

# Grant and Per Diem Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA)

## Frequently Asked Questions

Revised 04/12/2019

### General Topics:

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

### Application Submission Topics:

- [GIFTS Account setup](#)
- [Using the GIFTS system](#)
- [Support](#)
- [Tips](#)

### General Topics:

#### Overview

#### 1. What are the funding opportunities?

VA Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem (GPD) program is offering funding for a case management grant to support housing retention for formerly homeless veterans and veterans at risk for homelessness who exited programs such as GPD transitional housing or Healthcare for Homeless Veterans (HCHV) residential contract services.

#### 2. How much is expected to be awarded through this NOFA?

Approximately \$30 million is available for this grant component. VA expects to fund approximately 133 case management positions with this NOFA.

#### 3. How much is available per award?

The maximum 2-year award, per full-time funded case management position, is \$225,000.

The following VA medical facilities may be funded for up to three, full-time case management positions: VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System (station 691); Las Vegas, Nevada (station 593); Coatesville, Pennsylvania (station 542); Tennessee Valley Healthcare System, Tennessee (station 626); Orlando, Florida (station 675); Dallas, Texas (station 549); Phoenix, Arizona (station 644); VA Central Western Massachusetts Healthcare System (station 631); Columbia, South Carolina (station 544); Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (station 642); Bay Pines, Florida (station 561); Denver, Colorado (station 554); Jesse Brown VA Medical Center (Chicago), Illinois (station 537); Cleveland, Ohio (station 541); San Diego, California (station 664); Tampa, Florida (station 673); Portland, Oregon (station 648); N. California, California (station 612); VA Maryland Healthcare System, MD (station 512); Charleston, South Carolina

(station 534); San Francisco, California (station 662); Detroit, Michigan (station 553); and Honolulu, Hawaii (station 459). VA medical facility catchment area assignment will be determined by the applicant's response in the Project Summary.

All other eligible VA medical facility catchment areas not identified above, may be funded for up to one full-time case management position.

#### **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 can apply for this NOFA?**

- 501(c)3 or 501(c)19 non-profit agency
- State or Local Government
- Indian Tribal Government

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

No. Only non-profit agencies who have an IRS tax letter that shows their tax-exempt status along with their EIN, as well as State, Local or Indian Tribal governments, 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 NOFA?**

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

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

No. Eligible entities are listed above. See FAQ #5. For further information on priorities, see the "Funding Priorities" section of the NOFA.

[Back to top](#)

### **Dates**

#### **9. What is the due date for the NOFA?**

Applications are due May 20, 2019, by 4:00 p.m. Eastern Time.

#### **10. Will late applications be accepted?**

No. The deadline is firm as to date and hour. Late applications are ineligible for consideration.

#### **11. How soon will grantees hear back from the Department of Veterans Affairs on the status of their awards?**

GPD National Program Office expects to announce grant awards in the fourth quarter of fiscal year 2019. The initial announcement will be made via news release which will be posted on VA's National GPD Program website at [www.va.gov/homeless/gpd.asp](http://www.va.gov/homeless/gpd.asp). Following the initial announcement, the GPD Office will send notification letters to the grant recipients. Applicants who are not selected will be sent a declination letter within two weeks of the initial announcement.

#### **12. What is the award period?**

Funding will be for a period of two years beginning on October 1, 2019, and ending on September 30, 2021.

## Forms and requirements

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

These are the answers for the case management grant NOFA:

- Question 1, Type of Submission: **Application**
- Question 2, Type of Application: **New**
- 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-CM-FY2019**
- Question 12, Funding Opportunity Title: **Grant and Per Diem Case Management Services Grant Program**
- Question 13, Competition Identification Number/Title: **N/A**
- Question 17, Proposed Start Date: **10/1/2019**
- Question 17, Proposed End Date: **9/30/2021**
- Question 18, Estimated Funding: **Should be the estimated amount for 2 years**
- Question 19, Executive Order 12372: **Only applies to governmental organizations**

### 14. What is the Federal Entity and Federal Award Identifier?

These questions are not applicable, respond by placing N/A.

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

Registration instructions are available on the SAM website at <https://www.sam.gov>. The process to register with SAM can take some time. Plan your grant application timeline accordingly.

### 16. What if my organization's SAM registration is going to expire before or during the grant application?

The SAM registration has to be updated each year. Do not submit an application if your registration has expired or will expire soon after the application is submitted. Please use the link provided above to update your registration.

### 17. What if my agency left out information from the packet that was submitted? Can we submit it separately?

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

### 18. Can I mail, email, or fax my application?

No. The application must be submitted through the GIFTS electronic grants portal [https://www.grantrequest.com/SID\\_5937?SA=AM](https://www.grantrequest.com/SID_5937?SA=AM).

## Application content

### 19. How is coordination with the local VA medical center and Continuum of Care 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 Continuums of Care or other community entities who serve the homeless.

**20. Can the GPD Liaison assist with the application?**

No. This is not allowed. However, the liaison can provide performance data, information about current GPD and HCHV transitional housing and help obtain a letter of support/coordination from the local Medical Center Director.

**21. What is a letter of support/coordination?**

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

It is important to note that if you plan to seek letters of support/coordination, do not wait until the last minute. Remember your applications must be submitted as a complete package. Do not send support/coordination letters to the GPD Office as they will not be added to your application package.

**22. I am a current GPD grantee that is committing to giving up my current GPD transitional housing beds and converting them to permanent housing in order to qualify for funding priority one. How do I document that this housing meets the housing quality standards established under section 8(o)(8)(B) of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437f(o)(8)(B)) as required by the NOFA?**

You may contact your local Public Housing Authority and/or the office in your community that provides inspections for units receiving HUD HOME tenant-based rental assistance to inquire if they are able to assist you in determining if your site meets HUD Housing Quality Standards (HQS). HQS help Public Housing Authorities to define "standard housing" and establish the minimum criteria for the health and safety of program participants. Current HQS regulations consist of 13 key aspects of housing quality, performance requirements, and acceptability criteria to meet each performance requirement. Please note, that there may be a cost for your Public Housing Authority or HOME Inspector to inspect your facility and provide you with a report. Additionally, they may have a high volume of inspections to complete. Please allow ample time for the scheduling of this inspection to ensure you receive the report and are able to include it with your application prior to the deadline.

**23. The NOFA states “workload may be shared by multiple staff”? Can we hire part-time staff for these positions?**

Yes, the workload can be shared by multiple staff. VA will only be providing funding for a full-time case management position, which is 80 hours bi-weekly. A grantee may choose to hire multiple part-time staff to cover those 80 hours bi-weekly.

**24. Can we serve veterans outside of our county?**

Applicants are required to indicate the counties they plan to serve with this grant in the application. If the grant is awarded, the areas noted in the application would be the service areas.

**25. *new* Are veterans who were in GPD and graduated from the Department of Housing and Urban Development-VA Supportive Housing program (HUD-VASH) eligible for case management services under this grant? What about veterans who are using Supportive Services for Veteran Families programs (SSVF) funds for temporary financial assistance only?**

There is a process by which a veteran who graduated from HUD-VASH could be re-engaged in services. So, it is not recommended to build a project plan around serving veterans who may have exited from HUD-VASH.

If a veteran discharges to permanent housing from GPD or HCHV and is enrolled in SSVF for the purpose of obtaining temporary financial assistance funds to pay initial move-in costs (i.e. security deposits) then they may also be eligible to enroll in GPD Case Management. Grantees must ensure that SSVF is only providing temporary financial assistance and not case management services.

The applicant organization should describe their referral and acceptance process for case management services as required by the NOFA in section IV.G. Detailed Project Description, under Project Plan. Applicants must avoid duplication of case management services. If a veteran already is receiving, or has access to, case management services then they should not be enrolled in the GPD Case Management grant.

**26. *new* When can the case management service start for the veteran? How long after a veteran exited a program like GPD or HCHV could they start receiving case management services under this grant?**

Case management services under this grant should not replace or duplicate the services being provided while the veteran is in transitional housing. However, as the veteran is getting ready to exit to permanent housing, the case management engagement could begin to facilitate a “warm handoff.” The six-month timeframe for case management services begins when the veteran is enrolled into the case management grant by the VA. This timeframe does not have to start immediately as they exit their transitional housing.

**27. Is there a minimum number of veterans we would be expected to serve in this program?**

Applicants are required to demonstrate the need for this case management resource in their community. The NOFA does not have a stated minimum number of veterans to be served. However, applicants are asked to document how many eligible formerly homeless veterans they anticipate serving. The scoring of the application will include an evaluation of the scope of services provided as well as the number of veterans proposed to be served. The workload must be sufficient to support a full-time case management position.

**28. *new* Is there a minimum service area expected to be covered?**

Applicants are required to demonstrate the need for this case management resource in their community and to indicate the counties they plan to serve in the application. The NOFA does not have a stated minimum. The scoring of the application will include an evaluation of the scope of services provided. If the grant is awarded, the areas noted in the application would be the service areas.

[Back to top](#)

## Budget

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

The funding can be used to cover the salary and benefits costs of the case management staff providing services for this program. In addition, grantees may allocate a maximum of \$15,000 for transportation costs and \$4,000 for cell phones and computers, per case management position. Grant funds may be used to provide office furniture for the use of the case management staff, if needed.

**30. Can we use the grant to purchase a vehicle to support case management services?**

No part of an award under this NOFA may be used to facilitate capital improvements or to purchase vans or real property. Vehicles may be leased to facilitate required transportation within the community.

**31. *new* Can grant funds be used to support partial salary for the case manager's supervisor?**

No, salary costs can be requested for the case manager position only.

**32. *new* What types of transportation costs can be requested?**

Within the \$15,000 limit for transportation costs, applicants could request costs such as leasing a vehicle, mileage reimbursement, or public transportation reimbursement. Note that transportation costs can be requested for the case manager position only, not for veterans.

**33. *new* Can applicants request indirect costs?**

Applicants who have a current negotiated indirect cost rate agreement with a cognizant federal agency must provide a copy of the agreement with their application if they wish to charge indirect costs to the grant. If an agency does not have this, the de minimis rate (which is 10%) could be requested for indirect costs.

**34. Are the dollar limits named in the NOFA direct cost limits or total cost limits?**

The dollar limits named in the NOFA are total cost limits. Therefore, any allowable direct cost and its associated allowable indirect cost, when combined, must not exceed the dollar limits named in the NOFA.

[Back to top](#)

## Review and selection

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

No. This is the first step in the process, but the application will move to the next step for consideration of funding.

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

To score grant applications, VA will use the rating criteria described in 38 CFR 61.92 which can be found on the GPD website [www.va.gov/homeless/gpd.asp](http://www.va.gov/homeless/gpd.asp).

**37. 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 readers who purposely know nothing about your programs or agency to support an unbiased review of applications. Please keep this in mind when writing your application. You should provide clear, concise yet complete responses on your application.

**38. What if my agency leaves a section of the NOFA blank and does not answer the questions?**

Incomplete applications may be rejected at threshold. Applicants that provide limited responses to questions may not meet the minimum score of 750 points required to be legally eligible for funding. Each section of the application is scored.

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

The grantee is expected to provide the services as stated in the grant application and conform to GPD regulations for the case management program. Ultimately, the goal of the grant is to

enhance housing retention. Therefore, rates of housing retention will be evaluated as well as the number of veterans served.

[Back to top](#)

## Application Submission Topics:

### GIFTS Account setup

#### **40. I am not an existing GPD grantee. How do I create a GIFTS account?**

Please see the *GPD Grantee GIFTS User Guide* under section *Creating a GPD GIFTS Account-New Applicants*. The user guide can be found on the GPD website at [www.va.gov/homeless/gpd.asp](http://www.va.gov/homeless/gpd.asp).

#### **41. Will GIFTS work with all internet browsers?**

In general, GIFTS should work with most browsers. We strongly encourage applicants that are existing GPD grantees that are applying under the open NOFA to log on to their GIFTS account once the application is released to ensure that they are able to access it. For applicants that are not current grantees, it is also strongly recommended that they set up a GIFTS account shortly after the NOFA is released and to ensure access to the application.

#### **35. A staff member had been our lead in completing the application. However, they resigned during the application process. We aren't able to access GIFTS and get to the application. What do we do?**

It is important for applicants to have contingency and back up plans. At the start of the application, it may be helpful to name your lead person and your back up person with the application submission. Maintaining log in information is an applicant's responsibility. Please plan accordingly.

[Back to top](#)

### Using the GIFTS system

#### **36. I logged into GIFTS to work on my application. However, I am not able to see all of the questions on the screen. What should I do?**

We recommend scrolling down to see if you can then see the questions on the screen first. If this does not work, we suggest changing the resolution on your screen.

#### **37. Why do sessions timeout?**

If you have been inactive for a certain period of time, the application stops talking to the server. This causes the session to timeout.

#### **38. *new* I made a mistake on the eligibility screening quiz in GIFTS. How can I go back and fix it?**

Reset the eligibility quiz by clearing the browser history or by clearing cookies. Another option is to access the quiz from a different browser or from a different computer.

#### **39. I was in the middle of my application and then had to take a call. I forgot that I was still in the application. It looks like my session timed out. What should I do?**

Timeouts will occur if a session has been inactive for a certain period of time. We strongly suggest that you frequently save your work. If you can, please save and then log out if you need to transition to another task. If you are not able to do this, you would just need to refresh

your browser and log in again. However, if you did not save, you may have to redo work. Again, we strongly suggest saving often.

**40. I started an application, but I don't see my work. What do I do?**

When you are on the *Applications* screen, you will see a drop down on the right-hand side that says *Show*. Go to the drop down and select *In Progress Applications*. Your application should appear.

**41. I tried to upload an attachment in the application, but it didn't upload. What should I do?**

Depending on the number of users currently working on their applications as well as your internet speed, some areas in the application may be slower than others. You should continue to try to upload your attachment. If it is not working, you may want to log out and log back in at a later time.

**42. I started an application. I didn't see it so I started another application. Now, it looks like I have 2 applications. What do I do?**

When you are on the *Applications* screen. You will see a drop down on the right-hand side that says *Show*. Go to the drop down and select *In Progress Applications*. Your application should appear. Determine which application is the one that you want to use. Then, continue your work. Please note that you should only submit the application that is your master with all of your complete information.

[Back to top](#)

## Support

**43. I accidentally submitted two applications. Only one was our final. The other one is incomplete. What should I do?**

Please go to the *Applications* screen. You will see a drop down on the right-hand side that says *Show*. Go to the drop down and select *Submitted*. Your applications should appear. Determine which application is the one that you want to use. Take a screenshot and highlight the *Id Number* for the correct application. Then, please send an email to [gpdgrants@va.gov](mailto:gpdgrants@va.gov) with the screenshot and indicate which application (including ID Number) is correct and which one was submitted in error.

**44. I accidentally locked myself out of my GIFTS account. What should I do?**

From the log on screen, you can click on *Forgot Password?* which is found directly under the box where you can type your password.

**45. Who should I contact if I reviewed all of the FAQs but am still encountering technical issues with GIFTS?**

If you encounter an issue and have reviewed all of the FAQs, please email [gpdgrants@va.gov](mailto:gpdgrants@va.gov) with *GIFTS Support-Grant Application* in the subject of the email. Ideally, any requests for technical assistance with GIFTS should be sent at least 3 days prior to the submission date to help ensure that the issue can be resolved prior to the due date.

[Back to top](#)

## Tips

- On page 1 (Introduction) on the top right, there is the ability to *Email Draft*. This function may be helpful to share work with other collaborators or staff reviewing the application.

- Applicants may want to type their narrative sections in a Word document so that they can use features like Word Count and Spell Check which are not necessarily available within the application. It can also assist them if for some reason they forget to save and need to go back and copy and paste their narrative.
- Since the system is electronic (stated in NOFA), there is no flexibility for late submissions. Applicants are encouraged to reach out early if technical assistance with the application is needed. Additionally, GIFTs will close at 4:00 p.m. Eastern Time. This means that if an application has not been submitted by that time, it won't allow the user to submit.
- When applicants add attachments, they will want to hit *Browse First* to locate the document and then *Upload*. It is a two-step process.
- Applicants may want to copy and paste into a Word doc the *Review My Application Section* before they submit.
- Applicants may want to take a screen shot when they submit with the date and time the application was submitted.
- Applicants will want to plan ahead and submit prior to the deadline.

[Back to top](#)