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**VA Digital Services**

GI Bill Comparison Tool Data Service

Department of Veterans Affairs

Developer document and data dictionary for the GI Bill Comparison Tool Data Service (DS)/

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**Fall**

# Introduction to the Data Service

The GI Bill Data Service (DS) allows stakeholders to merge, build, export, and push data used in the GI Bill Comparison Tool (GIBCT). The primary motivation for the DS was to allow stakeholders to manage and maintain the data used in the GIBCT without assistance from the Digital Service. With that in mind, the app was designed such that stakeholders need not be concerned with mechanics of merging the disparate sources of the data into a cohesive data structure.

## Relationship with the GIBCT

The GI Bill Comparison Tool is an application that allows veterans to select and compare education benefits afforded to them under different GI Bills based on their self-reported military service. The benefits reported to them depend on a number of parameters, including: the institution and its characteristics (tuition, vets programs offered, and so on). Ancillary information important for the vet to consider is provided too (complaints, number of GI Bill students currently enrolled, graduation rates, etc.).

The GIBCT is powered by a single comma separated spreadsheet known as the data.csv. This spreadsheet contains all the information required to compute benefits for approximately 34,000 institutions.

Currently, this spreadsheet is provided to the DSVA by the VA EDU stakeholders, whenever an institution’s information needs to be updated in the GIBCT. The Data Service allows the stakeholders to perform this task without requiring the assistance of the DSVA.

# Uploading CSV Files

Uploading a CSV file is a four-step process:

1. Deleting the existing data
2. Uploading the raw CSV to the application
3. Storing an image of the CSV data
4. Processing the raw data into intermediate data

The CsvFile model and its subclasses accomplish these tasks.

## Intermediate CSV Files

Once a CSV is uploaded the data is semi-processed and stored in an *intermediate* CSV table. The intermediate tables contain both raw and derived data. There is one intermediate CSV table per CSV file. In turn, each of the intermediate tables is used as input when building the DataCsv table.

## The DataCsv Table

The DataCsv table contains the GIBCT data in its final form. The model contains methods that export the data into the data.csv file or push the data into the GIBCT production and staging databases.