

MyCAA Military Spouse Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

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A. MyCAA Program

1. What is the URL for the MyCAA Spouse Portal (website)?

<https://aiportal.acc.af.mil/mycaa>

2. What is the Military Spouse Career Advancement Account (MyCAA) program?

The **Military Spouse Career Advancement Accounts (MyCAA) Program** is a career development and employment assistance program sponsored by the Department of Defense (DoD). MyCAA helps military spouses pursue a license, certificate, certification or Associate's Degree (excluding General Studies and Liberal Arts) necessary for gainful employment in a high demand, high growth portable career field and occupation.

As part of the **Military Spouse's Career Lifecycle**, MyCAA offers the following:

Training and Education Financial Assistance: MyCAA provides a maximum education benefit of up to \$4,000 with an annual fiscal year cap of \$2,000 to assist eligible military spouses in acquiring a professional credential needed to meet their Portable Career goal. Annual cap waivers are available if there is an upfront tuition cost that exceeds \$2,000 (up to the maximum education benefit of \$4,000).

Employment Readiness Counseling: Counseling services are provided to all military spouses married to active duty service members of all ranks, regardless of their eligibility to receive MyCAA financial assistance and their desire to pursue higher levels of education. Counseling services help military spouses identify additional sources of federal, state and local financial assistance, expanded career choices and opportunities, and necessary support resources (e.g. child care, transportation, books, computers, equipment, supplies, etc.).

Employment Assistance and Career Services: Referrals are made to networks of military friendly employers for MyCAA spouse participants who have completed their programs of study using MyCAA funding and who are ready to seek gainful employment.

3. Where is the most updated version of the MyCAA Fact Sheet?

The MyCAA Fact Sheet is located on the front page of the MyCAA Spouse Portal:
<https://aiportal.acc.af.mil/mycaa>. It is also located on the Resource Page of this portal.

4. What does MyCAA pay for?

MyCAA pays tuition costs for education and training courses and examinations leading to Associate's degrees (excluding General Studies and Liberal Arts), licenses, certificates or certifications at an accredited college, university, or technical school in the United States or approved testing organization that expands employment or portable career opportunities for military spouses.

5. What does MyCAA NOT pay for?

- Tuition for courses and examinations that are not included in the spouse's Education and Training Plan and those that have already started or been completed by the spouse
- Reimbursements of any kind
- Books, supplies, equipment, uniforms, computers and electronic devices of any kind
- Student activities, events and entertainment
- Pre-payment/deposits for future courses, unless costs are part of a block of study
- School or college level entrance examinations, comprehensive exams and related preparatory courses
- Courses, tests or fees normally paid by an employer as part of a job training program
- Non-academic credit or ungraded courses, including courses taken on an audit basis or as an internship, practicum, apprenticeship, or clinical supervision; also, orientation programs that are non-academic credit or ungraded

- Courses taken more than one time unless MyCAA has received a full refund from the school
- Academic credit by examination tests (e.g. CLEP, etc.)
- General Studies and Liberal Arts Associate's Degrees
- Personal enrichment courses (excluding courses that are academic credit/graded electives in an approved MyCAA Spouse Education and Training Plan)
- Transportation, lodging, child care, and medical services
- Course Extensions (except for approved hardship waivers)
- Study Abroad Programs (excluding programs of study offered by participating MyCAA schools on overseas military bases)

6. What are the terms and conditions for spouses participating in MyCAA?

In order to open a MyCAA Account and request up to \$4,000 of education financial assistance funding on a course-by-course basis, military spouses must read and electronically sign the following Spouse Terms and Conditions Agreement.

- I agree that I am solely responsible for the establishment and management of my MyCAA Account. Under no circumstances shall I share my account username or password with anyone, including but not limited to my military sponsor or school representatives.
- I agree to develop an Education and Training Plan in coordination with school officials. I understand that a MyCAA Career and Education Consultant is required to approve this plan prior to my requesting MyCAA financial assistance.
- I understand that the maximum MyCAA financial assistance benefit is \$4,000 and that there is a \$2,000 annual fiscal year spending cap. Spending cap waivers are available if the spouse's school requires an upfront tuition payment exceeding \$2,000 (up to the maximum \$4,000 education benefit).
- I understand that MyCAA funding cannot be used to audit, to repeat a course (unless MyCAA receives a full refund from the school), or to pay for non-academic credit / ungraded courses such as college / freshman orientation programs, internships, practicums or supervised clinical assignments.
- I understand that I must submit a MyCAA financial assistance (FA) request for each course in my Education and Training Plan on a course-by-course basis between 60 -15 days prior to course start dates. I understand that failure to do so will result in my being held responsible for paying course costs.
- I understand that spouses that have participated in the Career Advancement Accounts program administered by the Department of Labor and funded by the Department of Defense and Department of Labor are not eligible to participate in the MyCAA without a waiver. If spouses have used less than \$4,000 from the CAA program a MyCAA consultant must be contacted for a waiver to be issued to use the remaining funds.
- I agree to allow the Department of Defense and my school to share information which is necessary for MyCAA Program administration and paying of school invoices. I understand I am responsible for ensuring that my grades are posted in the AI Portal within 60 days of course completion by school officials. I understand I will not be allowed to use additional MyCAA funding until my grades are posted.
- I understand if I fail or withdraw from a course, my MyCAA Account will be suspended and no financial assistance documents can be created until I contact a MyCAA Career and Education Consultant. If a second failure or withdrawal is made, I understand that I will not be allowed to receive any further funds from MyCAA.
- I understand that if I receive a grade of incomplete, I am required to attain a satisfactory grade within 6 months of the course end date unless a shorter term is specified by my school. I understand that my account will be suspended and no additional MyCAA funding will be provided until I complete this course.

- I understand that waivers related to course failures, withdrawals and incompletes are authorized for “hardship” cases (e.g. unanticipated health issues, permanent change of duty location, temporary duty assignments, emergency leave of the military member, or hospitalization for a length of time that precludes course completion). Waiver requests must be signed by my military sponsor’s supervisor or higher authority and uploaded into my MyCAA Account eFile with a request for waiver approval. They must include
 - (1) Name/title/code of course(s) for which the waiver is requested
 - (2) Reason for the Waiver
 - (3) Name, title and command for military sponsor’s supervisor or higher authority

IN SUMMARY: I have read the above Spouse Terms and Conditions Agreement. I understand that non-compliance may result in (1) my being held responsible for tuition and examination costs; (2) indefinite suspension of my MyCAA Account; or (3) in the case of fraud, permanent closure of my MyCAA Account. I agree to follow MyCAA Guidelines and to honor these terms and conditions, including the requirement to notify MyCAA when I find gainful employment in a portable career field and occupation.

7. Are spouses required to complete their courses, certification or license in a certain timeframe?

Yes. The duration of an associate’s degree course cannot exceed 12 months and a license or certificate program cannot exceed 18 months. No exceptions can be made to exceed either of these timeframes.

8. What are MyCAA’s requirements for spouses after they finish their coursework?

- Inform MyCAA when they receive their license, certificate, certification or Associate’s degree.
- Seek a job in their chosen Portable Career Field and occupation.
- Let MyCAA know when they find employment using the Contact Us page on the MyCAA Spouse Portal (<https://aiportal.acc.af.mil/mycaa>) -- as required in the Spouse Terms & Conditions Agreement that spouses electronically sign when they open their MyCAA Account.

9. Can spouses take graduate courses with MyCAA funding?

Spouses can take any program of study from an accredited school or institution recognized by the Department of Education or Department of Defense that leads to a license, certification, certificate or Associate’s Degree (except General Studies and Liberal Arts).

Coursework may include higher level courses needed for Continuing Education Units (CEUs) and higher level courses which serve as electives in an approved program of study.

In order to be eligible for MyCAA funding, coursework must be included in an approved MyCAA Spouse Education and Training Plan.

10. What happens if spouses need more than \$4,000? Are there other funding sources?

Spouses should:

- Contact Military OneSource (1-800-342-9647) or a MyCAA Career and Education Consultant (by sending a Message from the Spouse’s Message Box) to request additional financial assistance information.
- Contact their School Career Services Office or School Financial Aid Office
- Visit the following websites:

www.militaryonesource.com/mycaa
www.nmfa.org
www.careeronestop.org
www.ed.gov (Pell Grants)

11. Can MyCAA funding be used in conjunction with other federal education benefits?

Schools are responsible for making decisions in concert with military spouses regarding which source of funding to use when multiple sources of federal education benefits are available to military spouses. To avoid invoicing errors, administrative delays and the need to make refunds to MyCAA (not the spouse), school officials should advise or refer military spouses to an expert at their school regarding which source of funding to use. This will allow spouses to request MyCAA financial assistance 60-15 days prior to course start dates if MyCAA funding is the best source of funding to use. Keep in mind that two sources of federal education benefits cannot be used to pay for the same tuition costs.

12. Are there any financial resources to help pay for books?

Spouses can find information on the following websites:

www.halfpricetextbooks.us
www.freebookexpress.com
www.textbooksfree.org
www.CheapestTextbooks.com
www.Booksprice.com
www.Coursesmart.com

13. Is MyCAA funding taxable?

No. MyCAA funding is considered a scholarship and is not subject to taxation.

14. Why isn't the MyCAA website displaying properly?

The MyCAA website is not compatible with some browsers including Safari, and Google Chrome. Please access the MyCAA website using Internet Explorer version 6.0 or higher.

B. MyCAA Eligibility

1. Who is eligible for MyCAA?

Spouses of service members on active duty in pay grades E-1 to E-5, W-1 to W-2, and O-1 to O-2 who can start and complete their coursework while their military sponsor is on Title 10 military orders, including spouses married to members of the National Guard and Reserve Components in these same pay grades.

2. Who is NOT eligible for MyCAA?

- Spouses married to service members in pay grades: E-6 and above; W-3 and above; and O-3 and above
- Spouses who are a member of the armed forces themselves currently on Title 10 orders
- Spouses who are married but legally separated (or under court order or statute of any state or US territory) from a member of the armed forces on Title 10 orders
- Spouses whose National Guard/Reserve Component military sponsor is in a Warning Orders/Alert, Post Deployment/Demobilization or Transition Status
- Spouses married to a member of the Coast Guard
- Spouses who have participated and used over \$4,000 in the DoD-DoL Career Advancement Accounts (CAA) Pilot Program
- Spouses who are unable to start and complete their course(s) while their military sponsor is on Title 10 orders

3. How will MyCAA eligibility be verified?

- MyCAA uses DEERS to verify spouse eligibility based on social security numbers of both the military service member and the spouse. Social security numbers are not stored in the MyCAA website.
- A DEERS eligibility check is initiated when the spouse opens a MyCAA Account and each time the spouse requests MyCAA Financial Assistance (FA) on a course-by-course basis.

4. What should spouses do if they receive a DEERS error message?

- If the military sponsor has not registered his or her spouse in DEERS or information is out-of-date (especially information confirming that the service member is on Active Duty):
 - Visit the nearest Military Personnel Office for assistance.
 - Call the DEERS Helpdesk at 1-800-538-9552.
 - Visit www.TRICARE.osd.mil/DEERSAddress.
- Spouses will need a General Power of Attorney (POA) authorized by their military sponsor if the spouse will be making changes to the DEERS system without the military sponsor being present. Command legal officers can assist the military member with POA requests.

5. Are currently employed spouses eligible for MyCAA Financial Assistance (FA)?

Yes. Employed spouses can use MyCAA funding for coursework and exams that lead to employment and career advancement in one or more Portable Career Fields and occupations that require a license, certificate, certification or Associate's Degree.

Spouses who already have advanced degrees but who want or need to take coursework that leads to a recognized credential allowed by MyCAA may also use MyCAA funding to continue or advance their career and employment.

For Military OneSource and MyCAA Career Counseling Services, call 1-800-342-9647.

6. Can spouses who have previously participated in the Career Advancement Accounts (CAA) program administered by the Department of Labor also participate in the MyCAA program?

Spouses who have participated in the Career Advancement Accounts program administered by the Department of Labor are not eligible to participate in the MyCAA without a waiver. If a spouse used less than \$4,000 in the CAA program, a MyCAA consultant must be contacted for the spouse to receive a waiver to use the remaining funds

C. MyCAA Accounts

1. How does a military spouse create a MyCAA Account?

- Visit the MyCAA Spouse Portal at <https://aiportal.acc.af.mil/mycaa>.
- Provide Spouse Profile information.
- A real-time DEERS check will be initiated to determine spouse eligibility to use open a MyCAA Account.
- If eligible, the MyCAA Spouse Portal will walk the spouse through the process of opening a MyCAA Account.
- For those who do not pass the DEERS check, additional guidance will be provided.

2. Can a spouse's MyCAA account be locked?

Yes, for the following reasons:

- After three unsuccessful login attempts. (NOTE: Spouses should call a MyCAA Career and Education Consultant (1-800-342-9647) for assistance if their account gets locked for this reason.)
- If a spouse fails to adhere to MyCAA Terms and Conditions, including if a spouse knowingly allows another person to create and/or manage his or her account.
- If a spouse impersonates or misrepresents another person, or provides fraudulent information into the MyCAA account system. The spouse may also face serious legal and financial consequences.
- After the spouse fails or withdraws from a second course, the spouse's account will be permanently locked and no further MyCAA financial assistance will be available to the spouse.

Hardship waivers are available to spouses in extreme situations only. MyCAA Career and Education Consultants can provide additional information and assistance for hardship waivers.

3. Can a spouse's MyCAA Account be suspended?

Yes, for the following reasons:

- If a spouse fails to log in to his/her account for 12 months.
- If a spouse creates more than one account.
- If the school fails to post the spouse's grades and submit an invoice to MyCAA within 60 days of course end dates. NOTE: Spouses are ultimately responsible for ensuring that schools post their grades and submit an invoice in a timely fashion. No further MyCAA funding will be provided until these requirements are met.
- If the spouse fails or withdraws from a course. Spouses must contact a MyCAA Career and Education Consultant to discuss the course failure or withdrawal and to develop a plan for future success. The spouse's account will be suspended until this requirement is met. If there are additional course failures or withdrawals, the spouses account will be permanently locked.

4. Can a spouse use a .mil email address?

Yes. But MyCAA recommends spouses choose an email address other than .mil because MyCAA is not allowed to send password reset messages to .mil email accounts.

D. MyCAA Schools

1. Which schools can participate in the MyCAA program?

All schools and institutions participating in the MyCAA Program must be accredited by a regulatory body recognized by the U.S. Department of Education or the Department of Defense. Accreditations must be recognized by national, regional, state or industry standards.

2. How do spouses know if their school is participating?

There are approximately 3,000 schools and campuses participating in the MyCAA Program. Use the "School/Program" button and search function on the MyCAA Spouse Portal (<https://aiportal.acc.af.mil/mycaa>) to view a list of participating schools. The fastest way to get started using MyCAA financial assistance is to choose a school that is already participating.

If their school is not participating, spouses can encourage school officials to visit the School Resources page on the MyCAA Spouse Portal for more information about school eligibility, accreditation requirements, and how to "Come On-Board."

3. Can spouses complete the online School Eligibility Application for their school?

No. Only school officials can complete this application. This process can take up to 60 days to complete.

4. How does a spouse know when a school has completed the registration process?

- The school's correct name will appear in the School Search section of the MyCAA Spouse Portal (<https://aiportal.acc.af.mil/mycaa>) once the school has completed the MyCAA School Eligibility screening process, been approved for participation and become a registered user of the AI Portal.
- Spouses should follow up with the school's MyCAA Representative (e.g. main point of contact) to monitor school eligibility and registration status.
- **DO NOT call** MyCAA Career and Education Consultants regarding school registration status. This significantly delays the School Eligibility and Registration administrative processes which can take up to 60 days. Simply use the School Search function.

5. What requirements does MyCAA have for schools?

School officials must sign a MyCAA Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Department of Defense stating they will comply with MyCAA policy and program requirements. They must be accredited by a regulatory body recognized by the Department of Education or Department of Defense. Their staff must abide by requirements of the MyCAA School Users Terms and Conditions Agreement which covers (1) use of the AI Portal for processing invoices and posting grades, (2) being truthful and fair when recruiting students, and (3) applying the SOC Student Bill of Rights to military spouses.

6. Do spouses have to choose a school that is already participating in MyCAA?

- No, but it can take up to 60 days to approve new schools into the MyCAA program.
- If the spouse's school is not a MyCAA participant, the spouse is encouraged to consider an alternative school that is already participating in MyCAA.
- MyCAA Career and Education Consultants can recommend affordable school choices that will give similar education value for both traditional classroom and distance learning options.

7. Where do spouses find help choosing a school?

There are several sources of assistance:

- Call Military OneSource (1-800-342-9647) for Career Services including no-cost Career and Education counseling appointments.
- Visit www.careeronestop.org to explore Portable Career Fields and occupations, and to find schools that provide programs of study that lead to licenses, certificates, certifications and Associate's Degrees in your local area or line.
- Visit your local Community Colleges and use their career and education counseling services.
- Explore Military OneSource's Spouse Career Center, online at www.militaryonesource.com.
- Visit the MyCAA Spouse Portal (<https://aiportal.acc.af.mil/mycaa>) and use the Program Search function.
- Visit your school's website to review sample Education and Training Plans.

8. If spouses already know which school they want to attend, what do they do next?

- Create a MyCAA Account within the MyCAA Spouse Portal at <https://aiportal.acc.af.mil/mycaa>.
- Use the School Search function in the MyCAA Spouse Portal to verify schools of interest are participating in MyCAA.
- Meet with school officials from more than one school to discuss and compare course costs, school graduation and program of study completion rates, employment placement rates, availability of school career and student services, the true cost of education loans and availability of additional financial assistance, potential income levels for occupations of interest, etc.
- Apply to the best value schools that meet spouse career and education needs.
- Once accepted, enroll at the school and in the program of study of interest.
- Create a MyCAA Education and Training (E&T) Plan according to MyCAA E&T Plan guidelines (see MyCAA Spouse Portal front page). Then, seek MyCAA E&T Plan approval.
- After plan approval, request MyCAA financial assistance for each class that begins within the next 60-15 days.

9. Can spouses encourage a school to participate in MyCAA?

Spouses should encourage school officials to visit the MyCAA Spouse Portal (<https://aiportal.acc.af.mil/mycaa>) to learn more about how to “Come On-Board” with the MyCAA Program. Detailed information is found on the Schools Resource page. NOTE: Information and encouragement do not guarantee that a school will agree to participate or that the school will be eligible for MyCAA participation. Spouses should have an alternative school in mind in case their first choice of school is not available.

10. How long does the “On-Boarding” process take?

- The new School Eligibility and Application process can take up to 60 days.
- The MyCAA School and Program Support Team will provide only school officials with 20-40-60 day status reports regarding application status. They will let school officials know when it is time to register in the AI Portal.

Spouses SHOULD NOT WAIT too long before choosing a school and starting classes. They have 3 years to complete their program of study from the date of their first class.

11. Does MyCAA pay spouses or schools for course costs?

MyCAA Financial Assistance (FA) payments are made directly to schools using the AI Portal, an electronic invoicing system.

12. How do schools get paid?

Schools submit an electronic invoice for course payment through the AI Portal. The invoice is reviewed and approved by DoD Financial Analysts. A Payment Authorization Letter containing government credit card information is sent back to schools through the AI Portal. This letter allows schools to receive payment.

E. MyCAA Education and Training Plans

1. What is a MyCAA Education and Training Plan?

Education and Training Plan Guidance and sample documents are found in the Resource Section of the MyCAA Spouse Portal (<https://aiportal.acc.af.mil/mycaa>). They are reviewed and approved in the order in which they are received by MyCAA. Plans include:

- Portable Career Field and Occupation (called the Spouse’s Career Goal)
- School and Campus Location
- Program Type (license, credential or Associate’s Degree)
- Course and/or credential exam information (course names, codes, costs and start/end dates) including core course requirements and possible electives. Once approved by MyCAA Career and Education Consultants, the E&T Plan is locked for funding purposes. The spouse can only change the stated Career Goal once. Coursework changes may require Consultant assistance depending on when they are needed.

If incorrect information is provided, MyCAA Financial Assistance (FA) requests will be rejected during the school invoicing process. If this happens, the spouse may be held responsible by their school to pay course costs.

2. How can military spouses get assistance with their Education and Training Plan(s)?

Spouses can help themselves:

- Read the Education & Training Plan Guidelines posted on the front page of the MyCAA Spouse Portal (<http://aiportal.acc.af.mil/mycaa>). This includes sample plans from sample schools in sample formats.
- Visit www.careeronestop.org to explore Portable Career Fields and find schools that have programs of study leading to licenses, certificates, certifications, and Associate’s Degrees.

School officials can help spouses:

- Work with school officials and/or academic advisors to develop a School Education and Training Plan.
- This is the best way to ensure required information is correct and to avoid administrative errors and time delays.

MyCAA Career and Education Consultants (1-800-342-9647) can help spouses:

- Explore career interests, evaluate school options and compare programs of study, including costs.
- Review and approve spouse Education and Training Plans.
- Make allowable changes to Career Goals and coursework.

3. Why are there delays in getting help?

There are over 136,000 military spouses currently participating in the MyCAA program and over 3,000 schools that are registered in the MyCAA electronic invoicing system. MyCAA answers calls and messages in the order they were received unless they are urgent requirements related to class start dates or graduations.

The fastest way for spouses to get help if they already have an open MyCAA Account is to send a message to a MyCAA Career and Education Consultant through their Message Box.

Visit the Help/Contact Us and Resource Sections of the MyCAA Spouse Portal (<https://aiportal.acc.af.mil/mycaa>).

4. Why do grades get posted in the MyCAA Spouse Account?

- Failing grades, incompletes and course withdrawals do not help spouses acquire licenses, certificates, degrees or employment. In such cases, MyCAA requires spouses to make contact with a MyCAA Career and Education Consultant to develop a plan for future success.
- If there is more than one course failure or withdrawal, the spouse's account will be permanently closed.
- Grades must be posted within 60 days of course end dates. Ultimately, it is the spouse's responsibility to ensure grades are posted by school officials. Spouses will not be allowed to receive additional MyCAA funding until this requirement is met.

5. What CANNOT be included in a MyCAA Education and Training Plan?

- Courses with a zero (\$0) cost
- Courses being taken to complete a Bachelor's, Master's or Doctoral Degree
- Courses that are being taken on an audit basis or being repeated unless MyCAA has received a full refund from the school

6. Who can make changes to a MyCAA Education and Training Plan?

- Rules have changed. Prior to approval, spouses may make changes to their MyCAA Education and Training Plan. However, once a plan has been approved, a MyCAA Career and Education Consultant must be contacted for changes to be made. Contact a MyCAA Career and Education Consultant at 1-800-342-9647 or send a message using the MyCAA Account Message Box to request assistance.

7. How are Education and Training Plans affected by spouse relocation?

- Relocating spouses are encouraged to contact their MyCAA Career and Education consultant to discuss the impacts of relocation on their Education and Training Plans.
- If spouses are enrolled in a distance learning program and plan to continue that program, they will only need to update their Profile information.
- If spouses need to change schools, campus locations or programs of study, they will have to create a new Education and Training Plan and request MyCAA approval.

8. If spouses do not have correct school and course information, should they guess?

NO!

- DO NOT use prior year course catalogs to get information. Information changes every year.
- Spouses need to contact school officials to confirm school name, campus location and course information PRIOR to submitting Financial Assistance (FA) requests on a course-by-course basis.

9. Will MyCAA pay for the same course more than one time?

No. If a spouse needs to repeat a course, the spouse will need to do so at his or her own expense unless MyCAA receives a full refund from the school. MyCAA also does not pay for a course that is being audited or for courses that are ungraded or have no academic credit.

10. Will MyCAA pay for fees?

No. MyCAA only pays for tuition costs for courses and programs of study that lead to licenses, certifications and certificates required by Portable Career fields and occupations. It also pays for the cost of the license or certification test/examination.

11. Will MyCAA pay for Study Abroad Programs?

No. Additionally, MyCAA does not pay costs for transportation, lodging/housing, and other related expenses. MyCAA only pays tuition costs for courses and programs of study offered by participating schools within the United States and for those offered by these same institutions on military bases overseas.

12. What happens if a spouse fails a course?

The spouse's account will be suspended until the spouse talks to a MyCAA Career and Education Consultant and develops a plan for successfully completing future courses using MyCAA funding. A second course failure or withdrawal will result in the spouse's MyCAA Account being permanently closed.

13. Does adding classes to a MyCAA Education and Training Plan also enroll the spouse in these classes at their school/university?

No, spouses still have to:

- Apply and be accepted at their school and within their programs of study
- Follow school enrollment, course registration and Drop/Add procedures

14. How do spouses add courses to a new or approved Education and Training Plan? (?)

Contact a MyCAA Career and Education Consultant (1-800-342-9647) or send a Message via the MyCAA Account Message Box for assistance. Changes to Education and Training Plans are restricted.

15. If a spouse wants to add more courses to an already approved plan, do the additional courses need to be approved by MyCAA?

Assistance from a MyCAA Career and Education Consultant will be required to make changes to an Education and Training Plan. Approval can be made at that time.

16. How long does it take for an Education and Training Plan to be approved?

It takes approximately ten (10) business days. Once an Education and Training Plan is submitted, the plan is automatically entered into a queue in the system to be approved. Plans are worked in the order that they are received. Messages are no longer required to be sent to counselors requesting approval. Please do not send multiple messages requesting plan approval as this further delays the review and assessment process.

F. MyCAA Financial Assistance (FA)

1. Why is the Department of Defense (DoD) providing Financial Assistance (FA) to military spouses?

DoD is providing MyCAA financial assistance to eligible military spouses in order to assist them in becoming qualified for Portable Career employment opportunities. MyCAA funding shall not be used to pay for recreational or personal enrichment courses unless these are also requirements for approved programs of study leading to licenses, certificates, certifications or an Associate's Degree (e.g. electives).

2. When can a spouse apply for MyCAA Financial Assistance (FA)?

After spouses have created an Education and Training Plan and received MyCAA approval, they can request financial assistance on a course-by-course basis for courses starting with the next 60-15 days.

3. How do spouses apply for Financial Assistance (FA)?

- Open a MyCAA Account.
- Create an Education and Training Plan and get it approved by a MyCAA Career and Education Consultant.
- Follow step-by-step guidance for requesting MyCAA financial assistance in the MyCAA Spouse Portal.
- Print MyCAA Financial Assistance (FA) documents and take them to the school if course registration and enrollment is required onsite at the school. Keep in mind that school officials can see spouse FA requests real time (including changes made to these requests) in their AI Portal Accounts.
- School officials can reserve a space in a course for the spouse who has an approved FA document.
- If a spouse enrolls in a course without an approved FA document, the spouse will be held responsible for course costs.

4. How do spouses print a Financial Assistance (FA) document?

Follow step-by-step guidance on the MyCAA Spouse Portal (<https://aiportal.acc.af.mil/mycaa>).

5. How do spouses edit Financial Assistance (FA) information after it has been approved?

Contact a MyCAA Career and Education Consultant for more information and assistance: 1-800-342-9647 or send a Message via the spouse MyCAA Account Message Box.

6. Can spouses get money back from MyCAA for classes that have already started or been completed?

MyCAA does not provide reimbursements of any kind to spouses. Adjustments are sometimes made to MyCAA Spouse Accounts if refunds are made by schools back to the MyCAA credit card that was used to pay for a course that was cancelled by the school or if the spouse was able to drop a course before the end of the school's Drop/Add period. But MyCAA does not pay for courses that have already started or been taken by the spouse at his or her own expense.

If a spouse or school deliberately commits fraud by entering incorrect information into the MyCAA system, they can both be permanently disenrolled from the MyCAA program. They may also face serious legal and financial consequences.

7. If a spouse is not interested in Financial Assistance, can the spouse still participate in MyCAA?

Yes. Spouses can contact MyCAA Career and Education Consultants at 1-800-342-9647 to request career counseling services, referrals to self-assessment tests, employment assistance and other career services.

8. Can a spouse use MyCAA Financial Assistance (FA) at a school that is not participating in MyCAA?

No. This is also true for testing organizations. MyCAA can only pay schools and institutions if they have been vetted, approved and registered to participate in the MyCAA program

9. Do organizations that offer Continuing Education Units (CEU), Bar or CPA Exams have to register to receive MyCAA FA payments?

Yes. This is the only way they can receive payments for courses and credentialing exams.

G. MyCAA Spouses in Transition to New Program Guidelines

1. When will the MyCAA Program open up?

Phase one of the Military Spouse Career Advancement Program (MyCAA) was resumed March 13, 2010, for the 136,853 spouses who were already enrolled in the program. The second phase, for all military spouses not previously enrolled, will begin on October 25, 2010. The program will be closed from Midnight Thursday, October 21 to Monday, October 25, 2010, so that we may ensure the infrastructure is in place to implement the new program.

2. Why was October 25, 2010 chosen to reinstate the program for all military spouses?

This date was chosen to allow enough time to implement the new staffing and software infrastructure.

3. What drove the decision to change eligibility and include the annual cap, reduced benefit, etc.?

The Department of Defense had to make changes in light of current and future fiscal realities - so DoD adjusted the program to assist those spouses who need it most.

4. Under the new guidelines, some spouses will no longer be eligible for MyCAA funding who currently have a MyCAA Account and are going to school. Can they take classes in the fall?

Spouses who currently have an account will be allowed to request financial assistance until Thursday, October 21, 2010. And beginning September 1, 2010, spouses may request classes that have a start date up to January 31, 2011. To ensure adequate time to plan for courses, no new career plans will be accepted after August 31, 2010. After October 21, 2010, spouses outside of the eligibility categories will no longer be able to request financial assistance.

5. The spouses currently with MyCAA accounts have been approved for up to \$6,000. What happens to the spouse's money now and after October 25?

Spouses with current career plans may continue to use up to the \$6,000 maximum. On October 25th, all of the current MyCAA Accounts will be reduced from \$6,000 to \$4,000. If a spouse has used more than \$4,000 then she will have no remaining MyCAA funds. If she has used less than \$4,000 then she may use the remaining funds up to \$4,000.

6. What specifically is the eligibility for spouses of Guard and Reserve on Title 10 orders?

Effective July 20, 2010, only those spouses whose service members are executing Title 10 military orders will be eligible. This includes spouses of deployed National Guard and Reserve members who are activated on Title 10 orders. This change in practice is to better comply with the program's authorizing legislation. Guard and Reserve

spouses are no longer eligible from date of alert to 180 days past deployment. In addition, all spouse participants must be able to start and complete their courses while their military sponsor is on Title 10 orders.

7. What is the status of spouses of Guard and Reserve that are no longer on Title 10 orders that have approved financial assistance requests?

The change in eligibility will not affect an approved FA request. DoD will honor all approved FAs. The spouse's school will need to invoice via the AI Portal for payment for all approved FAs. However, effective immediately, spouses of Guard and Reserve who are no longer on Title 10 orders will not be able to request FA.

8. Some spouses who are still eligible for MyCAA funding have already spent more than \$4,000. Will they be able to finish out the remainder of the initial \$6,000?

Spouses can request financial assistance for courses under the current program until Thursday, October 21, 2010. Spouses who have exceeded \$4,000 on October 25 will no longer be eligible for MyCAA funding.

9. Can spouses who are no longer eligible for MyCAA funding still get career counseling?

Yes. All military spouses, to include spouses of Guard and Reserve, may receive educational counseling and career guidance from a Military OneSource Spouse Education and Career Consultant. Military OneSource Consultants can provide education and training, career exploration, assessment, employment readiness and career search assistance.

10. Will the program be cut in the future?

Not in FY 2011. However, in coming years, with a reduced defense budget a reality, every program will be closely scrutinized for its contribution to military family readiness.

11. Some spouses are currently using MyCAA funding for a Bachelor's or Master's degree. Will they be allowed to continue using MyCAA funding?

Beginning on October 25, 2010, MyCAA funding is restricted to Associate's degrees, and programs of study and tests leading directly to licenses and certifications. For spouses who have MyCAA funds remaining, beginning on October 25, 2010, they will need to use their MyCAA funds for completion of an Associate's degree, license or certification. MYCAA will continue to work with particular programs within a college or university that provide academic certificates which directly support a portable career and Associate's degrees. Associate's degrees in General Studies and Liberal Arts are not eligible for MyCAA funding.

12. What if a spouse is planning on getting a certification that is going to cost more than \$2000 up front? Can the \$2000 per year cap be exceeded?

Yes, there is a waiver process built into the MyCAA program for licenses and certifications that require up-front tuition that is greater than \$2,000 with a total expenditure limit of \$4,000. Spouses should contact a MyCAA Career and Education Consultant (1-800-342-9647 or by MyCAA Account Message Box) for assistance in requesting a waiver from MyCAA policy requirements.

13. When does the \$2,000 per fiscal year cap begin?

The fiscal year for 2010 is October 25, 2010 ending on September 30, 2011. Each year after that it will be October 1 through September 30 the following year.

14. Will the three year time limit to use MyCAA funding begin from the new guidelines or be retroactive to the beginning of the program?

The three year time limit to use MyCAA funding begins on the start date of the first course taken by a spouse using MyCAA financial assistance. This rule applies to all spouses with open MyCAA Accounts, regardless of when they began participating in the MyCAA program.

15. What happens when a spouse fails or withdraws from a course

Spouses will have to demonstrate successful completion of their courses in order to continue using MyCAA funding. If a spouse fails, withdraws or gets an incomplete in a course, their MyCAA account will be suspended. (is the process for a second failure or withdraw necessary here?)The spouse will need to contact a MyCAA Career and Education Consultant for education counseling regarding how the spouse can prevent reoccurrences, complete incompleted courses, and continue successfully pursuing their portable career. Schools need to upload grades to the AI Portal in a correct and timely manner. No additional FA requests can be submitted until these requirements are met.

16. How will the change in eligibility affect an already approved financial assistance (FA) request?

The change in eligibility will not affect an approved FA request. DoD will honor all approved FAs that contain correct information. The spouse's school will need to invoice via the AI Portal for payment of all approved FAs.

17. If there is a pending FA that was approved prior to October 21, 2010 but is not paid yet, will MyCAA still pay?

Yes. The spouse's school will need to invoice via the AI Portal for payment for all approve FAs.

18. Will the school get paid for course a spouse is in right now?

If the spouse is in a course which has an approved FA, yes, DoD will pay this FA.

19. Will spouses have to pay money back if they do not qualify for the program due to the change in eligibility?

No. Spouses who used MyCAA funding who are no longer eligible under the new program guidelines will not be required to pay any money back. The MyCAA funding they received under the initial eligibility rules was allocated appropriately.

20. If a spouse has funds remaining but no longer qualifies for MyCAA, will her MyCAA Account be locked?

Yes. Spouses who currently have a MyCAA Account but under the new program guidelines are no longer eligible will have their accounts locked on October 25, 2010, the date the new MyCAA program policies go into effect. However, they are eligible to receive education and career counseling from Military OneSource indefinitely while their military sponsor is on active duty.

21. Will spouses who have used more than \$4,000 already have to pay any money back?

No. The MyCAA funding they received under the initial eligibility rules was allocated appropriately and does not have to be paid back.

22. Who can spouses contact if they want to make a complaint?

Military spouses can request to speak to a MyCAA Service Delivery Manager (1-800-342-9647) for any service delivery issue.

If spouses have a concern regarding MyCAA policy, MyCAA and Military OneSource staffs do not have the authority to make policy changes. However, they can provide spouses with policy waiver request information.

- **Automatic Waivers** will be granted when schools require an upfront tuition payment that exceeds the annual \$2,000 cap, up to the maximum MyCAA education benefit amount of \$4,000 or the balance of the spouse's account.
- **Forgiveness Waivers** may be requested by spouses who have failed, withdrawn or received an incomplete for a course for the first time. In such cases, spouses must contact a MyCAA Career and Education Consultant to discuss the situation and to develop a plan to prevent reoccurrences. If a second offense occurs, the spouse's account will be closed permanently.
- **Hardship Waivers** must be requested by the spouse in writing with official documentation provided to MyCAA supporting the hardship reason. MyCAA Career and Education Consultants can provide additional details on this waiver process and requirements. Course extensions which incur an additional cost to MyCAA require a hardship waiver.
- **Waiver Decision Appeals** associated with Hardship Waiver denials should be sent to the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Military Community & Family Policy).

Spouses can send an e-mail to MyCAAFEEDBACK@militaryonesource.com to provide feedback on the MyCAA program and website to the Department of Defense.

Spouses who have completed their program of study and found employment should use the Help/Contact Us button on the MyCAA Spouse Portal (<https://aiportal.acc.af.mil/mycaa>) to provide information required by the Spouse Terms & Conditions Agreement signed when the spouse opened his or her MyCAA Account.

School officials should visit the Schools Resource Page on the MyCAA Spouse Portal (<https://aiportal.acc.af.mil/mycaa>) for contact information and assistance.

23. How will a spouse know if her license or certification qualifies as a portable career?

The Department of Labor and Department of Defense define a portable career as one that is high growth; high demand; largest employment; and most likely to have job openings in military duty locations. These types of careers are plentiful in many locations where the Armed Forces stations military families. MyCAA Career and Education Consultants (1-800-342-9647) can provide career and education counseling that will help spouses find licenses, certifications and other credentials that are recognized by the Departments of Labor and Defense as portable. They can also direct spouses to testing sources for these credentials and testing organizations that are registered participants in the MyCAA Program. For more information, spouses should visit the Tests Page in the MyCAA Spouse Portal (<https://aiportal.acc.af.mil/mycaa>).

24. Can a spouse's Associate's Degree be in any subject?

Spouses must pursue an Associate's Degree, license or certification in a portable career field. For example, Associate Degrees in general education would not be considered a good or acceptable career choice. Associate's Degrees in General Studies and Liberal Arts are not eligible for MyCAA funding.

25. Are there any restrictions in Associate's Degrees as to what MyCAA will pay for? Will MyCAA pay for general course requirements as well as career specific requirements (e.g. some Associate's Degrees require physical education or orientation seminars or English 100)?

Courses that are required by the school as part of an Associate's Degree will be paid for. Remember, Associate's Degrees in General Studies and Liberal Arts are not eligible for MyCAA funding.

26. Why no more BA or MA degrees? Some careers require a BA?

The original intent of the MyCAA program was to assist spouses married to service members in junior ranks, in other words, spouses who needed educational assistance resources the most as they begin pursuing portable careers in a mobile military lifestyle. DoD is re-focusing MyCAA on this original intent.

For spouses who already have more advanced degrees, licenses and credentials needed for portable careers:

MyCAA will pay for Continuing Education Units (CEUs) at all levels of study if they are needed to maintain a professional license or credential or needed to prepare for taking a license or credentials exam.

MyCAA will also pay for courses at any level that are part of an academic certificate program that leads to a portable career.

27. What other benefits are available to spouses once their funding is spent?

Military OneSource (1-800-342-9647) has prepared a comprehensive list of additional sources of financial assistance that can be used by spouses who are seeking education and training for portable careers. They can also provide career counseling to help spouses explore portable career options, learn more about their own interests, skills and abilities, and develop critical job search and networking skills. Additional Career Services are also available to MyCAA spouses who have completed their programs of study using MyCAA funding and who are now ready for gainful employment.

28. How do I get assistance to find other financial resources? What other resources are available to me?

Military OneSource Career and Education Consultants (1-800-342-9647) can assist spouses in finding additional financial resource options. There are numerous federal, state and grant opportunities available to military spouses.

29. How long can spouses under the current program use their \$6,000 MyCAA financial assistance?

Spouses can continue using up to the \$6,000 maximum until 21 October 2010. Starting on 1 September 2010 they may apply the financial assistance to courses or programs starting up to 31 January 2011. These applications must be approved by 21 October 2010.