



## VETERANS BENEFITS AT NOLS

NOLS is excited to have eight courses *based in Wyoming* approved for Veterans Benefits according to Title 38, United States Code and the Veterans Educational Assistance Improvements Act of 2010. The following Expedition and Wilderness Medicine courses are eligible for direct certification by NOLS:

- Rocky Mountain Instructor Course
- Rocky Mountain Outdoor Educator
- Rocky Mountain Outdoor Educator w/ Wilderness First Responder
- Rocky Mountain Outdoor Educator Semester
- Wilderness Medicine and Rescue Semester
- Wilderness EMT (*Wyoming Courses Only*)
- Wilderness First Responder (*Wyoming Courses Only*)
- Wilderness First Aid (*Wyoming Courses Only*)

### APPLY FOR YOUR NOLS COURSE

The first step toward utilizing VA benefits for a NOLS course is to apply or register for the course you are interested in from the list above. Once you have done so, please contact NOLS to let us know you will be using VA Benefits so we can make sure you have all the information you need.

### SUBMIT YOUR REQUIRED FORMS TO NOLS

NOLS needs the following items to certify your enrollment with the VA:

- Certificate of Eligibility
- DD-214

If you've used your VA Benefits at another school or university in the past, NOLS also needs:

- A copy of the confirmation page showing you have updated your VA Form 22-1995
- Unofficial copies of college transcripts from schools you've used your VA Benefits at in the past.

### FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

NOLS provides a different kind of education than you can get in other places, and that means your VA Benefits work differently here than they do at other institutions.

## **NOLS EXPEDITION COURSES**

NOLS Expedition courses take place in remote, backcountry settings. Because of this, the room and board portion of your course doesn't go toward renting an apartment and eating in a cafeteria, it goes toward rations, group equipment (tents, stoves, books), wilderness permits, and transportation to and from the remote places we operate in. When you see the "tuition" prices listed on our website, they include the cost of room and board. Here's how it works for you:

- The VA will pay 80% of the total cost of your course if you are 100% eligible for your benefits.
- The other 20% of the total cost is room and board. As you know, the VA will not pay for room and board, and NOLS requires that you pay this portion on your NOLS Dashboard before your course begins.
- If you are eligible for the Basic Housing Allowance, you will receive a monthly disbursement from the VA based on the cost of living in Lander, WY (82520) where NOLS Rocky Mountain and NOLS Headquarters is based. To find out if you're eligible for the Basic Housing Allowance, you can give the VA a call at 1-888-442-4551.
- You are also required to pay the equipment deposit for your course prior to the start date. More information about how required equipment works at NOLS is outlined below.
- You have the option of purchasing the Tuition Insurance for your course. This is not a required fee.

## **EQUIPMENT ON EXPEDITION COURSES**

Having the right equipment is as necessary for your NOLS Expedition course as having the right books for a history class. You need it to complete the course successfully. Here's how required equipment works at NOLS:

As you saw above, NOLS requires that you pay your equipment deposit before your course begins. At course end, however, NOLS will review your itemized NOLS equipment bill and request payment from the VA for the cost of equipment *required* for your course. The VA has strict regulations surrounding what equipment items for your course can be certified for reimbursement. They are as follows:

- NOLS can certify items that are *required* for your course. This does not include duplicated items, optional items, or items that NOLS provides you.
- NOLS can only certify items with the VA that are rented or purchased *from NOLS*.
- Renting vs Buying: When looking at your NOLS equipment list, you will see that some items are only available for rent, some items are only available for purchase, and some are available for rental or purchase.
- If you choose to purchase an item that is available to rent from NOLS, the VA will not cover *any* of the cost of your purchase. Only if an item is not available for rental will the VA cover the cost of a purchase.

For your Expedition course if you have seek more information regarding room/board cost, obtain fax number to convey documents, to speak to a School Certifying Official, or have other questions, please contact the NOLS Expeditions at 800-710-6657, extension 1.

## **NOLS WILDERNESS MEDICINE COURSES**

NOLS Wilderness Medicine courses are classroom-based courses, room and board is included in the tuition on the website. We require room and board payment out of pocket before the course begins, if you are eligible for the basic housing allowance, the VA will distribute a monthly stipend to you to account for the cost of room and board. For more information regarding room/board cost, obtain fax number to convey documents or to speak to a School Certifying Official, please contact the NOLS Wilderness Medicine Admission Office at 866-831-9001.

## TO APPLY FOR VA BENEFITS

Please refer to the Road Map for Success on the VA website: <http://www.gibill.va.gov/apply-for-benefits/>

### STEPS ON THE ROAD MAP TO SUCCESS

Step 1: Determine Your Best Benefit

Step 2: Collect Your Paperwork and Information

Step 3: Choosing a School (*VA designations for NOLS Expeditions is listed under NOLS; NOLS Wilderness Medicine is listed under Wilderness Medicine Institute*)

Step 4: Compare Programs

Step 5: Apply Online (VONAPP)

### INCLUDE THE APPROPRIATE VA FORMS ACCORDING TO THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

If you have not used Veterans benefits before, or are electing to switch to Chapter 33 (Post 9/11) from a previously used chapter, choose Education Benefits (VA Form 22-1990) from the dropdown menu.

If you have used Veterans benefits before, choose Change of Program/Place of Training (VA Form 22-1995) from the dropdown menu.

You will need to submit a copy of the DD Form 214 (Discharge Record) with the appropriate VA forms. **For additional information regarding required paperwork please refer to the VA website and NOLS' requirements above.** For additional assistance and information call 888-GIBILL-1 (1-888-442-4551)

## NOLS VETERANS BENEFITS POLICIES

**ELIGIBILITY:** Candidates for NOLS Outdoor Educator and Instructor Courses or the Wilderness EMT course must meet requirements for these courses as outlined by the NOLS Expedition or Wilderness Medicine Admissions Office.

**PRIOR TRAINING CREDIT:** NOLS does not grant credit for prior training, although experience gained personally or through other organizations will be considered for admission to the Instructor Course. To use VA benefits, your NOLS course must provide you with additional training or expertise. You are not eligible to use VA benefits to take any course for which you already have equivalent training or experience.

**EVALUATION:** Students on all NOLS courses will receive feedback concerning their progress throughout their course. On Expedition courses, instructors will provide verbal evaluation to all students, and at course end, the student will receive a written evaluation that consists of both a letter grade and prose. A student must complete the course with an overall grade of C or better to ensure receipt of a NOLS diploma. The written evaluation will be kept with the student's records and can be requested in writing from the NOLS Expedition Admission Office.

WEMT and WFR courses are offered through NOLS Wilderness Medicine. These courses lead to nationally recognized certification. Students must successfully complete written and practical examination. Successful course completion on the Wilderness EMT course requires an average of 80%, and on the WFR an average of 70%. WFA certifications are awarded on a pass/fail basis.

**SEPARATIONS:** In the event that a student were to become ill, injured, present a risk management hazard to the group or him/herself, or be separated for disciplinary reasons the student will be evacuated from the course by whatever means NOLS deems appropriate. Students who are separated for any reason will receive a "Student Separation Form" that documents their last day of attendance at NOLS. The refund policy for students attending a NOLS course on VA benefits corresponds to the "pro-rata plus 10%" refund policy mandated by law (reg. 21.4255-1.)

**CANCELLATIONS:** VA refund policies apply.