Hazlewood Exemption for Veterans & Dependents

The purpose of the Hazlewood Act is to provide an education benefit (tuition & fees exemption) to honorably discharged or separated Texas veterans and their dependent children and spouses.

New provisions were recently authorized which extend eligibility to certain spouses and permit eligible veterans to assign their unused hours to their child(ren). These new provisions are known as the “Hazlewood Legacy Act.” For more information, visit www.collegeforalltexans.com.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

Veterans who:
• at the time of entry into the US Armed Forces:
  - were Texas residents,
  - designated Texas as Home of Record, OR
  - entered the service in Texas.
• served at least 181 days of active military duty.
• received an honorable discharge or a general discharge under honorable conditions.
• have no federal veteran’s education benefits, or have such benefits dedicated to the payment of tuition & fees only (i.e. Ch. 33), not exceeding the value of Hazlewood benefits.
• are not in default on a student loan made or guaranteed by the State of Texas.
• enroll in classes for which the college receives tax support.

Children and spouses:
• of veterans who, at the time of entry into the US Armed Forces:
  - were Texas residents,
  - designated Texas as Home of Record, or
  - entered the service in Texas.
• of a parent/spouse who is a veteran of the US Armed Forces, Texas National Guard, or Texas Air National Guard who died as a result of service-related injuries or illness, is missing in action, or became totally disabled for purposes of employability as a result of service-related injury or illness.
• with no federal VA education benefits, or such benefits dedicated to the payment of tuition & fees only (i.e. Ch. 33), not exceeding the value of Hazlewood benefits.
• who are residents of Texas as of the semester in which they enroll.
• who are not in default on a student loan made or guaranteed by the State of Texas.
• enrolled in classes for which the college receives tax support.

The benefit may not be used for correspondence courses unless the courses are part of the student’s degree plan; a degree plan must be on file with the MCC VA Coordinator for these students.

Transferability of Benefits (Legacy Program)

Eligible veterans may assign unused hours of exemption eligibility to a child under certain conditions. To be eligible, the child must:
• be a Texas resident.
• be the biological child, stepchild, adopted child, or claimed as a dependent in the current or previous tax year.
• be 25 years or younger on the first day of the semester or term for which the exemption is claimed (unless granted an extension due to a qualifying illness or debilitating condition).
• make satisfactory academic progress in an eligible degree or certificate program.

If a child to whom hours have been delegated fails to use all assigned hours, a veteran may re-assign the unused hours to another dependent child. Veterans’ spouses are not eligible to receive a transfer of the veteran’s unused hours.

Application Process

To use Hazlewood benefits or to transfer unused benefits to an eligible child, applicants must complete the proper application(s). Applications are available for download through www.collegeforalltexans.com, or may be picked up from the McLennan Community College Veterans Assistance office. Please contact the Veterans Coordinator at (254) 299-8432 or kcervantes@mclennan.edu to ensure that the proper application(s) & documentation are submitted. All information must be submitted to the MCC Veterans Assistance office.

Necessary documentation to support Hazlewood eligibility may include:
• A member-4 DD 214 for the veteran.
• Documentation of relationship between veteran and spouse/child, such as:
  - marriage certificate.
  - birth certificate.
  - tax return.
• Proof from the Dept. of Defense or from the VA regarding the veteran’s death or disability, such as:
  - VA ratings disability letter.
  - DoD/VA letter regarding service-related death of veteran.
• Proof of eligibility or ineligibility for federal veterans benefits for both veterans and dependents. This may be obtained by requesting an Education Benefits letter from the VA office in Muskogee, OK at (888) 442-4551.
“Stacking” Benefits

A student may use both Ch. 33 (Post-9/11 GI Bill) or Ch. 31 (Vocational Rehabilitation) with Hazlewood during the same term if the combination of benefits does not exceed the total amount of tuition and fees. In either case, Hazlewood benefits may cover eligible tuition & fees which are not covered by Ch. 33 or Ch. 31 tuition & fees payments. A student may receive the full amount of Chapters 30, 1606, 1607 or 35 in conjunction with Hazlewood (stacking is not relevant).

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: What charges are covered by Hazlewood benefits?
A: The Hazlewood Act exempts qualified veterans and dependents from all tuition and fee charges, except property deposit fees and student services fees. Charges for continuing education classes are not covered in most cases.

Q: What charges are not covered?
A: Books, supplies, and living expenses are not exempted.

Q: Is there a limit to the number of semesters or years a Texas veteran can receive the Hazlewood Exemption?
A: No. However, there is a limit to the number of credit hours that may be exempted by the program. The exemption will cover up to 150 semester credit hours. This limit is not per institution, but is a cumulative total per eligible participant.

Q: If the veteran is now a Texas resident but was not a resident at the time of entering the service, can he/she qualify for Hazlewood Act benefits?
A: No. The veteran must have been a resident at the time of entry into service.

Q: Can veterans who are concurrently enrolled in more than one college (in the same term or semester) receive Hazlewood benefits?
A: Yes. But each college and university granting Hazlewood Act benefits must document the veteran’s eligibility and must observe the 150-hour limit.

Q: Can a reservist qualify to receive Hazlewood benefits?
A: Maybe. If the reservist has been called to active duty, has served at least 181 days on active duty, and has met all other requirements, he/she can receive the Hazlewood Exemption.

Q: Can a veteran who was not a United States citizen at the time of entry qualify for Hazlewood benefits?
A: Yes, provided the veteran was a Texas resident at the time of entry into the service, and is a Texas resident during the academic term for which he or she is enrolled.

Q: Is a veteran who is on terminal leave eligible to receive Hazlewood benefits?
A: No, not until he or she reaches the actual retirement date.

Q: If a veteran is eligible for and receiving federal veterans’ educational benefits, but can’t tap into Hazlewood yet because of the value of the federal veterans’ benefits, is he/she still eligible to transfer Hazlewood benefits to a child?
A: Yes. That the veteran is not yet eligible to use his/her Hazlewood benefit does not preclude him/her from transferring the hours to a child.

Q: If a veteran receives the Hazlewood Act benefit and it is later discovered that a state loan was defaulted upon, does the veteran have to repay the school?
A: In such a case, the school may require repayment of tuition and appropriate fees.

Q: If a child to whom unused hours have been assigned fails to use all available hours, can the veteran assign the remaining hours to another child?
A: Yes, a veteran may re-assign the unused hours that are available to another dependent child.

Q: Can two or more children/dependents of an eligible veteran use Hazlewood benefits at the same time?
A: No. The hours cannot be used concurrently by more than one dependent at a time.

Q: Does the Hazlewood Act cover dual credit hours?
A: Yes, the exemption may be used to pay for dual enrollment credit hours.

Q: Can a veteran who has transferred unused hours to a dependent child change his/her mind and take the hours back?
A: Yes, but hours which have already been exempted may not be reclaimed.

Q: Must the child start using the hours before he/she turns 26, or does eligibility to use the exemption end when he/she turns 26?
A: The statute indicates “to be eligible to receive an exemption... the child must be 25 years of age or younger on the 1st day of the semester.” If the child is 26 as of the first day of the semester/term, he/she loses eligibility for any remaining assigned hours.

Q: If a child qualifies for Hazlewood as a child of a disabled veteran AND qualifies to receive a transfer of unused Hazlewood hours, would the child be eligible for 150 hours of the exemption, or for 300 hours of exemption?
A: No individual is permitted to receive more than 150 semester credit hours of the Hazlewood Exemption.

McLennan Community College Veterans Assistance

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