



For Members of the U.S. Armed Forces



What you need to know about your federal student loan benefits

Thank you for your service

As America's servicemen and servicewomen, you've always been there for us when we needed you. The Department of Education and your student loan servicers appreciate the sacrifices you make for our country and we want to be there for you, too. Our teams of dedicated customer care representatives can help you access benefits available on your loans, review repayment options, and help you create a plan to manage your student loans while you are far from home.

Student Loan Benefits for Members of the Armed Forces

In acknowledgement of your service to our country, there are special student loan benefits and repayment options available from the U.S. Department of Education (ED) and the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD). This brochure provides an overview of these benefits and options. Contact your student loan servicer for additional information, including eligibility information and required documentation.

Benefit	Description	Loan and Service Eligibility	Documentation Requirements
Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA) Interest Rate Cap	Interest on student loans obtained prior to your military service is capped at 6% during periods of active duty.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal and private loans. Loans disbursed prior to active duty start date. For federal loans, the earliest benefit effective date is August 14, 2008, and active duty periods that fall on or after that date may qualify. If you consolidate your federal loans after your active duty start date, your consolidation loan may not be eligible for the benefit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your student loan servicer will proactively check an authorized military database*, and if you are listed as being in active duty status the servicer will automatically apply the benefit to eligible loan(s). If your military orders indicate a different active duty start date, you may submit a copy, and the benefit start date will reflect the earlier active duty start date. You also may initiate the benefit by submitting a copy of your orders.
Military Service Deferment	You can postpone loan repayment during certain periods of active duty and immediately following active duty.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal and some private loans. Generally offered for active duty military service during a war, other military operation, or national emergency. Assigned to a duty station other than your normal station. Generally, periods of training or attending service school are not eligible for deferment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed Military Service and Post-Active Duty Student Deferment Request form; or Written statement from commanding/ personnel officer along with completed borrower section of deferment form; or Copy of military orders along with completed borrower section of deferment form; or Verbal request from you or your representative if documentation cannot be submitted, for the initial twelve-month period for federal loans.
Deferments After Active Duty	You can postpone repayment while you prepare to return to school following your active duty.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal and some private loans. Following service during a war, other military operation, or national emergency. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Military Service and Post-Active Duty Student Deferment Request form; or Written statement from commanding/ personnel officer along with completed borrower section of deferment form; or Copy of military orders.
Public Service Loan Forgiveness	You may qualify for forgiveness of the remaining balance of your Federal Direct Loans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal Direct Loans only. Employed full-time at a qualifying government or nonprofit public service organization, including military service. Make 120 on-time qualifying payments after October 1, 2007 while in a qualifying income driven or 10 year standard repayment plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit an Employment Certification Form to determine eligibility.

* Federal loan servicers and many private loan servicers complete this proactive match. Contact your loan servicer for eligibility questions or for more information.

Benefit	Description	Loan and Service Eligibility	Documentation Requirements
0% Interest	While you are serving in a hostile area that qualifies you for special pay, you do not have to pay interest for up to 60 months.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal Direct Loans made on or after October 1, 2008. • The portion of a Direct Consolidation Loan that represents loans made on or after October 1, 2008. 	<p>Proof of deployment in a hostile area, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A certifying official's statement and signature; or • Military orders showing you're serving in a hostile area; or • A Leave and Earnings Statement showing you're receiving hostile or imminent danger pay.
Income-Driven Repayment Plans	Repayment plans that base your monthly payment on your income are available for federal student loans. Under these plans, you may qualify for a low or zero payment amount with the possibility of forgiveness of the remaining balance in 20-25 years.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eligibility is based on your income and varies with the loan type and date the loan was made. Contact your student loan servicer to determine your eligibility. • Private loans are not eligible for these plans; contact your loan servicer for available options. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income-Driven Repayment Plan Request form and documentation of income.
HEROES Act Waiver	While you are on active duty, ED waives many of the documentation requirements attached to federal student loan benefits. For example, if you are on an income-driven repayment plan and military service prevents you from providing updated information on your family size and income, you can request to have your monthly payment amount maintained.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal loans. • Active duty military service during a war, other military operation, or national emergency. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Military orders. • Your student loan servicer will proactively apply a waiver if they have information that you are actively serving in the military and qualify for the waiver.
Department of Defense (DOD) Repayment of Your Loans	In certain circumstances, as determined by the DOD, all or a portion of your student loans may be repaid by the DOD.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Varies based on branch of military. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact your designated Military Personnel Officer or representative for application process details.
Veterans Total and Permanent Disability Discharge	If you have a service-connected disability, you may qualify for discharge of your student loans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal and some private loans. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentation from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs verifying that you have a service-connected disability; and • Total and Permanent Disability Request form.

Helpful tips for active duty or if you are deployed

1. Consider granting power of attorney to an individual you trust to allow him or her to manage your financial matters, including your student loans. The person to whom you give power of attorney can sign documents and act on your behalf. The legal assistance office on your military base can assist with establishing a power of attorney. As an alternative, you can provide your servicer with the name of the person you approve to receive information about your loan.
2. Establish an account on your servicer's website, which will allow you to view information about your student loan and make payments online.
3. Provide your servicer with your current contact information, including an e-mail address, to ease communication.
4. Make interest payments, even if you have military deferment available to you. This will keep your balance from increasing and could save you money in the long run.
5. Review your repayment options. Repayment plans based on your income may provide a better outcome for federal student loans, as you may qualify for a low payment and loan forgiveness.
6. Sign up for automatic payments to help keep your loan in good standing.
7. Place an active duty alert on your credit report to reduce the risk that you'll become a victim of identity theft. When a business sees an active duty alert on your credit report, it must verify your identity before issuing credit. You may designate a personal representative (a spouse or another trusted person) who can act on your behalf to verify your identity or remove your active duty alert if needed.

Useful student loan resources

Resource	Description
Federal Student Aid StudentAid.gov/military StudentAid.gov 1-800-4-FED-AID	Learn more about government and nonprofit organizations that offer money for college to veterans, future military personnel, active duty personnel, or those related to veterans or active duty personnel. If you have federal student loans, you can learn about repayment plans, deferment and forbearance, and other options to help you repay your loans.
National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS®) NSLDS.ed.gov	Find out who is servicing your federal loans with NSLDS's comprehensive database.
DOD and VA Military Information Programs MilitaryOneSource.mil/ TodaysMilitary.com/living/paying-for-college Benefits.va.gov/gibill/	Information and resources for servicemembers and their families including information on veterans benefits and paying for college.
Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA) DMDC.osd.mil/appj/scra/	Get more information about the benefits available through SCRA.
Equifax - Equifax.com Experian - Experian.com TransUnion - Transunion.com	These are nationwide consumer reporting agencies where you can place an active duty alert on your credit report. Simply enter "active duty alert" in the website search box for forms and contact information.
Veterans Disability Discharge Program DisabilityDischarge.com	Get more information on loan discharge for disabled veterans.