

**Student Veteran
Handbook**



29 Cougar Court, Taft, CA 93268
661-763-7700

# Table of Contents

[Table of Contents 2](#_Toc190859500)

[Services Provided to Veterans and Dependents 3](#_Toc190859501)

[New Students Using GI Bill® Benefits -- Veterans 4](#_Toc190859502)

[New Students Using GI Bill® Benefits -- Dependents 5](#_Toc190859503)

[Continuing Students Using GI Bill® Benefits 5](#_Toc190859504)

[Transfer Students Who Have Used Using GI Bill® Benefits At Another College -- Veterans 6](#_Toc190859505)

[Attending Colleges Other Than Taft College 7](#_Toc190859506)

[Number of Units Required 7](#_Toc190859507)

[Withdrawal/Change of Classes 8](#_Toc190859508)

[Academic Progress 8](#_Toc190859509)

[Non-Required Courses 8](#_Toc190859510)

[Repeat Courses 8](#_Toc190859511)

[Post 9/11 GI Students Enrollment Verification 9](#_Toc190859512)

[Priority Registration 9](#_Toc190859513)

[CalVet College Fee Waiver 10](#_Toc190859514)

[Military Withdrawal 10](#_Toc190859515)

[Edith Nourse Rogers STEM Scholarship 10](#_Toc190859516)

[FAQ 11](#_Toc190859517)

[Veterans Resource Center (VRC) 11](#_Toc190859518)

[VA Work-Study Program 12](#_Toc190859519)

[Veterans Club 12](#_Toc190859520)

[Financial Aid 12](#_Toc190859521)

[Disability Support Programs & Services (DSPS) 13](#_Toc190859522)

[The Learning Center/Tutoring 13](#_Toc190859523)

[Student Resource & Basic Needs Center 13](#_Toc190859524)

[Campus Resources 14](#_Toc190859525)

[Kern County Resources 15](#_Toc190859526)

[U.S. Resources 16](#_Toc190859527)

[Crisis Resources 16](#_Toc190859528)

# Services Provided to Veterans and Dependents

Taft College is an approved institution of higher learning and a training facility for veterans applying for Veterans Administration (VA) educational benefits. Taft College provides educational support to veterans, active-duty servicemen, and dependents of veterans.

**Certification Services include:**

* Instructions on requesting certification from Taft College
* Monitoring of course enrollment and reporting of enrollment to the VA
* Coordination with Fiscal Services for tuition reimbursement from the VA
* Coordination with other colleges for students who enroll as Guest Students

**Counseling Services include:**

* Assistance in selecting the appropriate Taft College major
* Assistance in selecting VA approved courses and registration
* Completion of an approved Educational Plan
* Guidance on maximizing benefits at Taft College for graduation and transfer

# New Students Using GI Bill® Benefits -- Veterans

[ ]  **1.** Apply for VA Benefits <http://www.gibill.va.gov>

1. Email your Certificate of Eligibility to veterans@taftcollege.edu or bring it to Admissions & Records to be scanned

[ ]  **2.** Apply for Financial Aid. Taft College’s Federal School Code is 001309. <http://www.fafsa.gov>

[ ]  **3.**  Apply to Taft College at: <https://www.taftcollege.edu/admissions/apply>

[ ]  **4.** Email your DD-214 to veterans@taftcollege.edu or bring it to Academic Records to be scanned

[ ]  **5.** Send all previous college official transcripts, including military transcripts to admissions@taftcollege.edu

[ ]  **6.** Call Counseling 661-763-7748 to make an appointment with Veterans Counselor, Vicki Jacobi, to create a Comprehensive Educational Plan

[ ]  **7.** Fill out the Request for Certification form approximately 4 weeks prior to the start of the semester. <https://ct-prod-wp.taftcollege.edu/forms/admissions/veterans-services/va-online-request-for-certification/>

[ ]  **8.** Post-9/11 GI Bill® Students who receive Monthly Housing Allowance MHA and/or kicker payments are required to verify enrollment at the end of each month. Please see the section on Post-9/11 GI Bill® Students for more information.

# New Students Using GI Bill® Benefits -- Dependents

[ ]  **1.** Apply for VA Benefits <http://www.gibill.va.gov>

1. Email your Certificate of Eligibility to veterans@taftcollege.edu or bring it to Admissions & Records to be scanned

[ ]  **2.** Apply for Financial Aid. Taft College’s Federal School Code is 001309. <http://www.fafsa.gov>

[ ]  **3.**  Apply to Taft College at: <https://www.taftcollege.edu/admissions/apply>

[ ]  **4.** Send all previous college official transcripts to admissions@taftcollege.edu

[ ]  **5.** Call Counseling 661-763-7748 to make an appointment with Veterans Counselor, Vicki Jacobi, to create a Comprehensive Educational Plan

[ ]  **6.** Fill out the Request for Certification form approximately 4 weeks prior to the start of the semester. <https://ct-prod-wp.taftcollege.edu/forms/admissions/veterans-services/va-online-request-for-certification/>

# Continuing Students Using GI Bill® Benefits

[ ]  **1.** Renew your Financial Aid <https://www.fafsa.gov>

[ ]  **2.** Fill out the Request for Certification form approximately 4 weeks prior to the start of the semester. <https://ct-prod-wp.taftcollege.edu/forms/admissions/veterans-services/va-online-request-for-certification/>

# Transfer Students Who Have Used Using GI Bill® Benefits At Another College -- Veterans

[ ]  **1.** Apply for Financial Aid. Taft College’s Federal School Code is 001309. <http://www.fafsa.gov>

[ ]  **2.** Complete Form 22-1995 – Change of Training Place or Program
<https://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-22-1995-ARE.pdf>

[ ]  **3.** Apply to Taft College at: <https://www.taftcollege.edu/admissions/apply>

[ ]  **4.** Email your DD-214 to veterans@taftcollege.edu or bring it to Admissions & Records to be scanned

[ ]  **5.** Send all previous college official transcripts, including military transcripts to admissions@taftcollege.edu

[ ]  **6.** Call Counseling 661-763-7748 to make an appointment with Veterans Counselor, Vicki Jacobi, to create a Comprehensive Educational Plan

[ ]  **7.** Fill out the Request for Certification form approximately 4 weeks prior to the start of the semester. <https://ct-prod-wp.taftcollege.edu/forms/admissions/veterans-services/va-online-request-for-certification/>

[ ]  **8.** Post-9/11 Students who receive Monthly Housing Allowance MHA and/or kicker payments are required to verify enrollment at the end of each month. Please see the section on Post-9/11 GI Bill® Students Enrollment Verification for more information.

# Attending Colleges Other Than Taft College

For courses outside Taft College, you must provide Taft College with the following information so they can contact your secondary school with a Parent School Letter:

* College Information
* Course Information (Subject and Course #)
* Course Schedule (start-end dates)

**Primary School Letters are subject to approval. Courses offered by secondary colleges must be approved by your Counselor or the Taft College Evaluator to confirm course equivalency.**

Upon completion of the approved course(s), please submit an official transcript after the completion of the semester/session.

# Number of Units Required

For students enrolled in a degree program under Chapters 30, 31, 35, 1606/1607, the following number of units are required each semester to qualify for educational and training allowance:

12 units or more full allowance
9-11.5 units ¾ allowance
6-8.5 units ½ allowance
2-5.5 units ¼ allowance\*

\*Chapters 32 and 106 only. All other chapters, tuition, and fees only.

Short-term and Summer semester courses are computed proportionately for payment purposes. The VA considers 3 units per 4 weeks as full-time. For example, if you want full-time for the Summer and the Semester is 8 weeks, you will need 6 units to be considered full-time.

Taking only online and/or hybrid classes (considered online by the VA) will result in a partial monthly housing allowance.

# Withdrawal/Change of Classes

Veterans and Dependents are required to notify Taft College when they stop attending a class, withdraw from the college, or add/drop a class. Changes should be reported immediately after completing the add/drop procedure through MyTC. Report changes by filling out the Request for Certification form. Not reporting changes may cause you to be certified for the wrong unit load and overpayments.

# Academic Progress

A student on Academic probation status will be disqualified from Certification when their GPA falls below 2.0 the following semester. Taft College is required to notify the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) of this status. The DVA will terminate benefits unless it can be shown that the student is pursuing an appropriate objective and has a reasonable chance for success in the chosen program.

# Non-Required Courses

The VA will allow certification only for courses listed on your Student Educational Program Plan. These approved courses must meet the minimum requirements for transfer or graduation established by Taft College.

# Repeat Courses

The VA will not allow certification for repeated courses that were successfully completed. Letter grades of “A,” “B,” or “C” are approved for payment of required courses.

**Exception:** There are some courses that require a specific minimum grade for successful completion. Please refer to the Taft College Catalog for specific course requirements.

Courses taken to obtain academic repeats are NOT eligible for VA certification.

# Post 9/11 GI Students Enrollment Verification

Post 9/11 GI Bill® students who receive a Monthly Housing Allowance (MHA) and/or kicker payments are required to verify enrollment at the end of each month. Students who receive MHA or kicker payments will have their payments withheld if they fail to verify or report that they are no longer enrolled in their courses. You can opt in to verify your enrollment by text or email at: <https://benefits.va.gov/gibill/isaksonroe/verification_of_enrollment.asp>

By regularly verifying your enrollment, you protect your GI Bill® entitlement by preventing charges for classes you did not attend. This will help you better manage and access your earned benefits, as well as help prevent overpayments.

# Priority Registration

Taft College offers priority registration to all Veterans. To receive priority registration, the following needs to be completed:

[ ]  **1.** Online Orientation

[ ]  **2.** Comprehensive Educational Plan. If you do not have a Comprehensive Educational Plan, please contact Counseling 661-763-7748 to make an appointment with the Veterans’ Counselor, Vicki Jacobi.

[ ]  **3.** Email your DD-214 form to veterans@taftcollege.edu or bring it to the Admissions & Records Office in the Administration Building to be scanned and indicate it is for priority registration.

# CalVet College Fee Waiver

The College Fee Waiver for Veteran Dependents benefit waives mandatory system-wide tuition and fees at any State of California Community College, California State University, or University of California campus. This program does not cover the expense of books, parking, or room and board. There are four plans under which dependents of Veterans may be eligible. You will need to reapply every Academic Year.

[ ]  **1.** Apply for the CalVet College Fee Waiver <https://www.calvet.ca.gov/VetServices/Pages/College-Fee-Waiver.aspx>

1. Email your College Fee Waiver Authorization letter to veterans@taftcollege.edu or bring it to Admissions & Records to be scanned

[ ]  **2.** Apply for Financial Aid. Taft College’s Federal School Code is 001309. <http://www.fafsa.gov>

# Military Withdrawal

If you are a member of an active or reserve United State miliary service and receive orders compelling a withdrawal from all courses, please bring your Military Orders to Academic Records to be scanned or email to records@taftcollege.edu. If emailing, please include your A# and request a military withdrawal.

# Edith Nourse Rogers STEM Scholarship

The Edith Nourse Rogers Science Technology Engineering Math (STEM) Scholarship allows eligible Veterans using the Post-9/11 GI Bill® or dependents using the Fry Scholarship to get added benefits. This scholarship provides up to 9 months (or $30,000) of benefits for training in high-demand fields. Find out if you’re eligible and how to apply at: <https://www.va.gov/education/other-va-education-benefits/stem-scholarship/>

# FAQ

* You are required to fill out a Request for Certification to utilize and continue your educational benefits.
* The Certification Process may take up to 14 days.
* It takes 4-8 weeks for the VA Regional Office to process educational benefits. Payment is paid retroactively to the beginning of the semester.
* Overpayment is your responsibility, and you will owe money to the Department of Veterans Affairs. The DVA may deduct the funds from ANY Federal payments (retirement, taxes, disability, etc.)
* A DD-214 (with at least six months of active-duty service and an honorable discharge) will meet the Health and PE requirements for the AA/AS degree and CSU Area E General Educational requirements. If you plan on using your DD-214 to meet these requirements, please let your counselor and the Admissions & Records office know.

# Veterans Resource Center (VRC)

The Veterans Resource Center (VRC) is a place for Taft College Veterans and military-affiliated students. It’s where you’ll find support, camaraderie, and understanding. The VRC offers personalized services to Veterans, Active-duty military, and eligible Veteran family members in a welcoming environment. Drop by and take a break, access resources, or study with friends.

Take advantage of the study lounge complete with computers and free printer access. Refuel with a free cup of coffee or snacks from the fridge. Put your feet up and watch a little TV between classes.

The VRC is also your connection to campus and community resources. Our coordinator is here to provide guidance, help you access benefits, and provide you with the tools you need to succeed. The VRC works collaboratively with on-campus services as well as off-campus Veteran service providers. Peer-to-peer support, mentoring, and networking opportunities are available to help you stay on course and reach your goals.

The VRC is in the Cougar Support Center just west of the Administration building. For information please contact, Kristy Barnachia kbarnachia@taftcollege.edu

# VA Work-Study Program

The VA Work-Study Program is available to any eligible veteran or their dependents who are receiving VA education benefits and attending school three-quarter time or more. An individual working under this program may work at a school's veterans office, VA Regional Office, VA Medical Facility, CalVet or other approved State employment office. Work-study students are paid at either the State or federal minimum wage, whichever is greater. For information please contact, Kristy Barnachia kbarnachia@taftcollege.edu or Tina Mendoza tmendoza@taftcollege.edu

# Veterans Club

The mission of the Taft College Veterans Club will be to serve as a support system for student veterans, as well as family members of veterans and supporters. This organization will help provide information and referrals regarding services through Veterans Affairs and other agencies. In addition, the Veterans Club will strive to coordinate information and services to assist veterans, family, and friends toward successful transitions to careers and/or higher education. The Taft College Veterans Club will be an impartial club having no political or religious affiliation. For club information please contact, Tina Mendoza tmendoza@taftcollege.edu

# Financial Aid

Veterans and Dependents are encouraged to apply for federal and state financial aid opportunities. The application form is available online at <https://www.fafsa.ed.gov>. Taft College’s Federal School Code is 001309. Financial aid programs such as fee waivers, grants, work-study, and loans are available to assist with educational expenses. Eligible students may receive both VA benefits and financial aid funds during the same semester.

# Disability Support Programs & Services (DSPS)

Disability Support Programs and Services focuses on servicing students with disabilities. Specific services and accommodations for each student are determined on a case-by-case basis and only authorized by DSPS faculty. To request services please visit: <https://www.taftcollege.edu/disabled-student-program-services/> or contact
661-763-7799

# The Learning Center/Tutoring

The Learning Center is in the library and provides Taft College students access to learning assistance and academic support. Services include walk-in tutoring, small group tutoring, one-on-one tutoring appointments, and supplemental instruction. For more information or to make appointments visit: <https://www.taftcollege.edu/learning-center/> or contact 661-763-7938.

# Student Resource & Basic Needs Center

The Student Basic Needs and Resource Center supports students in need of additional assistance by providing and connecting students with all the essential resources needed not only to survive but thrive. The Student Basic Needs and Resource Center includes a food pantry which includes non-perishables and a clothing closet, CalFresh Outreach, and more. For more information or to make an appointment visit: <https://www.taftcollege.edu/support-programs-services/basic-needs/>

# Campus Resources

**Kristy Barnachia, Veteran Resource Center (VRC) Coordinator**
Located in the building west of the Administrative & Student Services building
661-763-7712
kbarnachia@taftcollege.edu

**Lisa Brettschneider and Lindsay Turner, School Certifying Officials**
Located in the Administrative & Student Services building in Admissions & Records
661-763-7741
veterans@taftcollege.edu
 **Vicki Jacobi, Veterans Counselor**
661-763-7719
vjacobi@taftcollege.edu
 **Tina Mendoza, Veterans Club**tmendoza@taftcollege.edu

**Counseling Center: To Make Appointments with Veterans Counselor, Vicki Jacobi**
Located in the Administrative & Student Services Building
661-763-7748

**Financial Aid**
Located in the Administrative & Student Services Building
661-763-7762<https://www.taftcollege.edu/cost-aid/financial-aid/>

**Disability Support Programs & Services (DSPS)**Located in the Administrative & Student Services Building
661-763-7799
<https://www.taftcollege.edu/disabled-student-program-services/>

**Learning Center**Located in the Library661-763-7938
<https://www.taftcollege.edu/learning-center/>

**Student Basic Needs and Resource Center**Located in the building west of the Administration & Student Services Building
661-763-7783
<https://www.taftcollege.edu/support-programs-services/basic-needs/>

# Kern County Resources

**Kern County Veterans Service Department**661-868-7300, toll-free 866-218-5367
1120 Golden State Ave, Bakersfield
<https://www.kerncounty.com/government/veterans-service>

**Bakersfield Vet Center**Provides readjustment counseling for veterans and their families. All services are confidential and available to those still on active duty or reserve status, without risk of becoming known to your chain of command.
661-323-8387
1110 Golden State Hwy, Bakersfield
<https://www.va.gov/bakersfield-vet-center/>

**Wounded Heroes Fund**Service organization for Kern County Veterans and their families
661-328-8600
<https://thewoundedheroesfund.org>

**Armed Forces Support Foundation**Provides financial & non-financial assistance to veterans of all eras in appreciation and recognition of their sacrifices.
<https://www.armedforcessupportfoundation.org/>

**Taft Salvation Army**Emergency Food, Help with Water Bill once a year, Help with gas or bus passes to medical appts, Clothing Closet, Counsel and Guidance in Crisis Situations
661-765-5557
630 North St, Taft (located in the Methodist Church)

**Taft NEEDS Center**Food
518 Main St, Taft

# U.S. Resources

**U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs**
GI Bill® (Education): 1-888-442-4551
<http://va.gov>
<https://www.va.gov/education>

**US Vets**213-542-2600
<https://usvets.org> **Warrior-Scholar Project**
202-796-8777
[https://www.warrior-scholar.org](https://www.warrior-scholar.org/)

**Foundation for Women Warriors**Enhancing the personal and economic wellbeing of women veterans and needs of military women transitioning to civilian life<https://www.objectivezero.org/>

**Objective Zero Foundation**Connects the military and veterans to peer support, wellness activities, and mental health resources online<https://www.objectivezero.org/>

# Crisis Resources

**Veterans Crisis Line**988

**Military Crisis Line**800-273-TALK (8255)

**National Call Center for Homeless Veterans**877-424-3838

**VA Caregiver Support Line**855-260-3274

GI Bill® is a registered trademark of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). More information about education benefits offered by VA is available at the official U.S. government website at <https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill>