

**Rhode Island Board of Governors
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RHODE ISLAND BOARD OF GOVERNORS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION ANNOUNCES IN-STATE TUITION PROGRAM FOR VETERANS

The program grants in-state tuition status to veterans
of any branch of the Armed Forces or National Guard

CRANSTON, RHODE ISLAND, MAY 18, 2009: The Rhode Island Board of Governors for Higher Education (RIBGHE) has approved a change in policy which grants in-state tuition to veterans of any branch of the American Armed Forces as well as to veterans of any branch of a state's National Guard. The new policy essentially waives the current one-year requirement for veterans to establish residency in the state of Rhode Island before they can qualify for in-state tuition rates.

“We have made a conscious decision as a system of higher education to work at being more welcoming and hospitable to our veterans,” said Judge Frank Caprio, RIBGHE board chair. “These courageous men and women have made great sacrifices in leaving behind their families, their jobs and all that is familiar to them in life to serve our state and our nation. Many have served in combat overseas. Others have served equally as admirably assisting their fellow Americans in recovering from natural disasters in our own country. These veterans deserve our admiration and respect, and aiding their efforts to secure a college degree is one small way we can and should show our appreciation for everything they have done,” Judge Caprio said.

“In moving to change this policy, I believe we are in keeping with the spirit of the new federal GI bill which provides a greater and more expanded menu of education benefits for our military veterans,” said Commissioner of Higher Education Jack R. Warner. “Other states are moving in this direction as well, although some have community service components attached to their requirements. We did not feel that was necessary here.

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“It is our belief that veterans have already completed the highest level of community service possible in serving our country. We are pleased and proud to be able to offer them an opportunity to attend Rhode Island’s state institutions of higher education at in-state tuition rates,” Commissioner Warner said.

The new policy states that a veteran of any branch of the United States Marines, United States Navy, United States Army, United States Air Force and United States Coast Guard and/or any veteran of any branch of a state’s National Guard who has been on active duty for a minimum of 24 months shall, upon establishing domicile in the state of Rhode Island, be entitled to classification as a Rhode Island resident for the purposes of determining tuition and fees at any state institution of higher education. A veteran who was injured while on active duty and whose injury caused him/her to be on active duty for a period of less than 24 months shall, upon establishing domicile in the state of Rhode Island, be entitled to this benefit as well.

The determination of tuition and fees applies to both undergraduate and graduate students.

Veterans seeking this benefit must have a Certificate of Eligibility issued by the federal Department of Veterans Affairs as the appropriate conformation of federal GI Bill educational benefits. In addition, the veteran must have a Rhode Island mailing address (not a post office box) and either be a US citizen or possess a permanent residency card.

A veteran must meet the academic and eligibility requirements of the University of Rhode Island, Rhode Island College or the Community College of Rhode Island and any school, college or program within those institutions to which the veteran might apply. Once the qualified veteran is admitted to one of those institutions, he/she may then be granted Rhode Island resident status for the purpose of paying tuition.

The benefit is transferable to a spouse and/or dependent(s) when the qualifying veteran has served a minimum of ten (10) years on active duty in one of the aforementioned branches of the Armed Forces. In addition the qualifying veteran must be a Rhode Island resident at the time he/she seeks to transfer the benefit to his/her spouse and/or dependent(s).

The benefit begins on August 1, 2009 for any term of enrollment begun after that date.

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Status as a Rhode Island resident does not apply immediately to state-sponsored financial aid programs. In order to qualify for state-sponsored financial aid, a veteran must be a Rhode Island resident since the January 31st prior to the academic year in which he/she enrolls at an institution. The veteran's Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) must be filed on or before March 1 for the year in which the veteran is seeking state-sponsored financial aid.

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