

Prototype Research Readout

STEM Wizard & VA Form 22-1995 Update



VA | Vets.gov

2.10.20



What We Wanted to Learn
What We Did
What We Learned
Appendix

What We Wanted to Learn

The Problem | The Product | Why This Testing

The Problem

As an individual seeking education benefits, I want to understand the eligibility criteria for the Edith Nourse Rogers STEM scholarship so I can apply if I'm eligible and not spend time applying if I'm ineligible.

If I'm currently ineligible, it'd be helpful to know if it's a scholarship I may be eligible for in the future.

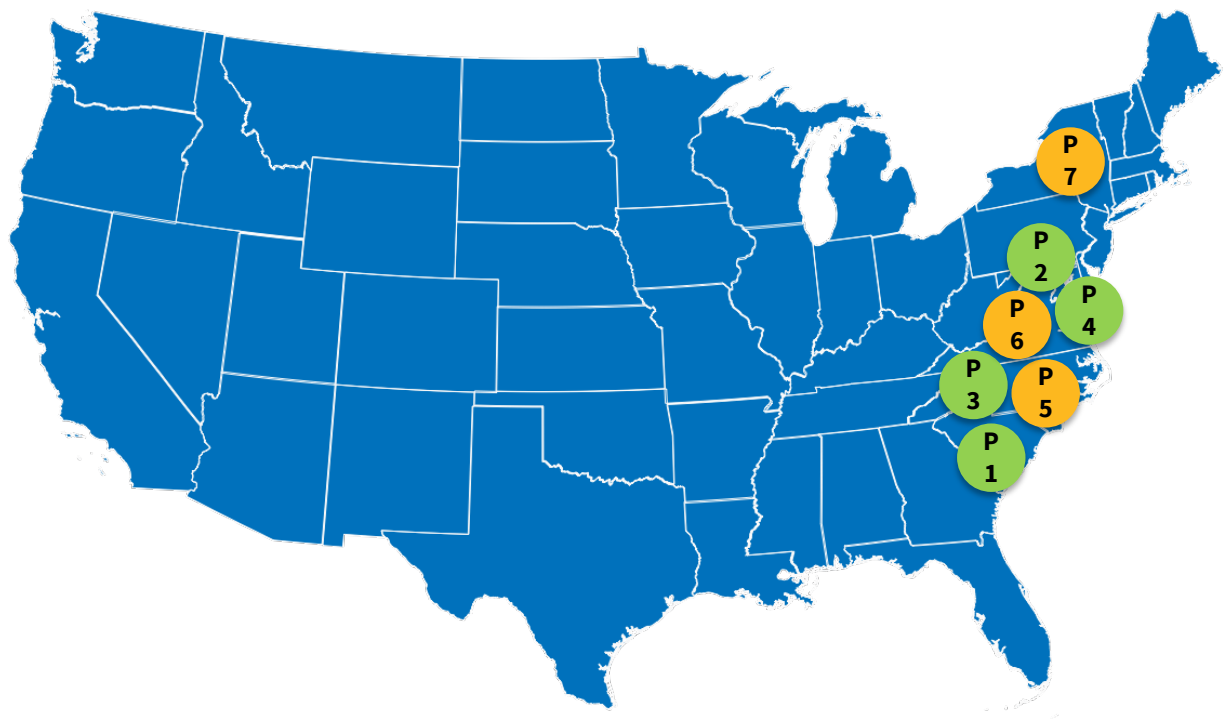
The Education benefits routing wizard and VA Form 22-1995, which are accessible on VA.gov, are being modified to provide additional information on the purpose of and eligibility requirements for the Edith Nourse Rogers STEM Scholarship.

We want to validate that the prototype effectively addresses the needs of students who are interested in applying for the Edith Nourse Rogers STEM Scholarship before we begin development.

What We Did

Participants | Prototype

Participants



		Veterans	Branches	Ethnicity	Age Range
Round 1	2 Women 2 Men	4	2	2	25-54
Round 2	2 Women 1 Men	3	2	2	25-44

The following research methods were used:

Remote Usability Sessions with

- 3 Veterans

Education Routing Wizard

How do I apply?

You can apply online right now. Just answer a few questions, and we'll help you get started with the education benefits form that's right for you.

[Find your education benefits form](#)

Are you applying for a new benefit or updating your program or place of training?

- ☐ Applying for a new benefit
- ☐ Updating my program of study or place of training
- ☒ Applying to extend my Post-9/11 or Fry Scholarship benefits using the Edith Nourse Rogers STEM Scholarship

To be eligible for the Edith Nourse Rogers STEM Scholarship, you must meet all the requirements below. You:

- Are receiving Post-9/11 GI Bill or Fry Scholarship benefits
- Have used up all your education benefits or are within 6 months of using all your benefits. [Check remaining benefits](#)
- Are enrolled in an undergraduate program for science, technology, engineering or math (STEM), or have already earned a STEM degree and are pursuing a teaching certification. [See approved STEM programs](#)

To learn more about the scholarship, [visit the VBA STEM page](#).

Based on the eligibility requirements above, do you want to apply for this scholarship?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

STEM Page

Update your education benefits

Form 22-1995

2 of 6: Education Benefit

Rogers STEM Scholarship

The [Edith Nourse Rogers STEM Scholarship](#) is offered to students training in high demand STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) fields.

To be considered, you must meet all the requirements below. You:

- Are receiving Post-9/11 GI Bill or Fry Scholarship benefits
- Have used all your education benefits or are within 6 months of doing so. [Check your remaining benefits](#)
- Are enrolled in an undergraduate degree program for STEM, or have already earned a STEM degree and are pursuing a teaching certification. [See approved STEM programs](#)

Are you applying for the Rogers STEM Scholarship? **(*Required)**

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No

Are you enrolled in a science, technology, engineering, or math (STEM) undergraduate degree program? **(*Required)**

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No

Have you used all of your Post-9/11 GI Bill or Fry Scholarship benefits or do you have less than 6 months of benefits left? **(*Required)**

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No

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[Finish this application later](#)

Ineligibility Page

Update your education benefits

Form 22-1995

2 of 6: Education Benefit

Rogers STEM Scholarship eligibility

To be eligible for the scholarship, students must meet all 3 of the following criteria:

Your responses:

- ☒ Are receiving Post-9/11 GI Bill or Fry Scholarship benefits
- ☒ Have used up all your education benefits or are within 6 months of using all your benefits
- ☒ Are enrolled in an undergraduate program for STEM, or have already earned a STEM degree and are pursuing a teaching certification

Would you like to continue applying for the scholarship to let VA determine your eligibility? **(*Required)**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

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[Finish this application later](#)

What We Learned

Primary Finding

Veterans can determine their eligibility and would prefer not to submit applications when they understand they are not eligible for the benefit.

***“If I'm not eligible for it,
why am I going to put an
application in for it?”***

-P5

Finding 1

Veterans can determine their eligibility before submission

Education Routing Wizard

How do I apply?

You can apply online right now. Just answer a few questions, and we'll help you get started with the education benefits form that's right for you.

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Are you applying for a new benefit or updating your program or place of training?

- ☐ Applying for a new benefit
- ☐ Updating my program of study or place of training
- ☒ Applying to extend my Post-9/11 or Fry Scholarship benefits using the Edith Hourse Rogers STEM Scholarship

To be eligible for the Edith Hourse Rogers STEM Scholarship, you must meet all the requirements below. You:

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- Have used up all your education benefits or are within 6 months of using all your benefits. [Check remaining benefits](#)
- Are enrolled in an undergraduate program for science, technology, engineering or math (STEM), or have already earned a STEM degree and are pursuing a teaching certificate. [See approved STEM programs](#)

To learn more about the scholarship, [visit the VBA STEM page](#).

Based on the eligibility requirements above, do you want to apply for this scholarship?

☒ Yes
☐ No

[Apply now](#)

STEM Page

Update your education benefits

Form 22-1995

2 of 6 Education Benefit

Rogers STEM Scholarship

The Edith Hourse Rogers STEM Scholarship is offered to students training in high demand STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) fields.

To be considered, you must meet all the requirements below. You:

- Are receiving Post 9/11 GI Bill or Fry Scholarship benefits
- Have used up all your education benefits or are within 6 months of using all your benefits. [Check your remaining benefits](#)
- Are enrolled in an undergraduate program for STEM, or have already earned a STEM degree and are pursuing a teaching certification. [See approved STEM programs](#)

Are you applying for the Rogers STEM Scholarship? **(Required)**

☒ Yes
☐ No

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Finish this application later

- Veterans can determine their eligibility based on the copy in the Education routing wizard.
- Veterans can determine their eligibility based on the STEM page. (Useful, as the majority of VA Form 22-1995 users bypass the wizard.)
- Adding “science, technology, engineering and math” to the 2nd question helps users answer the question accurately.

“Those 3 criteria are pretty clearly laid out, even on the first page... It's very clear.”

- P7

“I have 2 years left and I'm a history major. I don't fit any of these... so I'd click 'No'.”

- P5

Recommendation

Recommendation

- No change

Finding 2

The Ineligibility page deters applications that would be denied.

Update your education benefits
Form 22-1995

2 of 6 Education Benefit

Rogers STEM Scholarship eligibility

To be eligible for the scholarship, students must meet all 3 of the following criteria:

Your responses:

- ✓ Are receiving Post-9/11 GI Bill or Fry Scholarship benefits
- ✗ Have used up all your education benefits or are within 6 months of using all your benefits
- ✗ Are enrolled in an undergraduate program for STEM, **or** have already earned a STEM degree and are pursuing a teaching certification

Would you like to continue applying for the scholarship to let VA determine your eligibility? (*Required)

☐ Yes

☐ No

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[Finish this application later](#)

- The icons on the new Ineligibility page effectively draw the users' attention and communicate ineligibility.
- Users understand that they need to meet all 3 requirements to be eligible.
- Users who see one more or “x” indicate that they are not eligible.
- Users suggested content modifications that could enhance comprehension.

“[The icons] are very helpful...they give a clear picture of the eligibility criteria and the information that I entered.”

- P6

“[The 2nd requirement bullet is] a little bit wordy.”

- P5

Recommendation

Recommendation

- Refine the eligibility requirements language and include the new copy on all three STEM-related pages.

Finding 3

Veterans who determine they're ineligible are not interested in applying.

Update your education benefits
Form 22-1995

2 of 6 Education Benefit

Rogers STEM Scholarship eligibility

To be eligible for the scholarship, students must meet all 3 of the following criteria:

Your responses:

- ✓ Are receiving Post-9/11 GI Bill or Fry Scholarship benefits
- ✗ Have used up all your education benefits or are within 6 months of using all your benefits
- ✗ Are enrolled in an undergraduate program for STEM, **or** have already earned a STEM degree and are pursuing a teaching certification

Would you like to continue applying for the scholarship to let VA determine your eligibility? (*Required)

☐ Yes

☐ No

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[Finish this application later](#)

- Once users see an “x” next to one or more of the requirements on the Ineligibility page, they mentioned that there would be no point in continuing the application process.
- Ineligible Veterans indicated that they would select “No” to the “Would you like to continue applying for the scholarship to let VA determine your eligibility?” question or would go to another page on the site.

“I'm not going to waste my time applying for a scholarship that I know I'm not eligible for...I think it wastes the VA's time...I don't like to waste my time or anyone else's time.”

- P7

Recommendation

Recommendation

- No change

Finding 4

Veterans want VA.gov to prevent the submission of ineligible apps

Update your education benefits
Form 22-1995

2 of 6 Education Benefit

Rogers STEM Scholarship eligibility

To be eligible for the scholarship, students must meet all 3 of the following criteria:

Your responses:

- ✓ Are receiving Post-9/11 GI Bill or Fry Scholarship benefits
- ✓ Have used up all your education benefits or are within 6 months of using all your benefits
- ✗ Are enrolled in an undergraduate program for STEM, **or** have already earned a STEM degree and are pursuing a teaching certification

Would you like to continue applying for the scholarship to let VA determine your eligibility? (*Required)

☐ Yes

☐ No

[Finish this application later](#)

[Back](#) [Continue](#)

- Veterans want to be stopped by the system so they neither waste their time, nor the VA's time.
- Veterans thought the continue button might be suppressed or disabled. *

* The continue button is needed for students who are using VA Form 22-1995 to change their program or place of training.

“Why is the system allowing me to put an application in?...You have to put some kind of control measure in... If this generates an application and someone over at the VA sees this...I think that’s a doggone waste of time.”

- P5

Recommendation

Recommendation

- No change

Finding 5

Ineligible Veterans are interested in exploring other benefits

Update your education benefits
Form 22-1995

2 of 6 Education Benefit

Rogers STEM Scholarship eligibility

To be eligible for the scholarship, students must meet all 3 of the following criteria:

Your responses:

- ✓ Are receiving Post-9/11 GI Bill or Fry Scholarship benefits
- ✓ Have used up all your education benefits or are within 6 months of using all your benefits
- ✗ Are enrolled in an undergraduate program for STEM, **or** have already earned a STEM degree and are pursuing a teaching certification

Would you like to continue applying for the scholarship to let VA determine your eligibility? (*Required)

☒ Yes

☐ No

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- When faced with ineligibility, Veterans are interested in exploring other education benefits.
- Veterans assume that clicking the green button to exploring other education benefits is the next step.
- Veteran are pleased to have a path to explore other education benefits after seeing that they are ineligible.

“I'd just go see...if there was another link to click that had other scholarships that I might be eligible for.”

- P7

Recommendation

Recommendation

- No change

Finding 6

Veterans may apply if they anticipate they'll be eligible

Update your education benefits
Form 22-1995

2 of 6 Education Benefit

Rogers STEM Scholarship eligibility

To be eligible for the scholarship, students must meet all 3 of the following criteria:

Your responses:

- ✓ Are receiving Post-9/11 GI Bill or Fry Scholarship benefits
- ✗ Have used up all your education benefits or are within 6 months of using all your benefits
- ✓ Are enrolled in an undergraduate program for STEM, or have already earned a STEM degree and are pursuing a teaching certification

Would you like to continue applying for the scholarship to let VA determine your eligibility? (*Required)

☐ Yes

☐ No

[Finish this application later](#)

- As processing can take a while, Veterans may submit their application a couple of months early, before they reach the 6 month threshold.
- Those who may be eligible will carefully examine the requirements in the hopes of meeting the criteria.

"If I had 7 months left...I would apply because next month, I'm going to have 6 months left. If I had more than that, I would ...wait until...the end of the next semester...or year".

- P7

"I would make sure...that I truly don't meet all of the criteria. I would make sure there was no loophole."

- P7

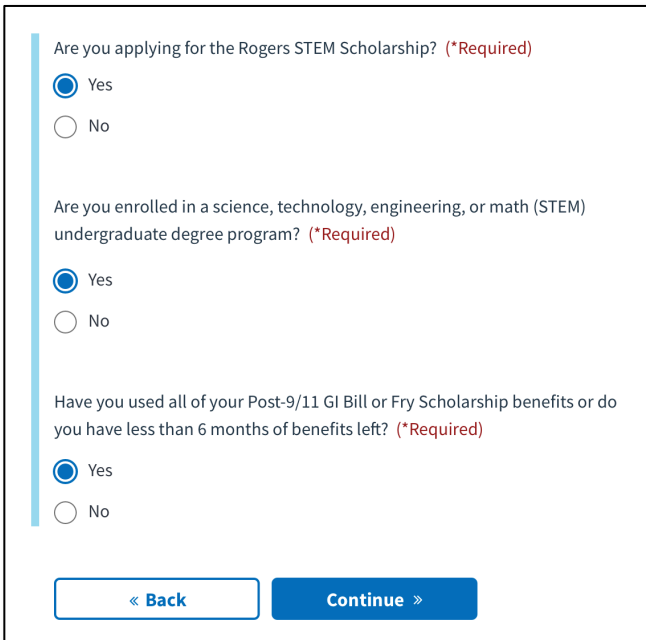
Recommendation

Recommendation

- No change

Finding 7

Veterans find the application process straightforward



Are you applying for the Rogers STEM Scholarship? (*Required)

☒ Yes

☐ No

Are you enrolled in a science, technology, engineering, or math (STEM) undergraduate degree program? (*Required)

☒ Yes

☐ No

Have you used all of your Post-9/11 GI Bill or Fry Scholarship benefits or do you have less than 6 months of benefits left? (*Required)

☒ Yes

☐ No

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- Veterans easily answer the questions.
- Veterans indicate that the process is easy and straightforward.

“That was easy.”

- P5

“It's pretty straightforward...”

The language that is used is pretty clear.”

- P6

“Using this font actually makes it less daunting”

- P5

Recommendation

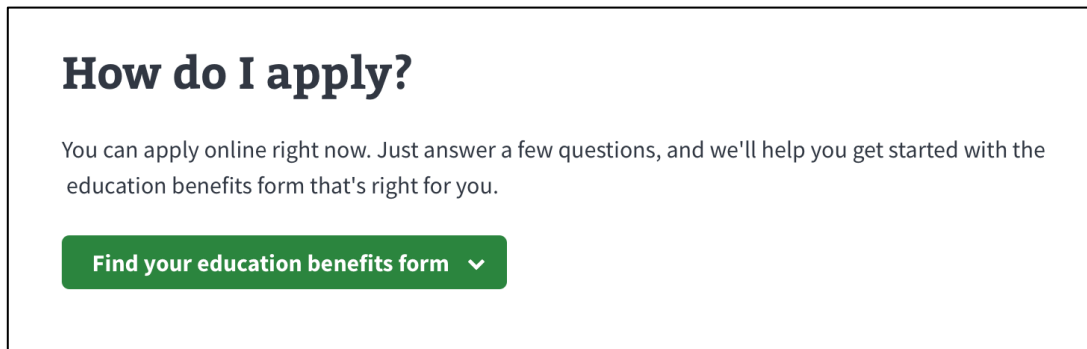
Recommendation

- No change

Findings for other projects

Findings for other projects

1. On the “How to apply” page within the “Education and training” section of the VA.gov website, Veterans may bypass the “How do I apply?” section when searching for a form that will allow them to change their program or place of training.



How do I apply?

You can apply online right now. Just answer a few questions, and we'll help you get started with the education benefits form that's right for you.

[Find your education benefits form](#) ▼

2. Veterans would like to receive a confirmation email after submitting VA Form 22-1995.

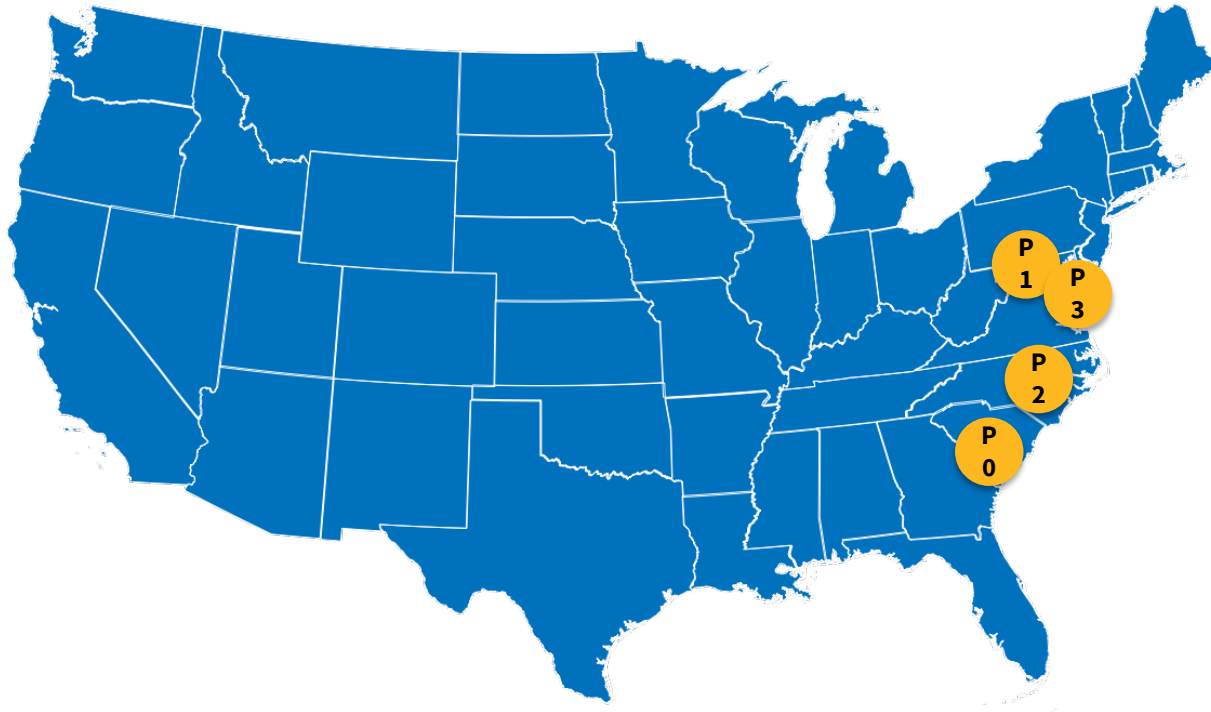
Next Steps

Next Steps

1. Obtain approval on prototype
2. Begin development
3. Define google analytics

Round 1 Findings

Participants



2 Women
2 Men

4
Veterans

2
Branch

2
Ethnic
Backgrounds

25-54
Age Range

Education Routing Wizard

How do I apply?

You can apply online right now. Just answer a few questions, and we'll help you get started with the education benefits form that's right for you.

Find your education benefits form ^

Are you applying for a new benefit or updating your current education benefits?

☐

 Applying for a new benefit

☐

 Updating my program of study or place of training

☒

 Applying to extend my Post-9/11 or Fry Scholarship benefits using the Edith Nourse Rogers STEM Scholarship

To be eligible for the Edith Nourse Rogers STEM Scholarship, you must be:

- A Post-9/11 GI Bill beneficiary or Fry Scholarship recipient
- Enrolled in an undergraduate program for science, technology, engineering or math (STEM), or have earned a STEM degree and be pursuing a teaching certification
- Within 6 months of using up all your educational benefits or already have done so. [Check your Post-9/11 GI Bill status](#)

To learn more about the Rogers STEM Scholarship and approved degree programs, [visit the VBA STEM page](#).

Based on the eligibility requirements, would you like to apply?

☒

 Yes

☐

 No

Apply Now

The following research methods were used:

Remote Usability Sessions with

- 4 Veterans

STEM Page

Update your education benefits

Form 22-1995

1 of 6 Education Benefit

Post-9/11 GI Bill beneficiaries and Fry Scholarship recipients who are studying in fields such as science, technology, engineering, and math may be eligible for the Edith Nourse Rogers STEM Scholarship.

[Learn more about scholarship eligibility](#)

Are you applying for the Rogers STEM Scholarship? (*Required)

☒

 Yes

☐

 No

Are you enrolled in an undergraduate STEM degree program? (*Required)

☐

 Yes

☒

 No

Do you have a STEM undergraduate degree and are now pursuing a teaching certification? (*Required)

☐

 Yes

☒

 No

The Rogers STEM Scholarship is only offered to students who are pursuing an undergraduate STEM degree or have graduated with a STEM degree and are pursuing a teaching certification.

Have you used all of your Post-9/11 GI Bill or Fry Scholarship benefits or do you have less than 6 months remaining? (*Required)

☐

 Yes

☒

 No

⚠ You may not be eligible

Based on your responses, it appears you may not be eligible for the Rogers STEM Scholarship.

[Return to the top of the page](#) if you'd like to choose not to apply for the Rogers STEM Scholarship.

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Continue

Round 1 Findings

Update your education benefits
Form 22-1995

2 of 6 **Education Benefit**

Post-9/11 GI Bill beneficiaries and Fry Scholarship recipients who are studying in fields such as science, technology, engineering, and math may be eligible for the Edith Nourse Rogers STEM Scholarship.

[Learn more about scholarship eligibility](#) ▼

Are you applying for the Rogers STEM Scholarship? **(*Required)**

☒ Yes
☐ No

Are you enrolled in an undergraduate STEM degree program?
(*Required)

☐ Yes
☒ No

Do you have a STEM undergraduate degree and are now pursuing a teaching certification? **(*Required)**

☐ Yes
☒ No

The Rogers STEM Scholarship is only offered to students who are pursuing an undergraduate STEM degree or have graduated with a STEM degree and are pursuing a teaching certification.

Have you used all of your Post-9/11 GI Bill or Fry Scholarship benefits or do you have less than 6 months remaining? **(*Required)**

☐ Yes
☒ No

⚠ You may not be eligible
Based on your responses, it appears you may not be eligible for the Rogers STEM Scholarship.
[Return to the top of the page](#) if you'd like to choose not to apply for the Rogers STEM Scholarship.

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- Veterans assume the VA will prevent them from continuing if they are ineligible.
- Veterans expect to see a way to exit the application once they realize they are ineligible.
- Veterans are confused by the presence of a “Continue” button after reading that they are ineligible.
- Veterans click the Continue button after warnings, which will result in denials if the application is submitted.
- Veterans think the "May not be eligible" language gives false hope.

Original Solution

STEM Page

Update your education benefits

Form 22-1995

2 of 6 Education Benefit

Post-9/11 GI Bill beneficiaries and Fry Scholarship recipients who are studying in fields such as science, technology, engineering, and math may be eligible for the Edith Nourse Rogers STEM Scholarship.

[Learn more about scholarship eligibility](#)

Are you applying for the Rogers STEM Scholarship? (*Required)

- ☒ Yes
☐ No

Are you enrolled in an undergraduate STEM degree program? (*Required)

- ☐ Yes
☒ No

Do you have a STEM undergraduate degree and are now pursuing a teaching certification? (*Required)

- ☐ Yes
☒ No

The Rogers STEM Scholarship is only offered to students who are pursuing an undergraduate STEM degree or have graduated with a STEM degree and are pursuing a teaching certification.

Have you used all of your Post-9/11 GI Bill or Fry Scholarship benefits or do you have less than 6 months remaining? (*Required)

- ☐ Yes
☒ No

You may not be eligible

Based on your responses, it appears you may not be eligible for the Rogers STEM Scholarship.

[Return to the top of the page](#) if you'd like to choose not to apply for the Rogers STEM Scholarship.

Back

Continue

New Solution

STEM Page

Update your education benefits

Form 22-1995

2 of 6 Education Benefit

Rogers STEM Scholarship

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- Are enrolled in an undergraduate degree program for STEM, or have already earned a STEM degree and are pursuing a teaching certification. [See approved STEM programs](#)

Are you applying for the Rogers STEM Scholarship? (*Required)

- ☒ Yes
☐ No

Are you enrolled in a science, technology, engineering, or math (STEM) undergraduate degree program? (*Required)

- ☒ Yes
☐ No

Have you used all of your Post-9/11 GI Bill or Fry Scholarship benefits or do you have less than 6 months of benefits left? (*Required)

- ☒ Yes
☐ No

Back

Continue

[Finish this application later](#)

Ineligibility Page

Update your education benefits

Form 22-1995

2 of 6 Education Benefit

Rogers STEM Scholarship

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Are you applying for the Rogers STEM Scholarship? (*Required)

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Back

Continue

[Finish this application later](#)

Participant Details

Key findings:

- Eligibility requirements are a bit wordy.
- "I have 2 years left and I'm a history major. I don't fit any of these... so I'd click 'No'...then I'd [go to the]"Other VA education benefits' [page]..."I'd be looking for something that says, 'Additional benefits'."
- Sighed when Exit page appeared. "But If that were me, I would have already said, 'Look, I don't qualify for it.'"
- [What caught his attention on the Exit page?] "Right here [the icons] is where I looked. I saw, check, x - read that, x - read that. Then I read the heading about needing to meet all 3 criteria. That's when I said, 'Let me be obstinate and click yes.'" "The first thing that I saw were these [checkmark and x icons]. The [icons] are definitely prominent enough"
- "If it were me, I would have clicked "No" [for the "Would you like to continue applying question]
- "There's got to be something that sounds a little bit more professional than 'used up'."
- "[The 'Check your remaining benefits' link] is a big one I'd click on.
- On the wizard, as well, get rid of "Has used up" and "are" in bullets.
- Recommends hyperlinking the ENR STEM Scholarship link in on the wizard and likes that the STEM Scholarship name is linked on the STEM page.

Key findings:

- "I really do think there shouldn't be a button there saying, 'do you want to apply?'....If you say no, it should be 'You are not eligible' and there should be a back button...[On exit page]. That [question] should not be there." "It makes it look like I'm continuing the application. Why should I be continuing that application? If I'm not eligible for it, why am I going to put an application in for it? Why is the system allowing me to put an application in?...It will end up wasting someone's time...If this thing is about efficiency, why would I want to submit a form?"...now if this generates an application, and someone over at the VA sees this...I think that's a doggone waste of time.
- "I wouldn't even give them the [option of] saying yes...I would have them put an 'additional benefits' page right down there [on the exit page].[Upon clicking 'No' and seeing the 'Explore other education benefits' button] Ah ha!
- I would like to see [the 'Explore other education benefits' button] earlier."
- Give them the back button, the 'Explore other education benefits' button and get rid of the question.
- "You have to put some kind of control measure in...Would prevent the VA from wasting time.]
- "The VA using this font actually makes it less daunting"
- [Later in the application] "Didn't I just [enter my school]?...[School Selection] is a little bit confusing"

Key findings:

- [Exit page] "Okay, so it looks like I'm not eligible for it." [Based on the 3 eligibility bullets on the Exit page]
- "[The icons] are very helpful...they give a clear picture of the eligibility criteria and the information that I entered...Yes, I'm receiving benefits. No, and so on."
- Knows that you must meet 'all 3' of the criteria based on the sentence.
- "Maybe the continue button would not be blue. It might be grayed out."
- [Upon taking the extra step of clicking no and seeing the "Explore other education benefits" button] Okay, alright, that makes sense. Do you want me to click the "Explore other education options". Was eager to click it. Thinks the button is useful.
- "[The 'Explore other education options' button] would bring me to a new page with a list of Education benefits."
- "It's pretty straightforward and... the language that is used is pretty clear."
- "Based on what it says, I would think they would deny the application"
- Would expect to see an "I" in a circle to learn more about STEM programs on the Exit page.
- Knows what STEM fields are.
- Didn't read about teaching certification originally - skipped over it.

Key findings:

- [Read through the criteria] "I meet the requirements, so I'll click 'Yes'."
- [From the wizard copy] "I can see immediately I would not be eligible. Noticed the criteria in 4 places."
- [While answering the STEM question] "You should stop because you are a history major and do not qualify."
- "I would not see any benefit [to applying]."
- "I would [select "No" on the Exit page and] "Explore other education benefits"
- Likes "let us determine" rather than "let VA determine" "In a way, it makes it a little more personable...makes it feel a little more tailored to you, rather than a form letter."
- [Alternative version] "In this case I would click 'Yes' because in a way it's VA's decision t[to determine] what they would like to do."
- "Would want to finish using Post-9/11 benefits before using this scholarship...Would come back at that time [to apply]."
- "If I had 7 months left, that would be different. I would apply because next month, I'm going to have 6 months left. If I had more than that, I would probably wait until...the end of the next semester...or year".
- "Once I said I did not want to let 'VA determine my eligibility' I'd want to see that ['Explore other Education benefits' button] because if I was looking for additional benefits on top of the post-9/11, then that would be helpful. [UX: Maybe she thought that she needed to stop the process from happening.]

Key findings:

- Copy suggestion for exit page: "If you're interested in in applying later, when you have less than 6 months benefits, then come back again". "That's what I would expect here [on the exit page]."
- [What would you do if you realized you were ineligible on the wizard?] "I wouldn't know at that point that there is the "Explore other education benefits" button towards the end of the application, but I would start ... clicking other links on the menu on the left side to see if there was anything that I was eligible for to have greater benefits."
- "I'm not going to waste my time applying for a scholarship that I know I'm not eligible for...I think it wastes the VA's time"
- "If the menu was still there, I'd just go up and start clicking in other areas to see if there was another link to click that had other scholarships that I might be eligible for. And failing that, if the menu wasn't there, I'd log out and log back in to reset the whole situation" [UX: showing the button earlier may be valuable and save the user time.].
- "Those 3 criteria are pretty clearly laid out, even on the first page...It's very clear."
- "It still hammers at you 'Are you actually eligible for this?', several times, which is a good thing, I think, because it makes sure that you are actually a STEM major."
- Aware that all 3 criteria are required. Thinks you could likely apply with 7-8 months left as you'd have 6 months left when it was awarded.



DIGITAL SERVICE at VA

Thank you