



# State Approving Agency and VA Education Benefits

CPSI Lunch and Learn

July 17, 2024

# State Approving Agency (SAA)

- Established by Congress after the passage of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, known as the GI Bill®, to work in partnership with VA to ensure education and training programs funded under the GI Bill are of quality and represent value to the veteran community and taxpayers
- Each Governor designates the state department where the SAA will be housed
  - Indiana SAA is housed in the Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs
  - SAA employees are state employees who operate on a federal contract/cooperative agreement that outlines and defines responsibilities under Title 38 US Code
- Primary responsibility is to approve programs for eligible veterans and dependents to use their GI Bill® benefits
- Help VA in preventing fraud, waste, and abuse in the administration of the GI Bill®

# SAA's Duties

- Review educational institutions and training establishments
  - Institutions of Higher Learning
    - Public, private
    - For-profit, nonprofit
    - Accredited, non-accredited
  - Non-College Degree Schools
    - Public, private
    - For-profit, nonprofit
    - Accredited, non-accredited
  - Apprenticeships
    - DOL-Registered apprenticeships
    - Non DOL-Registered apprenticeships
  - On-the-Job Training Programs
  - Vocational Flight Schools
  - High Schools
  - License and Certification Exams
- Ensure facilities meet federal and state regulations to become approved
- Determine the eligibility of participation in remedial training, practical training, online/distance learning
- Provide technical assistance to help facilities obtain and maintain approval
- Conduct Risk-Based Surveys and Targeted Risk-Based Reviews
- Conduct outreach to educational institutions, training establishments, and military-affiliated community

# GI Bill®

The GI Bill® is a program administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) that helps veterans, service members, and their dependents pay for college, graduate school, and training programs. Since 1944, the GI Bill® has helped qualifying veterans and their family members get money to cover all or some of the costs for school or training.






Different chapters have different eligibility requirements based on service and have different payment rates,

- Chapter 33 – Post 9/11 GI Bill®
  - Most popular
  - Those at the 100% eligibility rate receive a monthly stipend and book stipend. VA may pay all eligible tuition and fees directly to the school on the student's behalf.
  - Some service members may transfer their Post 9/11 benefit to their dependents
- Other chapters
  - Chapter 30 – Montgomery GI Bill® Active Duty (MGIB-AD)
  - Chapter 1606 – Montgomery GI Bill® Selected Reserve (MGIB-SR)
  - Chapter 35 – Survivors' and Dependents' Education Assistance (DEA)
  - Chapter 32 – Vietnam Era Veterans' Educational Assistance Program (VEAP)



## How to Apply

# For Approval

-  Step 1: Contact Program Director to get application
-  Step 2: Designate School Certifying Officials
-  Step 3: New School Certifying Official training
-  Step 4: Submit required documentation
-  Step 5: SAA will conduct inspection visit



# Step 1

## SAA Representatives

Director: Amber Mertens (317) 232-3917

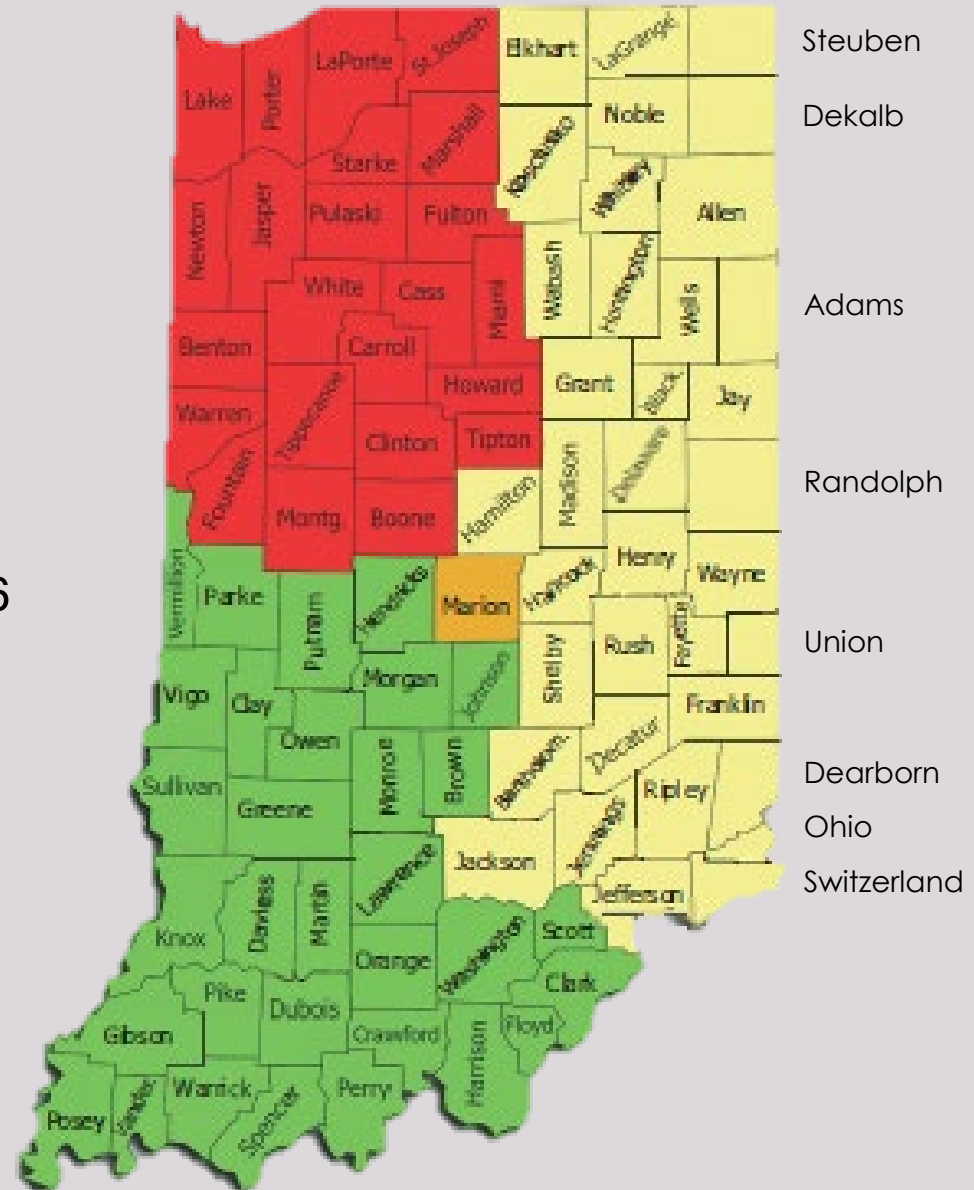
● Asst. Director: Tim Wilson (317) 232-3916

● Sean Litchford (317) 234-6061

● Gary Rainey (317) 234-5658

● Kim Bloodgood (317) 234-5865

Email: [saa@dva.in.gov](mailto:saa@dva.in.gov)





# Steps 2 & 3

## Step 2:

- Facilities should designate a School Certifying Official (SCO) who is:
  - Trustworthy
  - Customer Service Oriented
- VA recommends one (1) SCO full-time employee for every 125 GI Bill® students and/or dependents enrolled

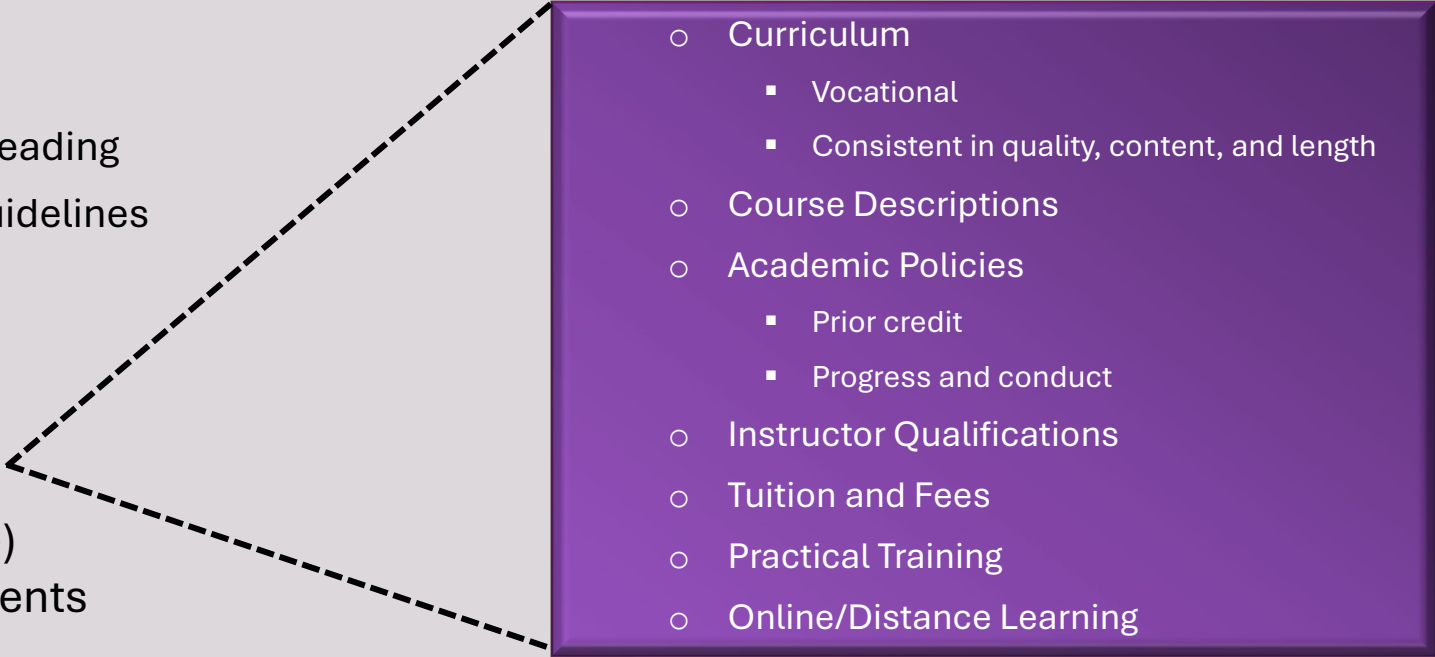
## Step 3:

- The designated School Certifying Official **MUST** complete required online training and submit Certificates of Completion
- During this step facilities should prepare their approval package!

# Step 4: Documentation

The SAA reviews various types documentation submitted by educational facilities. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Application
- Advertising
  - Not erroneous, deceptive, or misleading
  - Not violating GI Bill® trademark guidelines
- Accreditation
  - Participation in Title IV
- Business licenses
- Catalogs/Bulletins/Handbooks
- Financial statements (if applicable)
- Contracts and articulation agreements between educational institutions

- 
- Curriculum
    - Vocational
    - Consistent in quality, content, and length
  - Course Descriptions
  - Academic Policies
    - Prior credit
    - Progress and conduct
  - Instructor Qualifications
  - Tuition and Fees
  - Practical Training
  - Online/Distance Learning



# After Approval

## Facility is Added to:

- WEAMS (Web Enabled Approval Management System ) site
- GI Bill(R) Comparison Tool

## Facility Receives:

- WEAMS report from VA
- Official letter of approval from the SAA

## Facility Agrees to:

- Certify student enrollment
- Maintain records
  - Visits by VA, SAA, or 3<sup>rd</sup> party contractor
  - Compliance Surveys, Risk-Based Surveys, Supervisory Visits, Targeted Risk-Based Reviews
- Maintain approval
  - Submit updated catalogs/bulletins to SAA
  - Notify SAA of new programs
  - Notify SAA of changes to address, ownership, accreditation
- Participate in any required training provided by VA



Questions