

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:
CAPITAL GRANTS UNDER THE GRANT AND PER DIEM PROGRAM**

Introduction

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has prepared a Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEA) to continue to provide capital grants to support acquisition, construction, or rehabilitation of real property under the Grant and Per Diem (GPD) Program. The PEA was prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA; 42 United States Code [U.S.C.] 4321 et seq.), the President’s Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] Parts 1500–1508), Environmental Effects of the Department of Veterans Affairs Actions (38 CFR Part 26), and the VA’s NEPA Interim Guidance for Projects.

Purpose and Need

The purpose of the proposed action is to continue to provide grants to support acquisition, construction, or rehabilitation of real property used for GPD transitional housing facilities. The proposed action is needed to increase safety and reduce risk to Veterans in GPD transitional housing who otherwise would be experiencing homelessness. The grants would allow GPD grantees to improve the transitional housing they offer to Veterans resulting in less congregate housing and more individual unit style housing. The funding would allow GPD grantees to continue to transform programs and to meet the challenges local communities face when providing safe spaces for Veterans experiencing homelessness.

Proposed Action

The proposed action for this PEA is to provide capital grants to public or nonprofit private entities so they can assist Veterans experiencing homelessness by helping to ensure the availability of supportive housing and service centers to furnish outreach rehabilitative services, and vocational counseling and training. VA provides capital grants for the cost to construct structures and purchase land for new supportive housing facilities or service centers, acquire structures to establish supportive housing facilities or service centers, renovate existing structures to establish or expand supportive housing or service centers, and to procure a van for transportation.

Alternatives Considered

The PEA examined two alternatives—the Proposed Action and the No Action Alternative—defined as follows:

- **Proposed Action:** VA’s Proposed Action is to provide capital grants to public or nonprofit private entities so they can assist Veterans experiencing homelessness by helping to ensure the availability of supportive housing and service centers to furnish outreach rehabilitative services, and vocational counseling and training.

- **No Action Alternative:** Under the No Action Alternative, the Proposed Action would not be implemented, and funds would not continue to be disbursed via grants to public or nonprofit private entities. These organizations would have to find alternative funding sources for projects, or the projects would have to be cancelled.

Potential Environmental Effects

The potential environmental effects associated with implementing the alternatives as analyzed in the PEA are summarized in the following table.

Resource Area	Proposed Action	No Action Alternative
Aesthetics	Temporary impact from presence of heavy equipment and during construction, resulting in less than significant impacts.	None
Air Quality	Construction activities would have short-term minor impacts related to emissions and fugitive dust. Long-term minor emissions from the operation of transitional housing, service centers, and vehicle emissions would result in less than significant impacts.	None
Cultural and Historic Resources	Implementing best management practices (BMPs) and actions arising from consultation would minimize impacts resulting in less than significant impacts to cultural and historic resources.	None
Geology and Soils	Construction activities would include ground disturbance. Disturbances would be stabilized during operation and permit requirements would be met, resulting in less than significant impacts.	None
Hydrology and Water Quality	Implementing BMPs and groundwater control measures, and following permit requirements, would result in less than significant impacts.	None
Wildlife and Habitat	Implementing BMPs and actions arising from consultation would minimize impacts resulting in less than significant impacts to vegetation and wildlife habitats.	None
Noise	Construction activities would have noticeably higher noise levels than current levels. Operation of transitional housing and service centers would have a minor long-term increase in noise levels from traffic. These impacts would be less than significant.	None
Land Use	Rezoning may be necessary to be compatible with surrounding land uses. Less than significant impacts.	None
Floodplains, Wetlands, and Coastal Management	No construction in floodplains would occur. Compliance with CZMA requirements and wetland evaluation and permitting would result in impacts that would be less than significant.	None

Resource Area	Proposed Action	No Action Alternative
Socioeconomics	Short- and long-term beneficial impacts to local employment. Transitional housing and service centers would benefit Veterans experiencing homelessness.	Long-term adverse impact due to absence of program resources supporting services for Veterans experiencing homelessness.
Community Services	Minor increase in demand for fire protection, police services, and emergency services. Less than significant impacts.	None
Solid Waste and Hazardous Materials	Potential for unintentional releases of petroleum and hazardous materials during construction activities. Waste generated during operation transitional housing and service centers would be collected and disposed of properly. Less than significant impacts.	None
Traffic, Transportation, and Parking	Minor short-and long-term impacts to traffic. Less than significant impacts.	None
Utilities	Increased demand for utilities. May require the extension of utility connections. Less than significant impacts.	None
Environmental Justice	No disproportionate impacts to minority or low-income populations. Less than significant impacts.	None

The project-specific mitigation measures listed in Attachment A are incorporated into the Proposed Action and ensure the impacts addressed would be less than significant.

Agency Coordination and Public Participation

VA initiated consultation with federally recognized Native American Tribes. On November 5, 2021, VA issued a program-wide consultation package to federally recognized tribes, to determine if any tribe had interests in a project funded by a GPD grant. For the initial round of GPD capital grants, VA did not receive any responses from tribes with interest in continuing NHPA consultation for a specific grant. VA will initiate consultation with federally recognized Native American Tribes for each round of future capital improvement grants.

The Draft PEA was made available for a 30-day public comment period, beginning November 18, 2021. A notice of availability for the Draft PEA was posted on the GPD webpage and emailed to USEPA and over 1,200 GPD interested parties on November 18, 2021. Copies of the Draft PEA were available for public review on the VA website at:

(https://www.cfm.va.gov/environmental/Draft_GPD_Programmatic_EA_for_Public_Comment.pdf).

USEPA provided an email stating the agency had no comments on the Draft PEA. No other agency or public comments were received.

Finding of No Significant Impact

Based on the analyses in the PEA, which is summarized and incorporated by reference herein, VA concludes that implementing the Proposed Action would not have a significant adverse impact on the quality of the natural or human environment within the meaning of Section 102(2c) of NEPA. Therefore, preparation of an environmental impact statement is not required.

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Attachment A. Mitigation Measures Incorporated into the Proposed Action in this EA

Resource	Description
Cultural and Historic Resources	<p>Should previously unidentified historic or culturally significant items be discovered during project construction, the construction contractor would immediately cease work in the area of the discovery until appropriate SHPO/THPO, and Tribes are contacted to properly identify and appropriately treat discovered items in accordance with applicable local, state, and federal law(s).</p> <p>Should human remains be identified during ground-disturbing activities, all work in the vicinity of the discovery would cease immediately and local law enforcement contacted. The need for further consultation would be based on age and type of discovery as determined by initial assessment (i.e., likely crime scene, recent, historic, or prehistoric).</p> <p>Mitigation and minimization measures developed during NHPA Section 106 consultation to address potential adverse effects to cultural and historic resources will be implemented.</p>
Solid Waste and Hazardous Materials	A Phase I ESA will be prepared for all property acquisitions and construction of new facilities.
Wildlife and Habitat	Mitigation and minimization measures developed during Section 7 consultation to address potential adverse effects to threatened and endangered species will be implemented.
Floodplains, Wetlands, and Coastal Zone Management	Projects will not include new development within 100-year floodplain.
Solid Waste and Hazardous Materials	A Phase I ESA will be prepared for all property acquisitions and construction of new facilities.
Traffic, Transportation, and Parking	A traffic study will be conducted for new construction of large facilities and mitigation and minimization measures in the study will be implemented.