



Annual Report 2026

Veterans Education Transition Support (VETS)



Tennessee Higher
Education Commission

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Tennessee Higher Education Commission

2026-27 Commission Members

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Introduction

The Tennessee Veterans Education Transition Support (VETS) Act, enacted in 2014, established a statewide recognition program for higher education institutions that demonstrate exemplary commitment to supporting veterans as they transition from military service into and through postsecondary education. Through this legislation, institutions that provide targeted services, intentional outreach, and a campus environment designed to promote the academic success of student veterans may earn the designation of VETS Campus.

In 2024, the legislation was revised to introduce the VETS Bravo designation, recognizing institutions that go above and beyond the foundational requirements to deliver exceptional, innovative, and comprehensive support for military-connected students. This enhanced designation highlights campuses that demonstrate leadership and exceed expectations in serving veterans and their families. Detailed requirements for both VETS and VETS Bravo designations are outlined in Appendix A.

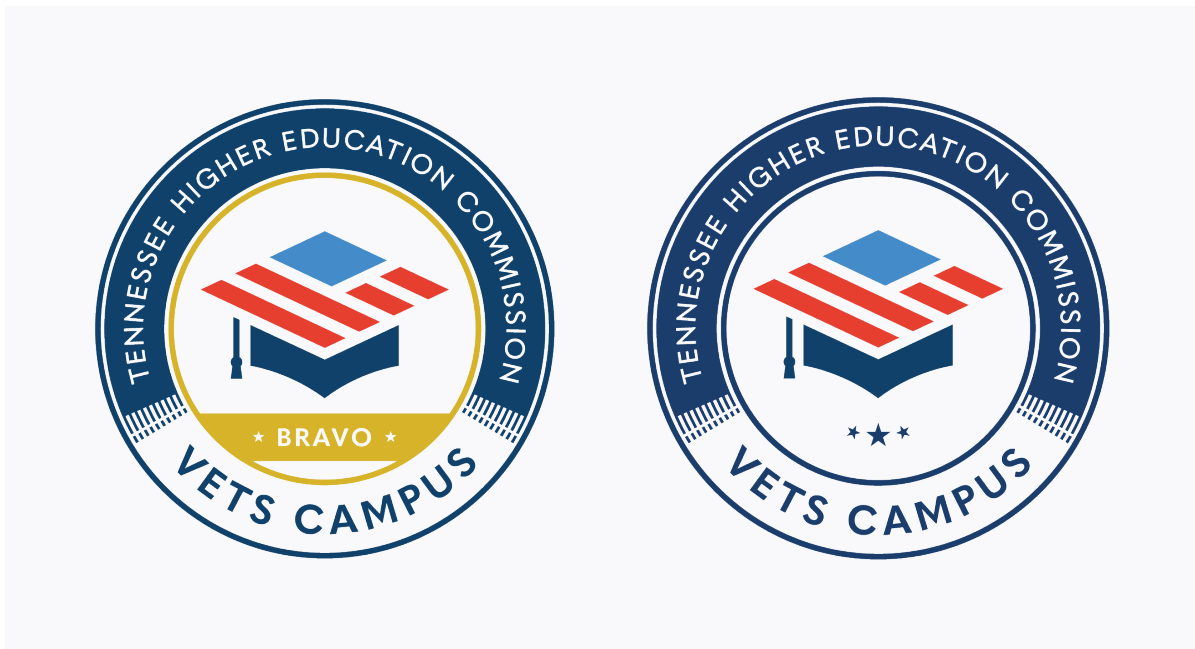
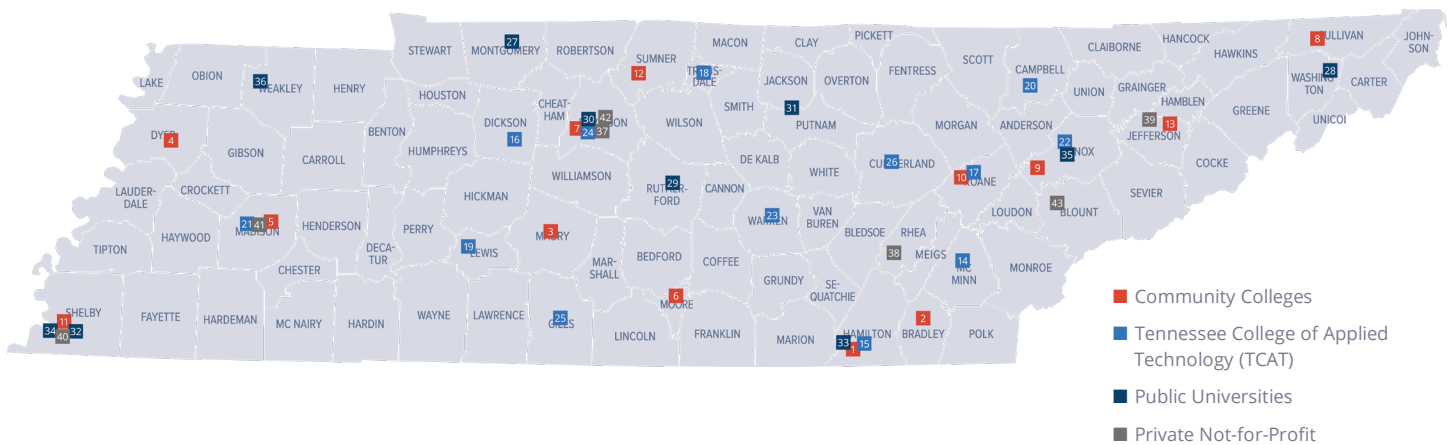


Figure 1. VETS Campus designation requirements can be found in Appendix A.

Institutions that have earned a VETS or VETS Bravo designation are required to submit annual data on their veteran and military-connected student populations. Although only one campus currently holds the VETS Bravo designation, all data is reported collectively in this report rather than separately. These data submissions to the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) include institution-level enrollment counts, programs of study by degree pursued, and the number of credentials attained.

For reporting purposes, military-connected students include both student veterans (those who have served in uniform and are no longer serving, members of the Reserve or National Guard, or active-duty service members) and military dependents, defined as family members. More detailed definitions can be found in Appendix B. Throughout this report, THEC complies with Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) requirements to protect students' personally identifiable information. Therefore, when tables are presented, individual cells containing fewer than 10 observations are suppressed. The suppressed information is included in table totals.

As of November 2025, there were 43 VETS designated campuses across the state. In April 2025, THEC awarded the first VETS Bravo designation to Austin Peay State University, which remains the only VETS Bravo campus in Tennessee at this time.



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The climate is very positive towards veterans. The staff and faculty appreciate our sacrifices and treat us with dignity and respect.

-VETS Campus Student

Student Enrollment

There were 18,313 military-connected students enrolled at Tennessee’s VETS Campuses in academic year (AY) 2024-25. Military-connected students made up 16,180 students in the undergraduate body at VETS Campuses (**Table 1**) and 2,133 in graduate programs at Tennessee’s VETS Campuses.

Table 1: Enrollment of Military-Connected Students in AY 2024-25

Source: VETS Campus Data

Type of Institution	UNDERGRADUATE		GRADUATE	
	Student Veterans	Military Dependents	Student Veterans	Military Dependents
Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology	773	525	–	–
Community Colleges	2,350	1,375	–	–
Private Not-for-Profit Colleges and Universities	304	479	179	136
Locally Governed Institutions	4,314	3,337	724	435
University of Tennessee System	988	1,735	386	273
TOTAL	8,729	7,451	1,289	844

Student Veterans

The term student veteran includes veterans, full time active-duty service-members, and members of the National Guard or reserves. In AY 2024-25, 55 percent of the military-connected students at Tennessee’s VETS Campuses were student veterans. There were 8,729 undergraduate student veterans and 1,289 graduate student veterans (**Table 1**). Student veterans in AY 2024-25 at Tennessee’s VETS Campuses were as follows: 7,971 veterans, 1,216 full time active-duty, and 831 members of the National Guard or Reserve. Fifty-five percent student veterans at VETS Campuses enrolled full-time.

Looking at enrollment by semester in this reporting period, Fall 2024 saw the most undergraduate student veterans on Tennessee’s VETS Campuses with a total of 6,767 (**Table 2**); 24 percent being at a community college and more than half of them (52 percent) being at a locally governed institution.

Table 2: Enrollment of Undergraduate Student Veterans at VETS Campuses by Semester

Type of Institution	Summer 2024	Fall 2024	Spring 2025
Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology	215	603	331
Community Colleges	572	1,627	1,588
Private Not-for-Profit Colleges and Universities	86	253	239
Locally Governed Institutions	1,410	3,552	3,360
University of Tennessee System	329	732	768
TOTAL	2,612	6,767	6,286

Note: The enrollment figures shown in the chart above may include duplicated counts for students who enroll in multiple semesters within the reporting year.

In this reporting period, Fall 2024 also saw the most graduate student veterans on Tennessee’s VETS Campuses with a total of 996 (**Table 3**); 55% being at a locally governed institution.

Table 3: Enrollment of Graduate Student Veterans at VETS Campuses by Semester

Type of Institution	Summer 2024	Fall 2024	Spring 2025
Private Not-for Profit Colleges and Universities	91	158	146
Locally Governed Institutions	267	552	530
University of Tennessee System	137	286	281
TOTAL	495	996	957

Veteran No Benefit

In AY 2024-25, ten percent of the undergraduate veteran category and 20 percent of the graduate veteran category reported by VETS Campuses (compiled in **Table 4**) were identified as Veteran No Benefit. These veterans may have exhausted their veterans’ education benefits, the benefits may have expired, or the earned benefit was being saved for a later degree. Veterans attending while not using benefits were more prevalent for those attending graduate school.

Table 4: Percentage of Veterans identified as Veteran No Benefit at VETS Campuses in AY 2024-25.

Students	LGI's	UT	Private	Overall
Veterans No Benefit (UG)	7%	24%	8%	10%
Veterans No Benefit (GR)	20%	16%	32%	20%



The dedication to fellow veterans shows in the work at the Veterans Success Center and in class.

–VETS Campus Student

Military Dependents

In AY 2024-25, there were 8,295 military dependents enrolled at Tennessee’s VETS Campuses. Military dependents make up 45 percent of the military-connected students at Tennessee’s VETS Campuses with 7,451 being undergraduate students and 844 being graduate students (**Table 1**). Fall 2024 saw the most enrollment of military dependents during this reporting period with 6,020 students: almost half (43 percent) attending a locally governed institution and a quarter (25 percent) from University of Tennessee campuses (**Table 5**).

Table 5: Enrollment of Undergraduate Military Dependents at VETS Campuses by Semester

Type of Institution	Summer 2024	Fall 2024	Spring 2025
Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology	93	398	221
Community Colleges	262	1,052	995
Private Not-for-Profit Colleges and Universities	101	471	454
Locally Governed Institutions	781	2,618	2,587
University of Tennessee System	301	1,481	1,447
TOTAL	1,538	6,020	5,704

Note: The enrollment figures shown in the chart above may include duplicated counts for students who enroll in multiple semesters within the reporting year.

There were 758 graduate military dependents in Fall 2024, the highest number enrolled on Tennessee’s VETS Campuses in this reporting period (**Table 6**); most of them (86 percent) enrolled at public universities and 14 percent attended a private not-for-profit college or university.

Table 6: Enrollment of Graduate Military Dependents at VETS Campuses by Semester

Type of Institution	Summer 2024	Fall 2024	Spring 2025
Private Not-for-Profit Colleges and Universities	92	103	102
Locally Governed Institutions	163	341	329
University of Tennessee System	90	314	214
TOTAL	345	758	645

VETS Campus Programs of Study

The U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) provides a list of Classifications of Instructional Programs (CIP) codes which establishes a taxonomy of programs. VETS Campuses reported the programs of study for both student veterans and military dependents during AY 2024-25.

Using the six-digit CIP code along with the degree level allowed THEC to determine those within that 51 - Health Professions category as having multiple fields appear on the top five programs of study for either student veterans or military dependents in doctoral study (**Tables 15 and 16**).

Tables **7 through 16** highlight the top five programs of study by student veterans or military dependents enrollment at each degree level. Instructional programs are accompanied by the six-digit CIP code and share of students in each.



Table 7: Top five TCAT Certificate and Diploma Programs of Student Veterans at VETS Campuses

CIP Code	Instructional Program	Percent
51.3901	Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurse Training	12%
48.0508	Welding Technology/Welder	12%
47.0303	Industrial Mechanics and Maintenance Technology/Technician	11%
47.0201	Heating, Air Conditioning, Ventilation & Refrigeration Maint.	10%
47.0604	Automobile/Automotive Mechanics Technology/Technician	9%

Table 8: Top five TCAT Certificate and Diploma Programs of Military Dependents at VETS Campuses

CIP Code	Instructional Program	Percent
48.0508	Welding Technology/Welder	17%
47.0604	Automobile/Automotive Mechanics Technology/Technician	10%
51.3901	Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurse Training	9%
47.0201	Heating, Air Conditioning, Ventilation & Refrigeration Maint.	8%
47.0303	Industrial Mechanics and Maintenance Technology/Technician	6%

Table 9: Top five Associate Degree Programs of Student Veterans at VETS Campuses

CIP Code	Instructional Program	Percent
24.0101	Liberal Arts and Sciences/Liberal Studies/University Parallel	52%
52.0201	Business Administration and Management, General	7%
11.0103	Information Technology	6%
51.3801	Registered Nursing/Registered Nurse	2%
15.0000	Engineering Technologies/Technicians, General	1%

Table 10: Top five Associate Degree Programs of Military Dependents at VETS Campuses

CIP Code	Instructional Program	Percent
24.0101	Liberal Arts and Sciences/Liberal Studies/University Parallel	63%
52.0201	Business Administration and Management, General	5%
51.3801	Registered Nursing/Registered Nurse	4%
15.0612	Industrial Technology	3%
11.0103	Information Technology	3%

Table 11: Top five Bachelor's Degree Programs of Student Veterans at VETS Campuses

CIP Code	Instructional Program	Percent
52.0201	Business Administration and Management, General	6%
51.3801	Registered Nursing/Registered Nurse	5%
43.0103	Criminal Justice/Law Enforcement Administration	4%
42.0101	Psychology, General	3%
11.0701	Computer Science	3%

Table 12: Top five Bachelor's Degree Programs for Military Dependents at VETS Campuses

CIP Code	Instructional Program	Percent
51.3801	Registered Nursing/Registered Nurse	5%
52.0201	Business Administration and Management, General	5%
42.0101	Psychology, General	4%
26.0101	Biology/Biological Sciences, General	3%
43.0103	Criminal Justice/Law Enforcement Administration	2%

Table 13: Top five Master's Degree Programs of Student Veterans at VETS Campuses

CIP Code	Instructional Program	Percent
52.0201	Business Administration and Management, General	22%
52.1301	Management Science	9%
13.0301	Curriculum and Instruction	6%
44.0401	Public Administration	4%
44.0701	Social Work	4%

Table 14: Top five Master's Degree Programs for Military Dependents at VETS Campuses

CIP Code	Instructional Program	Percent
52.0201	Business Administration and Management, General	17%
13.0301	Curriculum and Instruction	7%
13.1206	Teaching	7%
13.1101	Counseling	6%
13.0401	Educational Leadership Studies	4%

Table 15: Top five Doctoral Degree Programs of Student Veterans at VETS Campuses

CIP Code	Instructional Program	Percent
51.1201	Medical Doctor	18%
13.0401	Educational Leadership and Administration	13%
51.3818	Nursing Practice	7%
22.0101	Law	6%
51.2001	Pharmacy	<10

Table 16: Top five Doctoral Degree Programs for Military Dependents at VETS Campuses

CIP Code	Instructional Program	Percent
13.0401	Educational Leadership and Administration, General	13%
51.2001	Pharmacy	11%
51.1201	Medical Doctor	8%
51.2308	Physical Therapy	8%
01.8001	Veterinary Medicine	8%

VETS Campus Degree Completion

Since 2019, student veterans have earned over 16,100 credentials at Tennessee’s VETS Campuses. Student veterans earned 2,465 credentials in AY 2024-25, 37 percent being bachelor’s degrees (Table 17). Military dependents also earned 1,805 credentials and 54 percent of those were bachelor’s degrees (Table 18).

Table 17: Credentials Earned by Student Veterans at VETS Campuses in AY 2024-25.

Degree Types	TCATs	CC	LGIs	Private	UT	Total
TCAT Certificates	33					33
TCAT Diplomas	349					349
Community College Certificates		227				227
Associate		252	245			497
University Certificate			36		10	46
Bachelors			688	58	169	915
Masters			187	42	114	343
Doctoral			25	< 10	26	55
GRAND TOTAL	382	479	1,181	104	319	2,465

Note: TCATs – Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology; CC – Community Colleges; LGIs – Locally Governed Institutions; Private – Private Not-for-Profit Colleges and Universities; and UT – University of Tennessee system.

Table 18: Credentials Earned by Military Dependents at VETS Campuses in AY 2024-25.

Degree Types	TCATS	CC	LGI	Private	UT	Total
TCAT Certificates	24					24
TCAT Diplomas	241					241
Community College Certificates		73				73
Associate		151	90	< 10		242
University Certificate			< 10		< 10	16
Bachelors			512	56	404	972
Masters			119	24	69	212
Doctoral			< 10	< 10	14	25
GRAND TOTAL	265	224	735	86	495	1,805

Note: TCATs – Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology; CC – Community Colleges; LGIs – Locally Governed Institutions; Private - Private Not-for-Profit Colleges and Universities; and UT – University of Tennessee system.



It is comforting to know that people have my back.
–VETS Campus Student

Conclusion

Overall, 18,313 military-connected students were enrolled across the 43 Tennessee VETS Campuses that submitted data for AY 2024-25. Tennessee continues to see significant growth in the number of campuses dedicating resources and intentional support to veterans and the broader military-connected community.

The data illustrates an especially encouraging trend: military-connected students are not only enrolling but actively continuing their education to pursue higher-level degrees. This momentum reflects both the determination of these students and the strong support structures offered by VETS designated and VETS Bravo designated institutions.

Notably, Fall 2024 marked the highest semester enrollment of the year, with 6,767 undergraduate student veterans and 6,020 undergraduate military dependents enrolled across VETS Campuses, underscoring sustained engagement and the increasing visibility of military-connected learners statewide.

Through these continued efforts, VETS and VETS Bravo campuses exemplify the highest standards of military-connected serving institutions and are positioned to collaborate with campuses across Tennessee that are working to meet the criteria for VETS and VETS Bravo designation. We anticipate awarding additional designations in 2026 as institutions statewide continue advancing their commitment to supporting military-affiliated students.



Appendix A:

VETS and VETS Bravo Campus Designation Requirements

VETS Campus Designation Requirements:

1. Conduct an annual campus survey of students who are veterans to identify the views, needs, issues and suggestions of veterans;
2. Provide information to faculty and staff about military and veterans' culture, including combat-related mental or physical disabilities or other challenges;
3. Administer orientation programs for students who are veterans;
4. Facilitate mentoring and support programs for students who are veterans;
5. Develop outreach and communication strategies for military bases located near the campus, for the purpose of assessing veterans' educational goals and meeting their identified needs;
6. Create and maintain a process for the assessment of prior learning that grants academic credit to veterans for transferable training and experience attained through military service; and
7. Provide, on the campus website, information on the availability of prior learning assessments and potential program credit for skills, training or education obtained during military service.

VETS Bravo Campus Designation Requirements:

1. Have been designated a VETS campus for no less than the three-consecutive-year period immediately preceding the date on which the institution submits a request for certification as a VETS Bravo campus;
2. Develop a peer mentoring or other similar support program dedicated specifically for veterans and military-connected students;
3. Designate a VETS Bravo campus liaison who participates in no less than two professional development activities per year related to veterans; and
4. Provide career placement services specifically for veterans.

Appendix B: Definitions

Military-Connected Student: Any student fitting within the description of Student Veteran or Military Dependent below:

- **Student Veterans:** Active-duty members of the armed services, the National Guard, or Reserves and persons who are separated from the military through retirement or after a period of military service who are enrolled as a full- or part-time student at a postsecondary institution taking classes either online or in person.
- **Veterans:** A person who served in the active military, naval, or air service, and who was discharged or released therefrom under conditions other than dishonorable.
- **Reserve / National Guard:** The National Guard is part of the reserve components of the United States Army and the United States Air Force. There are also Reserve components in the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard. Many Reserve / National Guard individuals are in higher education or hold a civilian job full-time while serving part-time as a National Guard member.
- **Active Duty:** A person who is active duty is in the military full time. They work for the military full time, may live on a military base, and can be deployed at any time.
- **Military Dependents:** Students attending a postsecondary institution who are the qualified spouse, natural, adopted, stepchild or parents of a veteran or service-member.

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Glad to see the Veteran Service Center getting great people to help out veterans like myself and others.

–VETS Campus Student