

An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless the collection of information displays a valid OMB control number. Books or records relating to a collection of information must be retained as long as their contents may become material in the administration of any internal revenue law. Generally, tax returns and tax return information are confidential, as required by 26 U.S.C. 6103.

Request for Comments: Comments submitted in response to this notice will be summarized and/or included in the request for OMB approval. All comments will become a matter of public record. Comments are invited on: (a) Whether the collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information shall have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the collection of information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology; and (e) estimates of capital or start-up costs and costs of operation, maintenance, and purchase of services to provide information.

Approved: June 18, 2002.

Glenn Kirkland,

IRS Reports Clearance Officer.

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DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Fund Availability Under the VA Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem Program

AGENCY: Department of Veterans Affairs.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: VA is announcing the availability of funds for operational assistance under the *per diem* component of VA's Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem Program. This Notice contains information concerning the program, application process, and amount of funding available.

DATES: An original completed and collated per diem application (plus four completed collated copies) for assistance under the VA Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem Program must be received in the Grant and Per Diem Field Office, Tampa, FL, by 4 p.m.

Eastern Time on August 14, 2002. Applications may not be sent by facsimile (FAX). In the interest of fairness to all competing applicants, this deadline is firm as to date and hour, and VA will treat as ineligible for consideration any application that is received after the deadline. Applicants should take this practice into account and make early submission of their material to avoid any risk of loss of eligibility brought about by unanticipated delays or other delivery-related problems.

ADDRESSES: For a Copy of the Application Package: Download directly from VA's Grant and Per Diem Program Web page at: <http://www.va.gov/homeless/page.cfm?pg=3> or call the Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem Program Office at (toll-free) 1-877-332-0334. For a document relating to the VA Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem Program, see the final rule codified at 38 CFR 17.700.

Submission of Application: An original completed and collated per diem application (plus four copies) must be submitted to the following address: Grant and Per Diem Program, Department of Veterans Affairs, 10770 North 46th Street, Suite C-100, Tampa, FL 33617. Applications must be received in the Grant and Per Diem Field Office by the application deadline.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Roger Casey, VA Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem Program, Department of Veterans Affairs, 10770 North 46th Street, Suite C-100, Tampa, FL 33617; (toll-free) 1-877-332-0334.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This Notice announces the availability of funds for assistance under VA's Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem Program for eligible programs, established after November 10, 1992, or expanded after November 30, 1999, that have not previously applied for or received per diem in connection with a grant (see 38 CFR 17.716). This program is authorized by Public Law 107-95, the Homeless Veterans Comprehensive Service Programs Act of 1992, as amended. Funding applied for under this Notice may be used for aid for service centers and supportive housing. Funding will be in the form of per diem payments issued to eligible entities for an expected period not to exceed 36 months from the date of award, subject to availability of funds. For eligibility criteria please refer to 38 CFR Part 17.716.

VA is pleased to issue this Notice of Fund Availability (NOFA) for the Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem Program. The Department expects to

award approximately \$13.5 million under this NOFA pending the availability of funds in Fiscal Year (FY) 2003.

Funding available under this NOFA is being offered to help offset the operating expenses of existing faith-based and community-based organizations that are capable of providing supported housing and/or supportive service center services for homeless veterans. It should be noted that the existing regulations that govern current procedures for per diem funding, limits VA payment to one-half of the cost of a day of care up to the per day rate VA pays for State Home Domiciliary care. Revised regulations are being prepared to adjust the per diem payment in accordance with 38 United States Code (USC) Section 2012. This may result in higher per diem payments once the final regulations are published.

Interested organizations should know that the vast majority of homeless veterans in this country suffer from mental illness or substance abuse disorders or are dually diagnosed with both mental illness and substance abuse disorders. In addition, many homeless veterans have serious medical problems. Collaboration with VA medical centers, VA community-based outpatient clinics or other health care providers is an important aspect of assuring that homeless veterans have access to appropriate health care services.

The Urban Institute's analysis of data collected through the 1996 National Survey of Homeless Providers and Clients indicates that 21 percent of the homeless population is found in rural and suburban locations. Over the last eight rounds of grants, VA awarded approximately \$63 million to help establish 306 projects for homeless veterans. VA also provided funding in FY 2000 to support 53 existing programs in order to make additional supported housing services available to homeless veterans. To date, six states have no grant or per diem-funded programs available to serve homeless veterans. To date, six states have no grant or per diem-funded programs available to serve homeless veterans. These states include Alaska, Idaho, Kansas, Montana, North Dakota, and New Hampshire. Several other states have only one or two grant or per diem-funded programs. Also, only three grant and per diem-funded programs are affiliated with Native American Tribal Governments. VA is encouraging interested faith-based, community-based organizations, and Native American Tribal Governments from these states and rural areas of the country to apply for funding under this NOFA.

It is important to be aware that VA places great emphasis on responsibility and accountability. VA has procedures in place to monitor services provided to homeless veterans and outcomes associated with the services provided in grant and per diem-funded programs. VA is also implementing new procedures to further this effort. Interested faith-based and community-based organizations should be aware of the following:

- Each per diem-funded program will have a liaison appointed from a nearby VA medical facility to provide oversight and monitor services provided to homeless veterans in the per diem-funded program.

- Monitoring will include at least an annual review of each per diem program's progress toward meeting internal goals and objectives in helping veterans attain housing stability, adequate income support, and self sufficiency as identified in each per diem program's original application.

- Each per diem-funded program will participate in VA's national program monitoring and evaluation system administered by VA's Northeast Program Evaluation Center (NEPEC).

- It is the intention of VA to develop specific performance targets with respect to housing for homeless veterans. NEPEC's monitoring procedures will be used to determine successful accomplishment of these housing outcomes for each per diem-funded program.

VA encourages all eligible and interested entities to review this NOFA and consider applying for funds to provide service for homeless veterans.

Authority: VA's Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem Program is authorized by Public Law 107-95 and has been extended through FY 2005. The program is implemented by the final rule codified at 38 CFR 17.700. The final rule was published in the *Federal Register* on June 1, 1994, and February 27, 1995, and revised February 11, 1997. The regulations can be found in their entirety in 38 CFR, Volume 1, Sec. 17.700 through 17.731. Funds made available under this Notice are subject to the requirements of those regulations.

Allocation: Approximately \$13.5 million is available for the per diem component of this program. This funding is expected to be available for

a maximum of 36 months from the date of award, subject to the availability of funds. In later years, continued payment is subject to availability of funds.

Application Requirements: The specific per diem application requirements will be specified in the application package. The package includes all required forms and certifications. Conditional selections will be made based on criteria described in the application. Applicants who are conditionally selected will be notified of the additional information needed to confirm or clarify information provided in the application. Applicants will then have approximately one month to submit such information. If an applicant is unable to meet any conditions for per diem award within the specified time frame, VA reserves the right to not award funds and to use the funds available for other applicants. Grant recipients who received prior year funding for acquisition, renovation or new construction need not reapply for per diem for those portions of their programs that were created with grant funds. Per diem for these programs is requested in the grant application and paid at the time of grant project completion. However, if such entities desire per diem for programs not funded by a grant award under VA's Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem Program, an application responding to this NOFA is required.

Dated: June 24, 2002.

Anthony J. Principi,

Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

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DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

President's Task Force To Improve Health Care Delivery for Our Nation's Veterans, Notice of Meeting

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) gives notice under Public Law 92-463 that a meeting of the President's Task Force to Improve Health Care Delivery for Our Nation's Veterans is scheduled for Wednesday, July 10, 2002, beginning at 9 a.m. and adjourning at 5 p.m. The meeting will be held in the Horizon Ballroom of the

Ronald Reagan Building International Trade Center, 1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW., Washington, DC and is open to the general public.

The purpose of the President's Task Force to Improve Health Care Delivery for Our Nation's Veterans is to:

(a) Identify ways to improve benefits and services for Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) beneficiaries and Department of Defense (DoD) military retirees who are also eligible for benefits from VA, through better coordination of the activities of the two departments;

(b) Identify opportunities to remove barriers that impede VA and DoD coordination, including budgeting processes, timely billing, cost accounting, information technology, and reimbursement; and

(c) Identify opportunities through partnership between VA and DoD, to maximize the use of resources and infrastructure, including buildings, information technology and data sharing systems, procurement of supplies, equipment and services.

On the morning of July 10, the President's Task Force will receive presentations by Dr. Robert Roswell, Under Secretary for Health (VA), and Dr. William Winkenwerder, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs, from 9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. The morning session will conclude with a discussion of the next steps and issues leading to the Final Report. During the afternoon session, the seven Work Groups will brief the Committee in this order: Leadership Chapter, Benefits Chapter, Resources Chapter, Pharmaceuticals Chapter, Acquisition and Procurement Chapter, Facilities Chapter, and Information Management/Information Technology Chapter.

Interested parties can provide written comments to Mr. Dan Amon, Communications Director, President's Task Force to Improve Health Care Delivery for Our Nation's Veterans, 1401 Wilson Boulevard, 4th Floor, Arlington, Virginia 22209.

Dated: June 21, 2002.

By direction of the Secretary.

Nora E. Egan,

Committee Management Officer.

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