



VA Flight Training & Veteran Enrollment Guide

Chapters 30, 31, 33 & 1606 — Standalone (Part 141) Flight Schools

Benefits, approved programs, and enrollment for veterans and reservists pursuing professional flight training

Welcome, Veterans

Thank you for your service to our nation.

Your dedication, discipline, and leadership are exactly the qualities that make outstanding aviators — and we're honored you're considering Thrust Flight for the next chapter of your journey.

We also know that navigating VA education benefits can feel overwhelming, especially while managing the demands of flight training. You don't have to figure it out alone. From your very first question about eligibility to the day you earn your certificate and take to the skies as a professional pilot, Thrust Flight is with you every step of the way.

This guide explains how your VA education benefits work at Thrust Flight, what to expect during enrollment, and how to stay on track. If anything isn't clear — or if your situation changes at any point — please reach out to our School Certifying Official early. It's always easier to address questions before they become problems.

The skies ahead are yours. Let's get you there.

1. Program Overview

Veterans and reservists can fund professional flight training through several VA education programs, and each one pays very differently for a standalone (Part 141) flight school — that is, a flight school that is not part of a college degree. This guide summarizes how Chapter 30, Chapter 31, Chapter 33, and Chapter 1606 apply to

standalone flight training, then walks through Thrust Flight’s approved programs and the enrollment process for veteran students.

Why “standalone” matters

Standalone flight schools are treated as vocational, non-degree training. That changes how each program pays — including annual dollar caps, reimbursement percentages, and whether a housing allowance is available. Flight training offered through a degree-granting college follows different rules.

2. Current VA Rates

Chapter 33 (Post-9/11 GI Bill): pays net tuition and mandatory fees up to \$17,661.89 per academic year (August 1 – July 31) for flight training.

Chapter 30 (MGIB-AD): reimburses 60% of approved charges. For veterans eligible for the 3-year rate, one month of entitlement is charged for every \$2,601 VA pays for flight training (October 1, 2026 – September 30, 2027). Veterans with a 2-year eligibility rate are subject to the \$2,110 divisor for this rate period.

Chapter 1606 (MGIB-SR): reimburses 60% of approved charges; one month of entitlement per \$508 VA pays under the rate illustrated in this guide (October 1, 2026 – September 30, 2027).

Chapter 31 (VR&E): may authorize eligible training costs and a monthly subsistence allowance when flight training is specifically approved in the veteran’s rehabilitation plan.

These rates are set by VA and may change. Confirm current figures, eligibility, remaining entitlement, and program approval before finalizing any estimate. VA payment and entitlement rules vary by benefit chapter and are not based solely on the length of the program.

3. VA Benefit Programs for Flight Training

The four programs below fund standalone flight training in different ways. Each summary includes a worked example based on a \$120,000 program.

Chapter 35 — Survivors’ and Dependents’ Educational Assistance (DEA) is not available for standalone flight training at a pilot school or training center. The programs described below — Chapters 30, 31, 33, and 1606 — are the VA education benefits discussed in this guide for flight training at Thrust Flight.

3.1 Chapter 33 — Post-9/11 GI Bill

For a standalone flight school, the VA pays net tuition and mandatory fees up to an **annual national cap of \$17,661.89**. This is not a 60% split — within the cap, a veteran at the 100% eligibility tier receives 100% of approved charges.

- Payment is **prorated by eligibility tier** (100 / 90 / 80 / 70 / 60 / 50 / 40, based on qualifying service). At the 60% tier, the annual benefit is about \$10,597.
- **No monthly housing allowance (MHA)** is payable for flight training.
- **No book or supply stipend** is payable for flight training.

- The **Yellow Ribbon Program** is not applicable to standalone flight training at a pilot school. Charges above the applicable Chapter 33 annual flight-training limit may be the student's responsibility, subject to the student's eligibility and applicable VA rules.

Example — \$120,000 Program (100% tier)	Amount
Approved program cost	\$120,000
Annual national cap (100% tier)	\$17,661.89 / year
VA pays in Year 1 (up to the cap)	up to \$17,661.89
Monthly housing allowance (MHA)	Not payable
Books & supplies stipend	Not payable

The applicable annual dollar limit is an important consideration for Chapter 33. If training continues into a later academic year, another annual limit may become available, subject to the veteran's eligibility, remaining entitlement, and applicable VA rules.

3.2 Chapter 30 — Montgomery GI Bill, Active Duty (MGIB-AD)

For veterans who enrolled in the Montgomery GI Bill while on active duty. Chapter 30 reimburses a fixed share of approved charges and draws down entitlement based on the dollars the VA pays.

- **Reimburses 60% of approved flight training charges;** the veteran is responsible for the remaining 40%.
- For veterans eligible for the 3-year MGIB-AD rate, entitlement is charged at one month for every \$2,601 VA pays for flight training (effective October 1, 2026 – September 30, 2027). Veterans with a 2-year eligibility rate are subject to the \$2,110 flight-training divisor for this rate period.
- For a veteran with 36 months of remaining entitlement and the 3-year MGIB-AD flight-training rate, the entitlement calculation corresponds to approximately **\$93,636 in VA payments** before considering prior use of entitlement or any other applicable VA limitations. NOTE: This is an example. Based on length.

Example — \$120,000 Program	Amount
Approved program cost	\$120,000
VA reimbursement (60%)	\$72,000
Veteran's out-of-pocket (40%)	\$48,000
Entitlement used (example assumes 36 months)	≈ 27.7 months
Entitlement remaining	≈ 8.3 months

In this example, 60% of \$120,000 (\$72,000) is below the illustrative \$93,636 entitlement-based amount for a veteran with 36 months of remaining entitlement at the 3-year MGIB-AD rate. The example would use about 27.7 months and leave approximately 8.3 months of entitlement.

3.3 Chapter 1606 — Montgomery GI Bill, Selected Reserve (MGIB-SR)

For members of the Selected Reserve. Chapter 1606 uses the same 60% model as Chapter 30, but pays substantially less in practice because its entitlement divisor is far smaller.

- **Reimburses 60% of approved flight training charges** (the same headline percentage as Chapter 30).
- For this rate period, entitlement is charged at one month for every \$508 VA pays for flight training. Actual entitlement use depends on the veteran's remaining entitlement and applicable VA rules.
- For a veteran with 36 months of remaining entitlement, the 60% reimbursement calculation can be limited by the entitlement available. At the \$508 divisor used for this example, 36 months corresponds to approximately **\$18,288 in VA payments**. Actual payment depends on the veteran's remaining entitlement and applicable VA rules.

Example — \$120,000 Program	Amount
Approved program cost	\$120,000
Nominal 60% reimbursement	\$72,000
Illustrative entitlement amount (36 × \$508)	\$18,288
Illustrative VA payment if entitlement is exhausted	≈ \$18,288
Your out-of-pocket	≈ \$101,712

In this example, 60% of \$120,000 is \$72,000, but that amount would require about 142 months of entitlement at the \$508 divisor. Assuming 36 months of remaining entitlement, the VA payment would be limited by the entitlement available, leaving the remaining balance to the reservist.

3.4 Chapter 31 — Veteran Readiness & Employment (VR&E)

Chapter 31 can provide substantial support for flight training when a veteran qualifies, and flight training is specifically approved as part of the veteran's VR&E rehabilitation plan.

- Available only to veterans with a **service-connected disability and an employment handicap**, and only when flight training is approved in an individualized rehabilitation plan where a piloting career is a suitable employment goal.
- **When approved, VR&E may authorize eligible training costs, subject to the veteran's rehabilitation plan and applicable VA rules. There is no automatic percentage split based solely on Chapter 31 status.**
- VR&E may also provide a monthly subsistence allowance when authorized under the veteran's rehabilitation plan and applicable VA rules.

Example — \$120,000 Program (if approved)	Amount
Approved program cost	\$120,000
VA-authorized eligible training costs	Full cost
Student responsibility for approved costs	≈ \$0

Example — \$120,000 Program (if approved)	Amount
May be payable if authorized	Paid monthly
VR&E counselor/rehabilitation plan approval	Approved rehab plan

When approved, VR&E may authorize eligible training costs and may provide a subsistence allowance, subject to the veteran’s rehabilitation plan and applicable VA rules. Flight training must be specifically approved by the VR&E counselor; eligibility alone does not guarantee payment.

4. Side-by-Side Comparison — \$120,000 Standalone Flight Program

Program	What the VA pays	Your out-of-pocket	Housing / extras	Main limiting factor
Ch 33 (100%)	100% of approved charges, up to \$17,661.89 / academic year	Charges above the annual cap	No MHA, no book stipend	Annual dollar cap
Ch 30 (MGIB-AD)	60% of approved charges; example = \$72,000	\$48,000	None	Applicable divisor and remaining entitlement
Ch 1606 (MGIB-SR)	60% of approved charges; may be limited by entitlement	Depends on remaining entitlement and amount paid by VA	None	\$508 divisor in this example; remaining entitlement
Ch 31 (if approved)	May authorize eligible approved training costs	Depends on VR&E authorization	Monthly subsistence allowance	Rehabilitation-plan approval

Chapters 30 and 1606 both reimburse 60% of approved flight-training charges, but the amount of entitlement consumed differs by benefit and eligibility. Chapter 30 uses a much larger entitlement divisor than Chapter 1606 under the rates illustrated in this guide.

5. Important Considerations

- **Private Pilot Certificate and Medical Certificate Required.** For VA vocational flight training, the student must already hold a private pilot certificate. For an Airline Transport Pilot course, the student must have a valid first-class medical certificate on the date training begins. For other flight courses, the student must have a valid second-class medical certificate on the date training begins. The school and specific training program must also meet applicable FAA, State Approving Agency, and VA approval requirements.
- **Multi-year planning (Chapter 33).** Because the Chapter 33 benefit is an annual cap, spreading training across academic years can capture more than one year’s cap.
- **Verify current rates.** The MGIB divisors are fixed for the benefit year ending September 30, 2027, and the Chapter 33 flight cap updates each August 1.
- **Confirm eligibility and approval.** Work with the School Certifying Official (SCO) and the VA to confirm your eligibility tier and that your specific program is approved.

For standalone flight training, Chapter 31 may provide substantial coverage when flight training is specifically authorized in the veteran's VR&E rehabilitation plan. Chapter 33 pays approved charges within the applicable annual flight-training limit, subject to the veteran's eligibility percentage. Chapters 30 and 1606 reimburse 60% of approved charges, with entitlement charged according to the applicable divisor and the veteran's remaining entitlement.

Choosing the right benefit depends on eligibility, remaining entitlement, program cost, and the applicable VA rules.

Figures shown are current published VA rates and illustrative examples. Reimbursement rates, entitlement charges, caps, and subsistence allowances are set by VA and may change. Verify current rates, eligibility, remaining entitlement, and program approval before making financial decisions. This guide is informational and is not financial advice. VA payment and entitlement rules vary by benefit chapter and may depend on approved charges, remaining entitlement, eligibility percentage, training status, and applicable limits.

6. Approved Flight Programs

VA education benefits may only be used for programs approved by the Texas State Approving Agency (SAA) and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Approved programs may include:

Program	Vocational Objective
Instrument Rating	Develop advanced navigation and instrument flight skills required for professional aviation operations.
Commercial Pilot Certificate	Prepare students for employment as professional commercial pilots.
Certified Flight Instructor (CFI)	Prepare pilots to provide flight instruction and meet FAA certification requirements.
Commercial Pilot Accelerated	Prepare students for employment as professional commercial pilots through an accelerated FAA Commercial Pilot training curriculum.

Students should consult the School Certifying Official for the most current list of VA-approved programs and eligible training courses.

7. Enrollment Process

Step	Action
Step 1	Apply for admission to the Thrust Flight program.
Step 2	Apply for VA education benefits through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.
Step 3	Receive your Certificate of Eligibility (COE).
Step 4	Submit all required documentation to the School Certifying Official.
Step 5	Complete enrollment and flight training agreements.
Step 6	Enrollment is certified to the VA.
Step 7	Begin flight training.

8. Required Documentation

Veteran students must provide the following. Missing items can delay certification.

Required for Enrollment

- Certificate of Eligibility (COE)
- Government-issued photo ID
- FAA Medical Certificate (if required)
- FAA Pilot Certificate (if applicable)
- High School Diploma, GED, or equivalent
- Prior education transcripts (if applicable)

Veterans

- DD Form 214, Member Copy 4 (if requested)

Active Duty

- Military Tuition Assistance documentation (if applicable)

Chapter 31 Students

- Authorization from your VR&E counselor

Failure to provide required documentation may delay certification.

9. Certification Procedures

The School Certifying Official certifies enrollment through the VA Enrollment Manager system. Certification may include:

- Program name
- Enrollment dates
- Flight training course approval
- Tuition and fees
- Flight training charges
- Enrollment changes

Students should allow sufficient processing time for VA benefit payments.

10. Attendance Requirements

Because flight training requires scheduled ground and flight instruction, attendance is closely monitored. Students are expected to:

- Attend all scheduled flight lessons
- Attend required ground training sessions
- Maintain progress in accordance with FAA training requirements

Excessive absences, repeated cancellations, or failure to maintain training activity may result in:

- Academic warning
- Probation
- Administrative withdrawal
- Withdrawal from the program and/or reporting of the enrollment change to VA, as required.

Students should notify the school immediately regarding anticipated absences.

11. Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)

Students must maintain satisfactory academic progress. SAP includes:

Academic Performance

- Successful completion of required training stages
- Passing written examinations and evaluations
- Demonstrating competency in FAA-required subject areas

Flight Performance

- Progressing through flight training syllabus requirements
- Completing stage checks and practical evaluations

Conduct

- Compliance with school policies
- Compliance with FAA regulations and safety standards

Changes in enrollment or failure to meet applicable program requirements may affect the student's VA benefits.

12. Changes in Enrollment

Students must immediately notify the School Certifying Official regarding:

- Withdrawal from training
- Leave of absence
- Schedule changes
- Address changes
- Program changes
- Name changes
- Training interruptions

Failure to report changes may result in VA overpayments. The student is responsible for repayment of any debt created by incorrect or delayed reporting.

13. Tuition and VA Payments

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs determines eligibility and payment amounts. VA payments vary based on:

- Benefit chapter
- Remaining entitlement
- Eligibility percentage
- Program approval status
- Flight training course eligibility

Students remain responsible for charges not covered by VA benefits.

Pending VA Payments Compliance

In accordance with 38 U.S.C. § 3679(e):

Thrust Flight will not impose any penalty — including the assessment of late fees, denial of access to classes, flight training, or other institutional facilities, or a requirement that a covered individual borrow additional funds — because of a delayed payment from the Department of Veterans Affairs under Chapter 31 or Chapter 33.

14. Refund Policy

Students withdrawing from training are subject to the school's published refund policy as outlined in the School Catalog and Enrollment Agreement. The refund policy explains:

- Student cancellations
- Withdrawals
- Terminations
- Tuition adjustments
- Refund calculations

Students should review all enrollment documents carefully before beginning training.

15. Student Responsibilities

Staying on top of a few key responsibilities will help ensure your benefits continue without interruption and your training stays on track. If anything changes or you're unsure about something, reach out to the SCO early — we're here to help. Key responsibilities include:

- Providing accurate information
- Maintaining attendance
- Maintaining satisfactory progress
- Reporting enrollment changes

- Monitoring benefit entitlement
- Reviewing VA correspondence
- Responding to requests from the VA or the school
- Maintaining FAA eligibility requirements

When in doubt, contact the SCO before a situation escalates — small issues are much easier to resolve when caught early.

16. Veteran Resources

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Benefits information, eligibility, and education assistance — www.va.gov.

GI Bill Comparison Tool

Compare approved schools and flight training programs — www.va.gov/education/gi-bill-comparison-tool.

Ask VA

Submit questions directly to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs — ask.va.gov.

Texas Veterans Commission

Additional veteran support and counseling resources.

FAA Airmen Certification

Information on pilot certification requirements and FAA regulations — www.faa.gov.

17. Frequently Asked Questions

Thrust Flight — VA Flight Training Benefits

When will VA pay my benefits?

VA payment timelines vary by benefit chapter and the completeness of your enrollment certification. Once your School Certifying Official submits your enrollment, the VA processes the claim and issues payment based on eligibility and entitlement. Allow sufficient processing time, especially during peak enrollment periods. For payment-status questions, contact the VA Education Call Center at 1-888-GIBILL-1 (1-888-442-4551).

How much will the Post-9/11 GI Bill (Chapter 33) pay for flight training?

For VA-approved vocational flight training, the Post-9/11 GI Bill pays up to the annual maximum established by the VA.

- Payment is based on your eligibility percentage (50%–100%).
- Any cost above the annual VA limit is the student's responsibility.

Because rates change annually, verify current benefit levels before enrolling using the VA's GI Bill Comparison Tool at www.va.gov/education/gi-bill-comparison-tool.

Will my Chapter 33 benefits cover my entire Commercial Pilot program?

Not necessarily. The VA pays only up to the annual vocational flight training cap. If your program cost exceeds that amount, or your eligibility is less than 100%, you are responsible for the remaining balance.

What happens when I reach the annual Chapter 33 maximum?

Once the VA has paid the annual maximum for vocational flight training:

- No additional payments are made until the next benefit year.
- You may continue training, but at your own expense unless other funding is available.

Can I continue training after my VA benefits are exhausted?

Yes. You may continue by paying out of pocket or using alternative funding sources. VA benefits may resume in the next benefit year if entitlement remains.

Can I use both Chapter 33 and Chapter 31 benefits?

Generally, VA will not pay Chapter 31 and Chapter 33 benefits for the same period of enrollment. If you are eligible for both, coordinate with your VR&E counselor and the School Certifying Official before enrolling.

Do I have to pay the school while waiting for VA benefits?

No. In accordance with 38 U.S.C. § 3679(e), Thrust Flight will not charge late fees due to VA delays, deny access to classes or training facilities, or require additional borrowing due to delayed VA payments. Students remain responsible for non-VA-covered costs.

Will I receive a Monthly Housing Allowance (MHA)?

No Monthly Housing Allowance (MHA) is payable for vocational flight training. No Chapter 33 books-and-supplies payment is payable for flight training.

Will VA evaluate my prior education or military training?

Yes. The school must evaluate prior education, training, certifications, and military experience as applicable to determine whether previous training affects the student's approved program or remaining training requirements. Any applicable prior-credit determination should follow the school's approved policy and VA requirements.

Why is attendance important?

VA students must maintain satisfactory attendance and progress. The School Certifying Official must report attendance issues, withdrawals, or terminations to the VA, which may affect benefits.

What happens if I withdraw or fail a course?

Withdrawals or failing grades may impact Satisfactory Academic Progress, delay completion, and trigger VA reporting and possible overpayments. Mitigating circumstances may be considered by the VA.

Who should I contact for VA questions?

School Certifying Official (SCO)

Tracy Copeland

Phone: 972-634-0240

Email: tr.copeland@thrustflight.com

For eligibility or payment decisions, contact the VA directly.

Important Notice

VA benefits are determined solely by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and are subject to federal law. Flight training is subject to benefit-specific eligibility requirements, applicable annual or entitlement limits, and program approval requirements.

Certification Statement

This guide provides general information regarding veteran educational benefits. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs determines eligibility, entitlement, and payment of all benefits. School policies are subject to change in accordance with federal, state, FAA, Texas State Approving Agency, and VA requirements.

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