



Workforce Issuance

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☐ Policy ☒ Information

To: Chief Elected Officials
MassHire Workforce Board Chairs
MassHire Workforce Board Directors
Title I Administrators
MassHire Career Center Directors
Title I Fiscal Officers
MDCS Operations Managers

cc: WIOA State Partners

From: Alice Sweeney, Director
MassHire Department of Career Services

Date: August 28, 2019

Subject: **Discharging the Federal Student Loan Debt of Totally and Permanently Disabled Veterans**

Purpose: To notify MassHire Workforce Boards, MassHire Career Center Operators and other workforce partners of the [Presidential Memorandum](#), signed August 21, 2019, on discharging federal student loan debt of totally and permanently disabled Veterans.

Background: The Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended by the Higher Education Opportunity Act in 2008 and other acts (Higher Education Act), honors Veterans who are totally and permanently disabled as a result of their service to the Nation by providing for the discharge of their Federal student loan debt. Borrowers who have been determined by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to be unemployable due to a service-connected condition and who provide documentation of that determination to the Secretary of Education are entitled to the discharge of such debt.

For the last decade, Veterans seeking loan discharges have been required to submit an application to the Secretary of Education with proof of their disabilities obtained from the Department of Veterans Affairs. The process has been overly complicated and difficult, and prevented too many Veterans from receiving the relief for which they are eligible. This has inflicted significant hardship and serious harm on these Veterans and has frustrated the intent of the Congress that their Federal student loan debt be discharged.

Only half of the approximately 50,000 totally and permanently disabled Veterans who currently qualify for the discharge of their Federal student loan debt have availed themselves of the benefits provided to them by the Higher Education Act. This has created a serious and critical problem for disabled Veterans, who must deal with the day-to-day consequences of their service-connected injuries, and for our military, as readiness and recruitment suffer when we do not take care of our Veterans. There is a pressing need to quickly and effectively resolve this problem. Prompt action is being taken to ensure that all totally and permanently disabled Veterans are able to obtain, with minimal burden, the Federal student loan debt discharges to which they are legally entitled.

Action

Required: Please share this information as appropriate.

Effective: Immediately.