

# Grant and Per Diem (GPD) Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) – Capital Grant Frequently Asked Questions

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## Contents

- [Overview](#)
- [Eligibility](#)
- [Dates](#)
- [Forms and requirements](#)
- [Letters of coordination](#)
- [Application content](#)
- [Budget](#)
- [Review and selection](#)

## Overview

### 1. What is the funding opportunity?

VA Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem (GPD) program is offering a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for capital grants to increase safety and reduce the risk to Veterans in GPD transitional housing who otherwise would be experiencing homelessness.

Funds are available to support acquisition, construction or rehabilitation of real property used for GPD transitional housing facilities. Funds provided through this NOFO are not to support per diem costs, services costs or the cost of operating transitional housing beds for Veterans.

Funding under this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) is available through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, 2020 (the CARES Act; P.L. 116-136).

### 2. Can my agency apply for more than one grant?

Yes, but only in limited circumstances when the following condition is met: Applicants, as defined by Employer Identification Number (EIN), are limited to one application per currently active GPD per diem only (PDO) grant per VA medical facility catchment area.

### 3. How much funding can I request?

Each application may request no more than \$50,000 total costs per GPD bed that, upon completion of the project, will be changed from a bed in a shared space to a bed in a private room (w/private bath). Requests may be for up to \$2.5 million total costs per application.

### 4. Where is the VA medical center near me?

See the VA website for a list of VA medical centers by state:

<https://www.va.gov/directory/guide/allstate.asp>

[Back to top](#)

## Eligibility

### 5. Who is eligible to apply for a grant under this NOFO?

An eligible applicant is any current GPD grantee.

For purposes of this NOFO, a current GPD grantee is an organization that successfully applied to NOFO VA-GPD-PDO-FY2020 and received a GPD PDO grant with an award date of

October 1, 2020, and with an end date of September 30, 2021, and that is eligible for an option year award starting October 1, 2021.

For purposes of this NOFO, a current GPD grantee includes PDO transitional housing projects, but does not include GPD grantees with only a PDO Service Center grant, a TIP grant, a Special Need grant or a Case Management grant unless they also have an active PDO transitional housing grant.

**6. Can I apply for this NOFO if I am an individual or a for-profit organization?**

No. Only current GPD grantees can apply.

**7. Can I use another non-profit agency's 501(c)3 or 501(c)19 non-profit tax-exempt status letter to apply for the NOFO?**

No. The non-profit status must belong to the applicant.

**8. Does my organization have to be a current GPD provider to be eligible to apply?**

Yes.

**9. If my organization is a current GPD provider, are we guaranteed funding?**

No. This is a competitive process. The highest scoring applications will be awarded based on a variety of factors including funding availability and the degree to which health and safety risks are reduced for GPD Veterans living in shared spaces.

[Back to top](#)

## Dates

**10. What is the due date for the NOFO?**

Applications are due no later than by 4:00 p.m. Eastern Time on the date stated in the NOFO.

**11. Will late applications be accepted?**

No. The deadline is firm as to date and hour. Late applications are ineligible for consideration. Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit early to avoid unexpected delays or problems.

**12. How soon will grantees hear back from the VA on the status of their awards?**

GPD expects to announce awards in the fourth quarter of fiscal year 2021. The announcement will be made via news release and posted on the GPD website at [www.va.gov/homeless/gpd.asp](http://www.va.gov/homeless/gpd.asp). GPD will notify successful and unsuccessful applicants.

**13. What is the award period?**

Funding will begin on October 1, 2021. Grantees are expected to complete the capital improvement project within 18-24 months to provide improved living spaces for Veterans during the National Emergency due to COVID-19. To be responsive to the urgency of the National Emergency due to COVID-19, GPD places emphasis on projects being completed as timely as possible.

[Back to top](#)

## Forms and requirements

**14. How do I complete the Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)?**

General information about the form is available on the GPD website:

<https://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/GPD.asp>

and also at: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html>

Specific instructions related to the capital NOFO are provided here:

- Question 1, Type of Submission: **Application**
- Question 2, Type of Application: **New (even if you have a GPD award currently or have had one in the past)**
- Question 11, Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number: **64.024**
- Question 11, CFDA Title: **VA Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem Program**
- Question 12, Funding Opportunity Number: **VA-GPD-CG-FY2021**
- Question 12, Funding Opportunity Title: **GPD Capital Grant**
- Question 13, Competition Identification Number/Title: **N/A**
- Question 17, Proposed Start Date: **10/1/2021**
- Question 17, Proposed End Date: **[enter an estimated end date that is within 18-24 months of the start date]**
- Question 18, Estimated Funding: **[enter the estimated amount not to exceed \$2,500,000 total costs or not to exceed \$50,000 total costs per bed, per the NOFO]**
- Question 19, Executive Order 12372: **Only applies to governmental organizations**

**15. What type of signature will be accepted on the SF-424?**

The SF-424 must be signed by a person at the applicant organization who is authorized to make commitments on behalf of the organization. The signature on the SF-424 must be digital or hand-written. A blank signature field or a “signature” that is manually typed will not be accepted. Any application received without a signature or without an acceptable signature will be rejected at threshold and will not be reviewed or considered for funding. VA reserves the right to communicate about the signature field, as needed, prior to making threshold decisions.

**16. What are the Applicant Identifier, Federal Entity Identifier and Federal Award Identifier?**

These questions on the SF-424 are not applicable. Respond by placing N/A or leaving blank.

**17. What is the estimated funding?**

In the Estimated Funding field on the SF-424, enter an amount based on the estimated cost for the entire project as calculated according to the number of beds being proposed to be changed from a bed in a shared space to a bed in a private room (with a private bath).

As stated in the NOFO:

- Each application may request no more than \$50,000 total costs per GPD bed that, upon completion of the project, will be changed from a bed in a shared space to a bed in a private room (with a private bath).
- Each application may request no more than \$2.5 million total costs per application.

**18. Applicants must have an active registration with the System for Award Management (SAM). Where can I find information about how to register for SAM?**

The process to register with SAM can take time. Plan your grant application timeline accordingly. Registration instructions are available on the SAM website: [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov)

**19. What if my agency’s SAM registration will expire before award decisions are made?**

SAM registrations must be updated annually. Do not apply if your registration has expired or will expire soon after applying. Update your registration promptly when needed.

**20. What is a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) in SAM?**

The SAM-generated UEI is a new data element assigned by SAM. SAM records that have already been assigned Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) numbers prior to the

completion of the transition to UEI will retain the DUNS for historical purposes. Organizations already registered in SAM automatically will be assigned a UEI which will be displayed in SAM.

A UEI is not required to apply for this NOFO. If your organization has not yet been assigned a UEI by SAM, leave this field blank. More information is available at: [gsa.gov/entityid](https://gsa.gov/entityid)

**21. What if my agency left out information from the submitted application? Can we submit it separately?**

No. An application must be submitted through the electronic grants portal as a complete package. If the agency submits documentation separately from the original package, it cannot be added to the application package.

**22. Can I mail, email or fax my application?**

No. The application must be submitted through the electronic grants portal. Refer to the GPD website for additional resources: [www.va.gov/homeless/gpd.asp](https://www.va.gov/homeless/gpd.asp)

**Letters of coordination**

[Back to top](#)

**23. What is a letter of coordination?**

A letter of coordination is a written means by which an applicant can demonstrate ongoing coordination with community partners including your local VA medical center (VAMC) regarding your proposed grant project.

Medical centers typically include information such as the proposed number of beds to be improved, the need for the project, as well the medical center's past experience with the applicant organization regarding planning or operating of a related project or regarding participation in community-wide planning.

It is important to note that if you plan to seek letters of coordination, do not wait until the last minute. Medical centers, Continuum of Care (CoC) and other partners have limited resources and may be responding to multiple requests from multiple organizations. We recommend proving at least 30 days or more, if possible.

Applications must be submitted as a complete package. If you include a letter(s) of coordination, upload it as part of the application through the online application portal. Do not send letters to the GPD Office as they will not be added to your application package.

**24. Can you describe the coordination that is expected?**

Applicants should proactively engage in strategic planning dialogue with the VAMC, CoC, Veteran Working Groups, or other community partners including existing GPD grantees, Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) grantees and Healthcare for Homeless Veterans (HCHV) Contracted Residential Services (CRS) grantees to fully understand needs. This dialogue can help applicants identify what housing needs, services, and configuration would best support the community's efforts to end Veteran homelessness.

Applicants should be responsive to the needs articulated by the VAMC, CoC and other community groups.

**25. What tools are available to better understand the community's need?**

Applicants are encouraged to use a robust, dynamic, strategic combination of tools to best understand need. Applicants who are involved with local Coordinated Entry Systems (CES) will have the best understanding of community needs and planning efforts.

From a system perspective, applicants can review data from the community's master list/by name list/active list; data from the Homeless Information Management System (HMIS); other CoC data; the community's progress towards the Federal Criteria and Benchmarks (FCB); Community Solutions' Functional Zero; the CoC Gaps Analysis Tool (which can be provided by the local VAMC); the VA, HUD, and USICH Community Planning Survey submission; and the VA and USICH Transformation of GPD: Considerations for Communities.

These are just some of the tools applicants may use to understand the community's current work towards ending Veteran homelessness. These tools also may be useful in creating common language when working with VAMCs and CoCs.

Additionally, applicants may use information from their past experience providing services within the community. For example, past performance, statistics, demographics, point-in-time reports, etc. can provide useful information about the community's need.

**26. What if the information in my application is different from the information included in a letter of coordination?**

Communication and transparency are critical. Inconsistent information between a letter and the rest of the application might impact the overall score.

Information contained in letters of coordination should not be a surprise to applicants because dialogue regarding strategy should occur prior to requesting letters of coordination. This includes providing detailed and accurate information to the VAMC, CoC or other partners about the plans you will propose in the application and how these plans align with needs identified by the community partners.

This is an opportunity for your organization and the VAMC, CoC or other partners to discuss plans that are tailored to your organization's abilities and to the needs of the community. The strongest letters are individualized, intentional and detailed. They speak to the applicant's proposed plan, integration into systems such as coordinated entry and VA coordination, the partnership, the alignment with community needs, and experience providing services.

**27. How is coordination with the local VAMC and CoC taken into account in our application?**

There is a regulatory requirement for the applicant to demonstrate coordination with the local VA medical center. Applicants also should demonstrate coordination with local CoCs or other community entities who serve the homeless by responding to the application questions.

**28. Are letters of coordination required?**

No, letters of coordination with the VAMC or with the CoC(s) are not required. The inclusion of a letter(s) and/or the content of a letter(s) can impact the overall score of an application.

**29. Can the GPD Liaison at the VAMC assist with the application?**

No. The GPD Liaison cannot help you write the application. However, the liaison can provide performance data, information about current GPD and HCHV transitional housing and help obtain a letter of coordination from the local Medical Center Director.

[Back to top](#)

## Application content

### **30. How strict are the word counts for each section?**

The word counts are suggested maximum limits. Most applicants will use less than the suggested limit. Applicants are strongly encouraged to provide complete responses while also being as clear and concise as possible.

### **31. Is there a minimum or maximum service area expected to be covered?**

The service area is expected to be the same as that which was approved for the PDO grant.

Applications do not have to include coverage for the entire VAMC catchment area in the application. The coverage area, however, must not exceed the VAMC catchment area.

If, as a result of the proposed capital grant project, the PDO-approved transitional housing location changes significantly within the VA medical facility catchment area, applicants must make this clear in their application. Reviewers will be looking to see that any impact to the PDO location, staffing and services will result in the same level of care or better for Veterans.

### **32. What if my agency's transitional housing is located in two different VAMC's catchment areas?**

Applicants must submit a separate application for sites that fall under a different medical center's catchment area. Applicants, as defined by EIN, are limited to one application per currently active GPD PDO grant per VA medical facility catchment area.

### **33. How do I find out the VAMC catchment area?**

If you do not know your VAMC catchment area, you can contact the local medical facility: <https://www.va.gov/directory/guide/allstate.asp> and ask to speak with the Homeless Program.

### **34. How many beds can be improved with this capital grant?**

There is not a minimum or maximum number of beds that can be improved with this grant.

Rather, the NOFO specifies maximum dollar amounts that cannot be exceeded and requires that the grant funding be used to change beds in shared rooms to beds in private rooms (with private bathrooms) as described in the NOFO.

No funds from this NOFO may be used to support per diem, services or operational beds.

This capital grant may be used for acquiring, constructing or rehabilitating real property for the purpose of increasing individual unit style housing, decreasing congregate living spaces and improving the safety and health for Veterans served at an existing GPD facility. VA will consider the degree to which risk is reduced for Veterans.

### **35. Is the configuration I'm considering acceptable to GPD?**

Applicants may refer to the webinar for examples of configurations and what is acceptable.

The NOFO cannot predict all potential housing arrangements and related circumstances. Applicants are expected to propose plans within the requirements and guidance of the NOFO. When a specific situation is not explicitly addressed in the NOFO, applicants must use their judgment to propose plans that meet the intent of the NOFO and may explain how their choices align with the intent of the program. All applications will be evaluated per the NOFO.

**36. Can capital grant funds be used to improve a common area (e.g. a shared sitting room)?**

In general, no, the grant is intended to be used to reduce the number of beds in shared rooms and to increase the number of beds in private rooms (with private bathrooms).

However, if the overall design for rehabilitation to individual rooms "requires" changes to a common area, this may be allowable. In such cases, incidental expenses related to improving a common area may be requested if needed to increase safety and to reduce risk.

Note that if an incidental cost is requested for improving a common area shared by non-GPD Veterans, the requested cost must be calculated based on the prorated portion directly allocable to the GPD project only. If an incidental cost is requested for improving a common area, it must support, and must not detract from, the primary purpose of the grant, which is to create private rooms (with private bathrooms) for GPD Veterans.

[Back to top](#)

**Budget**

**37. How can the grant funding be used?**

Funding may be budgeted for direct costs necessary for a capital improvement project designed to improve safety and reduce risk by increasing individual units and decreasing shared space for GPD Veterans during the National Emergency due to COVID-19.

Those activities deemed outside of the scope of this NOFO will not be funded, including but not limited to general rehabilitations not directly tied to increasing safety and reducing risk, minor repairs, minor improvements, aesthetical enhancements, landscaping, furniture, vans, vehicles, phones, operational costs, services, or case management.

**38. Can we use the capital grant to purchase or to lease a vehicle?**

No. Funds may not be used to purchase or lease vehicles for providing services to Veterans.

**39. Are contingency costs allowed?**

A small amount for contingency costs may be calculated into the amount requested per bed.

Contingency costs are not merely an amount budgeted as a buffer just in case surprises arise. Rather, contingency costs are specifically defined in 2 CFR 200.433:

<https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/CFR-2016-title2-vol1/CFR-2016-title2-vol1-part200>

Amounts for major project scope changes, unforeseen risks, or extraordinary events may not be included. Payments for the grantee's "contingency reserve" or any similar payment made for events the occurrence of which cannot be foretold with certainty as to the time or intensity, or with an assurance of their happening, are unallowable.

If contingency costs are awarded, in order for actual costs incurred to be allowable, they must comply with the cost principles and other requirements in this part (see also §§200.300 and 200.403); be necessary and reasonable for proper and efficient accomplishment of project or program objectives, and be verifiable from your internal records.

If contingency costs are awarded, any portion that is not needed during the course of the capital improvement project must be returned to the federal government. VA reserves the right to provide prior written approval to re-budget, but re-budgeting permission is not guaranteed.

**40. Are we allowed to request costs from the grant to facilitate relocation of Veterans during this rehabilitation or capital project?**

Yes, costs to relocate Veterans in order to facilitate the rehabilitation of a facility under this capital grant are allowed to be requested.

**41. Can applicants support indirect costs?**

Typically, capital expenditures are excluded from indirect cost rate calculations. Therefore, no, indirect costs are not expected to be included in capital grant budget requests. If indirect costs are requested, you must include a detailed explanation in the budget narrative.

[Back to top](#)

**Review and selection**

**42. If my application meets threshold, will it automatically be funded?**

No. This is the first step in the process after which the application would move to the next step for review and consideration for funding.

**43. How are grant applications rated?**

To score grant applications, VA will consider the intent of this NOFO to reduce risk for Veterans. Also, VA will use the rating criteria described in the NOFO and in the GPD regulations (38 CFR Part 61) found on the GPD website [www.va.gov/homeless/gpd.asp](http://www.va.gov/homeless/gpd.asp)

**44. How is risk assessed?**

Risk is assessed by both the number of private GPD beds (with a private bathroom) that will be created by the end of the proposed project and by how many individuals shared the space where the GPD bed was prior to the proposed project.

For example, risk is reduced more by 10 GPD beds changing from 1 shared room with 10 total individuals to 10 private rooms (with private bathrooms) than by 10 GPD beds changing from 5 dual-occupancies rooms to 10 private rooms (with private bathrooms).

**45. What if I have been doing business with the GPD Office for several years. Won't they know how my program operates and have our outcome data on hand?**

Grant applications are reviewed by subject matter experts who do not necessarily know anything about your specific program or agency. This supports an unbiased review of applications. Please keep this in mind when writing your application. You should provide complete responses while also being as clear and concise as possible.

**46. What if my agency leaves a section of the application blank?**

Incomplete applications may be rejected at threshold. Inadequate application content may lead to low scores which might result in the application not meeting the minimum score required to be eligible for funding.

**47. Do I need to request a change of scope (COS) for my GPD PDO grant?**

Capital grant projects are expected to result in the same number of beds as authorized in the associated PDO grant. Neither bed reductions nor bed increases are expected. However, there may be cases that require a bed reduction in order to provide individual rooms with private bathrooms (e.g. renovation of multi-person rooms to individual living quarters).

Applicants are reminded that they must continue to provide the same level (or better) of staffing and services as described in their FY 2020 PDO application, or as modified through an approved change of scope.



If a COS request is needed, you may submit the request early in order to have a response from GPD prior to your capital grant application submission. Or, you may explain your intent to reduce PDO beds within the capital grant application, and the anticipated timeline as to when the reduction would be needed. The actual change may be timed to coordinate with the completion of the capital project.

GPD reserves the right to withdraw an offer of a capital grant if the bed numbers are problematic or if any outstanding bed issues are not clarified in time for award decisions.

COS requests can take approximately 30 days to be processed.

**48. How will I know when the project is successfully completed?**

Completion of the project will be evidenced by:

- The VA medical facility contacting GPD confirming that the grantee passed a VA inspection.
- The grantee submitting to GPD a final report confirming that all work described in the application is completed, the final number of GPD beds in shared rooms has been reduced and the final number of individual unit style GPD beds (with a private bathroom) has been increased by this grant.
- GPD providing to the grantee an activation date.

**49. After the project is completed, for how long must the facility be used for GPD transitional housing to avoid a debt to the federal government?**

The minimum operational period is determined by the dollar amount of the capital grant. Refer to the table shown in 38 CFR 61.67 for the recovery provisions:

<https://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/docs/GPD/2013-04222FinalRule-38CFR61.pdf>

VA will seek recovery for awarded capital grant funds on a prorated basis if at any time during the minimum operational period a grantee no longer has an active GPD PDO grant and/or if a grantee does not maintain bed numbers.

Operational periods begin on the activation date, not on the award date.

**50. Are the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) real property disposition requirements applicable to these capital grant funds?**

No. The real property disposition requirements in 2 CFR 200.311 do not apply for this NOFO.

**51. How will our work be evaluated?**

Each grant's performance will be indicated by a reduction in the number of GPD beds in a shared room and an increase in the number of beds in a private room (w/private bathroom).

**52. Will there be any special reporting requirements involved?**

The normal reporting requirements are in effect as referenced in the NOFO and in the terms of conditions of the grant agreement provided to each grantee. In addition, grantees should expect additional monitoring and reporting pursuant to CARES Act funding throughout the life of the capital grant and throughout the records retention period which extends beyond the end date of the associated PDO grant.

[Back to top](#)