials:

[TWC College Credit for Heroes website](#)

[College Credit for Heroes Brochure](#)

MINNESOTA – VETERAN EDUCATION TRANSFER SYSTEM

In 2010, The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System (MnSCU) established the **Veterans Education Transfer System (VETS)** to help veterans and members of the armed forces identify how their military occupations can count for college credits at institutions throughout the system.

With the support of a federal grant, MnSCU started by establishing a comprehensive crosswalk between American Council on Education credit recommendations for military training and occupations and the system's academic programs. The system then developed an online user interface ([MyMilitary GPS LifePlan](#)) linking to a database that allows veterans to learn how their skills and knowledge map to various educational opportunities. On the interface, a veteran enters details about his or her military experience (including branch, occupation, specific training dates and skill levels), and the system's search engine produces a list of education and training programs that grant college credit for that veteran's college-level learning. The initial search result page shows how many prior learning credits the veteran would receive for each program, the degree or credential awarded upon completion of the program, and the specific college offering the program.

If there is a program of interest, the veteran then has the option to read more about the individual program, the course requirements, and the specific courses for which he or she would receive prior learning credit. If a military occupation has not been evaluated by one of the MnSCU colleges or universities, the veteran can request a review of his or her military occupation(s) via the Online Support Center for advising services. Veterans can also take advantage of navigational support through a phone call or chat with an Online Support Center eAdvisor.

Between 2011 and 2015, MnSCU developed **articulations to more than 18,000 military occupations** by examining similarities between military occupations and course recommendations from the American Council on Education.

Additional Material:

[Credit for Prior Learning Wizard](#)

Additionally, in 2014, [Statute 197.775 Higher Education Fairness \(updated 2019\)](#) stipulated that Minnesota State Colleges and Universities must recognize courses and award educational credits for courses that were part of a veteran's military training or service if the courses meet the standards of the American Council on Education or equivalent standards for awarding academic credits. In recognizing courses and awarding educational credits, consideration must be given to academic skills developed in all aspects of the training or service course curriculum, and may not be limited solely to the physical fitness or activity components of the course. Private institutions are encouraged to provide CPL for military experience.

More recently, in 2019, Minnesota became one of nine states given a grant by Lumina Foundation to participate in All Learning Counts. This initiative seeks to build clearer pathways to degrees/credentials for adults. It will support the work of participating institutions and systems to ensure that knowledge, skills, and abilities gained outside of formal higher education—through work, military, etc.—can be recognized and applied toward programs leading to credentials of value.

KENTUCKY – PROVISION FOR MILITARY FAMILIES

Kentucky's military CPL legislation ([HB 301-2011](#), passed in 2011) is notable because it extends benefits to spouses. The law states: active duty service members or their spouses, who are engaged in professions which require professional licensure/certification, must be allowed considerations in their licensure or certification requirements so that they may continue to maintain their professional licensure/certification.

THE MULTI-STATE COLLABORATIVE ON MILITARY CREDIT

The [Multi-State Collaborative on Military Credit](#) (MCMC) was initiated in March 2012 by the state higher education executive officers (SHEEOs) in Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio in partnership with the Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC) and support from Lumina Foundation and USA Funds. The initiative, which has expanded to thirteen states, allows states to exchange information and best practices in the areas of military credit, certifications/licensures, and technology. The ultimate goal is to remove barriers that service members may encounter and increase access to and participation in higher education.

MCMC MEMBERS: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Wisconsin

To achieve its primary aim, the MCMC has set four goals:

1. Maximize ways for student service members and veterans to transition to college;
2. Create models for consistently, transparently and effectively awarding credit for military training and experience that can be scaled regionally and nationally;
3. Establish strong partnerships with institutions and organizations for the purpose of promoting shared interests; and
4. Generate a system for documenting and tracking academic progression at the state level.

The MCMC aims to address these issues with a comprehensive approach that involves all types of institutions, including certification and non-diploma credential programs, technical colleges, community colleges, and four-year universities. The group's multi-pronged strategy a) encourages departments and institutions to learn from one another, b) builds on the existing body of work, and c) includes and advances various methods of assessing CPL.

This approach is being supported by the input of the four working groups:

- **Articulation of Academic Credit:** Identify policies and best practices to facilitate the translation of military training and experience into college credit or progress toward completing a certificate or degree program.
- **Licensure and Certification:** Determine how military occupations translate directly into licenses and certifications or as milestones toward college degrees that lead to licensure.
- **Communications and Outreach:** Identify policies that enhance the ways in which information can be communicated to service members about how their military training and experience can result in progress toward earning a postsecondary certificate, degree, or professional license or certification.
- **Data, Technology and Systems:** Develop the metrics and data processes needed to follow service members for purposes of identifying the military occupation and matching with academic credentialing, major and career choice, academic preparation, retention, time to degree, graduation success, and enrollment patterns that lead to academic success.

Potential program participants can reference [Valuing Military Learning](#) (2016) for complete details about MCMC.

On January 15, 2020, the **Midwestern Higher Education Compact** [announced](#) the receipt of grant funds from the American Institutes for Research (AIR) for joint research with the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) on a thirteen-state review of policies and implications of military transcript and experience review. This research project will be part of the National Research Collaborative on Competency-Based Education and Learning at AIR.

ADDITIONAL MILITARY OPPORTUNITIES FOR CPL

While there are a number of CPL opportunities for active and/or veteran members of the military, the process to receive credit can be time-consuming and expensive. Some, but not all costs qualify for reimbursement through the post-9/11 GI Bill®.

The American Council on Education (ACE) collaborates with the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) to review military training and experiences and recommend appropriate college credit for members of the Armed Forces. All recommendations are based on ACE reviews conducted by college and university faculty members who are actively teaching in the areas they review.

- The college may grant credit for military training experiences that are evaluated by ACE and are comparable to course content required in a student's academic program.

New England Fast Facts

- Prior military learning experiences are evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
- Students may explore standardized testing (CLEP/DSST/Excelsior) to complement military training.
- The Technical Studies program is a flexible self-designed degree program that allows for the application of prior military and other life learning experiences.
- Students should submit a Joint Services Transcript for military experience they wish to have evaluated.

For more information, visit the [ACE Military Guide Online](#)

National Standardized Tests:

- 1) **DSST** (formerly DAN TES Subject Standardized Tests) are credit-by-examination tests originated by the United States Department of Defense's Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES) program. The program is an extensive series of 38 examinations in college subject areas that are comparable to the final or end-of-course examinations in undergraduate college courses. DSST's are available for both upper and lower level credit. For more information, visit the [DSST website](#)
- 2) **CLEP** is a group of standardized tests that assess college-level knowledge in several subject areas that are administered and created by the College Board. Each institution awards credit to students who meet the college's minimum qualifying score for that exam. The tests are useful for students who have obtained knowledge outside the classroom, such as through independent study, job experience, or military training.

Acceptance of CLEP exams for transfer credits will be based on the following criteria:

- The student has earned a passing score as defined by The College Board and the college.
- The student has been accepted into a program.
- There is a course within the student's program of study that is equivalent to the CLEP exam.

CLEP scores are not calculated into a student's GPA or in any way interpreted as a grade. Students may not transfer CLEP credits for a course they have successfully completed or for a course that is more advanced than the subject of the exam. For more information, visit the [CLEP page](#) on the College Board's website.

- 3) **UExcel – Excelsior College Exams:** Individuals can register online and pay a fee (between \$110-\$470 per exam each time taken) to take a timed eligibility test for which students can receive college credit (typically 3 credits). Partial refunds are available to students who pay but decide not to take the exam. Online practice exams are also available for \$35 (two-hour exam) or \$75 (three-hour exam). Grade reports are provided immediately upon completion of an exam. UExcel exams may be taken up to four times total, but no more than three times in a given calendar year. For more information, visit the [UExcel website](#).

Customized Exams: In addition to the national standardized tests listed above, some schools offer customized exams to verify college-level learning achievement. These may be final exams of current courses or “challenge exams” designed by school faculty to assess whether an incoming student with prior learning can meet the learning objectives of a specific course. For eligible national and customized exams, test-takers can get reimbursed through the GI Bill®. For more information about eligible tests, visit the [U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs website](#).

Portfolio Assessments: A portfolio is a written document an individual prepares that describes the knowledge and experiences he or she wants assessed for college credit. Portfolios can be particularly useful to veterans and service members when there are no credit recommendations or standardized tests available. Some schools offer portfolio assessment themselves, while others outsource this service. CAEL's portfolio service is [LearningCounts.org](#), an easy-to-use online service that helps an individual develop his/her CPL portfolio. The GI Bill® reimburses individuals for

portfolio assessments done through LearningCounts.org, although it is important to note that the cost will be rounded up to one month's worth of entitlement.

Yellow Ribbon Program: The program began on August 1, 2019 for the 2019-2020 academic year. It is a provision of the law that created the Post-9/11 GI Bill®, which is available for degree-granting institutions in the U.S. or at a branch of such institutions located outside the U.S. The program allows approved private institutions of higher

learning and the VA to partially or fully fund tuition and fee expenses that exceed the established thresholds under the Post-9/11 GI Bill®. Generally, program recipients are able to attend a private school for little or no out-of-pocket costs. Only Veterans (or dependents under Transfer of Entitlement) at the 100% benefit level qualify for the program. Active duty members and spouses are not eligible, however, active duty waivers and discounts are available via the [Tuition Assistance Program](#)). Students must reapply each academic year to remain in the program. In addition, the institution must be approved to participate in the program, and veterans must apply to the school. The program is voluntary for schools. Currently, the maximum award amount for the 2019-2020 academic year is \$24,476.79.

How it works: Let's say a veteran attends a private university with a tuition of \$45,000 a year. The school is participating in the Yellow Ribbon Program and agrees to waive \$10,000 in tuition costs for veterans. The VA matches that \$10,000 waiver, making the total tuition waived \$20,000. The Post-9/11 GI Bill® will pay the legally mandated maximum of \$24,476.79, and the Yellow Ribbon Program will waive \$20,000. The VA will be responsible for tuition of \$523.21 that he or she must pay with financial aid or out-of-pocket.

More information about the program and the lists of participating Yellow Ribbon schools are posted on the [U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs website](#).

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