

PARTNERSHIPS WITH FAITH-BASED AND NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATIONS



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U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

PARTNERSHIPS WITH FAITH-BASED AND NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATIONS

Equal Treatment for Faith-Based Organizations

38 C.F.R. part 50 – amended March 4, 2024

- Introduction
- New requirement
- Resources

PARTNERSHIPS WITH FAITH-BASED AND NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATIONS

Introduction

- [Executive Order 14015](#) dated February 14, 2021: *Establishment of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships*
 - Organizes **effective efforts to serve people in need** across the country and around the world in partnership with civil society
 - **Empowers faith-based and secular organizations** to assist in the delivery of vital services in our neighborhoods
 - Ensures that Federal grants are **consistent with applicable laws**
- [Final Rule FR Doc. 2024-03869](#) dated March 4, 2024: *Partnerships with Faith-Based and Neighborhood Organizations*
 - Nine Federal agencies (including HUD, DOL, DOJ, DHHS)
 - **Maximizes participation** by Veterans and community-based organizations in projects funded by Federal grants and **maximizes consistency** across Federal agencies
 - Compliance date: **July 2, 2024**

PARTNERSHIPS WITH FAITH-BASED AND NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATIONS

New Requirement

- Grantees must give written notice to beneficiaries and prospective beneficiaries about religious protections
 - Applies to all GPD grant types
 - Transitional housing (Per Diem Only, Transition in Place, Special Need)
 - Service Center
 - Case Management
 - Applies to all grantee organization types
 - Non-profit, State or local government, Public Housing Authority
 - Faith-based organizations, secular organizations
- Exceptions
 - Segregated non-Federal funds (when GPD grant funds are not co-mingled with other funds)
 - Indirect Federal financial assistance (when payment is the choice of the Veteran, not the choice of the Government)

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New requirement (continued)


- Use the template language provided by GPD available on the [GPD provider website](#)
- Comply by **July 2, 2024**
 - All Veterans in the program as of July 2 must have received written notification
 - Going forward, all new and prospective Veterans must receive notice
- Update your operating procedures and document compliance. Be prepared to show documentation during reviews, audits, etc.

Case Management & HMIS

Program Management & Operations

Grant Management & Compliance

Inspections & Change of Scope Resources:

[Beneficiary Notice of Religious Protections - Template](#) 

[Capital Checklist for Inspections](#) 

[Transitional Housing Inspection Packet](#) 

[Service Center Inspection Packet](#) 


[GPD Medication Storage Guide and Access FAQ](#) 

[Change of Scope Suggestions & Criteria](#) 

[Change of Scope Request](#) 

[Change of Site Request](#) 

General Terms & Conditions of Award:

[Effective March 2023](#)  (PDO, TIP, Case Mgt, Special Need)

[Effective November 2021](#)  (Capital ARP)

PARTNERSHIPS WITH FAITH-BASED AND NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATIONS

Sample instructions and template language

VA Grant & Per Diem (GPD)

Partnerships with Faith-Based and Neighborhood Organizations

Written Notice to Veterans about Protections

Template Language for ALL GPD Grantees

INSTRUCTIONS

Consistent with the requirements of [38 C.F.R. part 50](#), all GPD grantees who serve Veterans under a GPD-funded project must give written notice to beneficiaries (e.g., Veterans) and prospective beneficiaries. This notice must provide information about protections against religious discrimination. Grantees are responsible for ensuring subrecipients comply with the requirement.

This requirement applies to all GPD grantees regardless of the grant type (i.e., transitional housing, service center, case management) and regardless of the organization type (e.g., non-profit, State government, local government, Tribal government, faith-based organization, non-faith-based organization, housing authority).

The following template language may be used to provide notice according to your organization's operating procedures. Each organization's written notices may vary depending on internal practices (e.g., handout, poster, signed agreement); however, the language must be substantially similar to the template and grantees are responsible for proactively communicating the message.

Written notice to beneficiaries must be provided no later than **July 2, 2024**, and ongoing after that as new beneficiaries and prospective beneficiaries are identified.

For more guidance, watch the April 2024 Operational Webinar, available on the GPD provider website: https://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/GPD_ProviderWebsite.asp.



Template Language for ALL GPD Grantees

REMINDER: This template is required for all GPD grant types that serve Veterans and is required for all grantee organization types regardless of the character of the organization. See instructions on page 1 for details.

TEMPLATE

Name of Organization: *[insert grantee name]*

Name of Program: Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Grant and Per Diem (GPD) Program

Contact Information for VA's GPD Program Office: *[insert local VA medical facility's homeless program team's contact info]* or GPDgrants@va.gov.

Because this program is supported in whole or in part by financial assistance from the Federal Government, we are required by [38 C.F.R. part 50](#) to let you know that:

- 1) We may not discriminate against you based on religion, a religious belief, a refusal to hold a religious belief, or a refusal to attend or participate in a religious practice.
- 2) We may not require you to attend or participate in any explicitly religious activities (including activities that involve overt religious content such as worship, religious instruction, or proselytization) that may be offered by our organization, and any participation by you in such activities must be purely voluntary.
- 3) We must separate in time or location any privately funded explicitly religious activities (including activities that involve overt religious content such as worship, religious instruction, or proselytization) from activities supported with direct Federal financial assistance.
- 4) You may report violations of these protections, including any denials of services or benefits by an organization, by contacting or filing a written complaint with the grant program office using the contact information set forth above.
- 5) If you would like to seek information about whether there are any other organizations that provide these kinds of services in your area, including Federally funded organizations, please use the contact information above.

As of July 2, 2024, this written notice must be given to you before you enroll in the program or receive services from the program. When it is impractical to provide such notice before we provide the service, this notice must be given to you at the earliest available opportunity. In the case of GPD transitional supportive housing and other related services, notice might be provided after we begin providing the service if earlier notice would result in a barrier or delayed entry.

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Rights and Responsibilities

- **Grantee Rights:**

- Faith-based organizations may apply for a VA grant on same basis as other organizations
- Faith-based organizations do not lose the protections of law when they accept a VA grant
- Faith-based grantees retain autonomy, right of expression, and religious character
- Faith-based grantees retain independence and may continue to carry out their mission
- Faith-based grantees do not have to conceal, remove, or alter religious symbols

- **Grantee Responsibilities**

- Must provide **written notice** to Veterans and prospective Veterans on religious protections
- Must ensure compliance by subrecipients
- Must not discriminate on religious grounds when providing services & outreach to Veterans
- Must not use grant funds for any explicitly religious activities
- Must carry out grant activities in accordance with all VA requirements

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Rights and Responsibilities (continued)

- **VA Rights:**

- VA may make case-by-case religious accommodations in accordance with the Constitution
- VA continues to make award decisions based on merit
- VA may choose the manner and form of grantee guidance (webinars, GPD website)

- **VA Responsibilities**

- VA must not discriminate for or against an organization on the grounds of religious character, motives, or affiliation, or lack thereof, when selecting grant recipients
- VA must apply requirements equally to faith-based and non-faith-based organizations
- VA must provide grantees with template language for **written notices** to beneficiaries
- VA must provide guidance to grantees regarding nondiscrimination, protections, allowable activities, and allowable costs (NOFOs, grant agreements, recipient guides, GPD website)

PARTNERSHIPS WITH FAITH-BASED AND NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATIONS

GPD resources

- GPD provider page: https://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/GPD_ProviderWebsite.asp
 - Regulations
 - GPD [38 C.F.R. part 61](#)
 - Faith-based [38 C.F.R. part 50](#)
 - Recipient guides
 - NOFOs
 - General terms & conditions of award repository
 - **Template language for written notices about religious protections**
 - GPDgrants@va.gov
 - Local VA GPD Liaison



PARTNERSHIPS WITH FAITH-BASED AND NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATIONS

Other resources

- Final Rule FR Doc. 2024-03869 dated March 4, 2024:
<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2024/03/04/2024-03869/partnerships-with-faith-based-and-neighborhood-organizations>
- Executive Order 14015 dated February 14, 2021:
<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/02/18/2021-03424/establishment-of-the-white-house-office-of-faith--based-and-neighborhood-partnerships>
- Fact Sheet White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships:
<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/02/17/fact-sheet-biden-harris-administration-celebrates-the-second-anniversary-of-the-reestablishment-of-the-white-house-office-of-faith-based-and-neighborhood-partnerships/>