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Veterans Should Check Out Post-9/11 GI Bill 11/11/2009

Veterans of the United States military may be eligible to receive up to a \$3,000 advance in education benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The offer is available to those who meet certain criteria under the Post-9/11 GI Bill.

The bill provides financial support for education and housing to those with at least 90 days of aggregate service on or after September 11, 2001, or to individuals discharged with a service-connected disability after 30 days. A soldier must have received an honorable discharge to be eligible, and the amount of support for which he or she may qualify is dependent on one's place of residence and the type of degree being pursued.

"Before this, veterans received one payment per month and it had to be applied to education," said Donna M. Simms, Lindenwood Academic Services Representative and VA Certifying Official. "The new bill also allows for things such as housing and book stipends books to offset other college costs. It also makes it more feasible to attend universities like Lindenwood, which are private and may initially appear to be more expensive to attend."

To assist veterans, Lindenwood participates in the Yellow Ribbon GI Education Enhancement Program (Yellow Ribbon Program), which reimburses veterans the difference of more expensive tuition rates. Lindenwood's Yellow Ribbon Grant contributes up to 50 percent of those expenses and VA matches the university's contribution. Amounts are based on the length of individual service.

For more information about either the Post- 9/11 GI Bill or the Yellow Ribbon Program, please contact Simms at (636) 949-4105 or visit www.va.gov.