

Missouri Returning Heroes Act

The Missouri Returning Heroes Act, established August 28, 2008, provides reduced tuition for certain combat veterans attending public institutions of higher education.

Information for Postsecondary Institutions (returningheroesactforschools.php)

Am I eligible?

To be eligible for assistance you must meet the following requirements:

- Was a veteran who served in armed combat in the military after September 11, 2001.

To meet this requirement you must have served in a combat zone as designated by the U.S. Department of Defense and as documented on field 13 of your **DD214** ([documents/sampleDD214.pdf](#)).

If you were a member of the Reserves or National Guard you are considered to be a veteran who served in the military as long as you served in armed combat in a full-time capacity under a call to active service authorized by the President of the United States or the Secretary of Defense for a period of more than 30 consecutive days.

Institutions will look at the following indicators to determine if you meet this requirement:

- Receipt of a combat service medal:
 - Bronze Star
 - Combat Action Badge
 - Combat Action Medal
 - Combat Infantry Badge (Army)
 - Combat Ribbon (Marine)
 - Congressional Medal of Honor
 - Global War on Terror ("GWOT") Service Medal
 - Global War on Terror ("GWOT") Badge
 - Purple Heart
 - Any other Action Badge, Combat Medal, or Expeditionary Medal or Ribbon offered within a geographic area that enables the veteran to receive a combat pay tax exclusion exemption, hazardous duty pay, imminent danger pay, or hostile fire pay
- Any military service in a combat zone between September 11, 2001 and the present. **Combat Zones recognized by the Internal Revenue Service can be found on the IRS website (<https://www.irs.gov/uac/combat-zones>)**. Please note this list may not be comprehensive. Your institution may have to contact the Missouri Veterans Commission to determine if your service was in a combat zone.
- Was a Missouri resident when first entering the military, as documented by the home of record listed in field 7b of your DD214. You do not have to be a Missouri resident at the time you receive the tuition benefit.
- Discharged from military service under honorable conditions as documented in fields 24 and 28 on your DD214. Any type of discharge other than "bad conduct," "less than honorable," "undesirable," or "dishonorable" is considered to be a discharge under honorable conditions.
- Attend a **public institution of higher education** ([../public-and-independent-colleges.php](#)).

- Achieve and maintain a cumulative grade point average (CGPA) of at least 2.5, or its equivalent. Your institution will check your cumulative GPA on the same timetable it uses to calculate state grant and scholarship recipients' cumulative GPAs. Institutions typically check cumulative GPAs either at the end of each semester (2 checks per year), or at the end of each academic year (1 check per year).

You do not have to have a 2.5 CGPA the first time you receive the tuition reduction, even if you have previously attended an institution of higher education. However, you must achieve a 2.5 CGPA at the end of the first and all subsequent periods when the institution checks cumulative GPA in order to continue to receive the reduction.

- Enroll in a program leading to a certificate, or an associate or bachelor's degree. If you are pursuing a bachelor's degree and an advanced degree at the same time, the tuition reduction will apply to the portion of your coursework that is specifically designated as leading to a bachelor's degree. Your institution may consult with MDHE to determine your eligibility if your situation does not fit within this framework.

How much can I receive?

The Returning Heroes Act limits the tuition rate charged to qualifying veterans to \$50 per credit hour. If you are attending an institution that measures coursework in clock hours rather than credit hours, your institution will apply a credit hour to clock hour conversion formula to determine the amount of the tuition limitation.

The tuition reduction is applied before federal and state student aid has been applied to the tuition amount. For example, if you are eligible for \$500 in federal or state student aid and you are enrolled in 12 credit hours, your tuition rate under the Act would be \$600 (12 hours x \$50/hour = \$600). The \$600 tuition would be reduced by the \$500 in aid so you would owe \$100 in tuition. In contrast, if you had to pay full tuition of, for example, \$100 per credit hour without the tuition limitation, you would owe \$700 in tuition (12 hours x \$100/hour - \$500 financial aid = \$700).

If your institution charges fees by the credit hour and does not have any charges specifically designated as tuition, MDHE recommends the institution apply the limitation to the fee.

You are not required to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or otherwise apply for federal or state student aid, such as the federal GI Bill benefits or the state Access Missouri grant.

How long can I receive the reduced tuition?

The tuition limitation expires 10 years from the date of your last discharge from service. You may receive the reduced tuition through the end of the tenth year.