

# GRANT & PER DIEM NATIONAL PROGRAM OPERATIONAL GRANTEE CALL

February 13, 2024

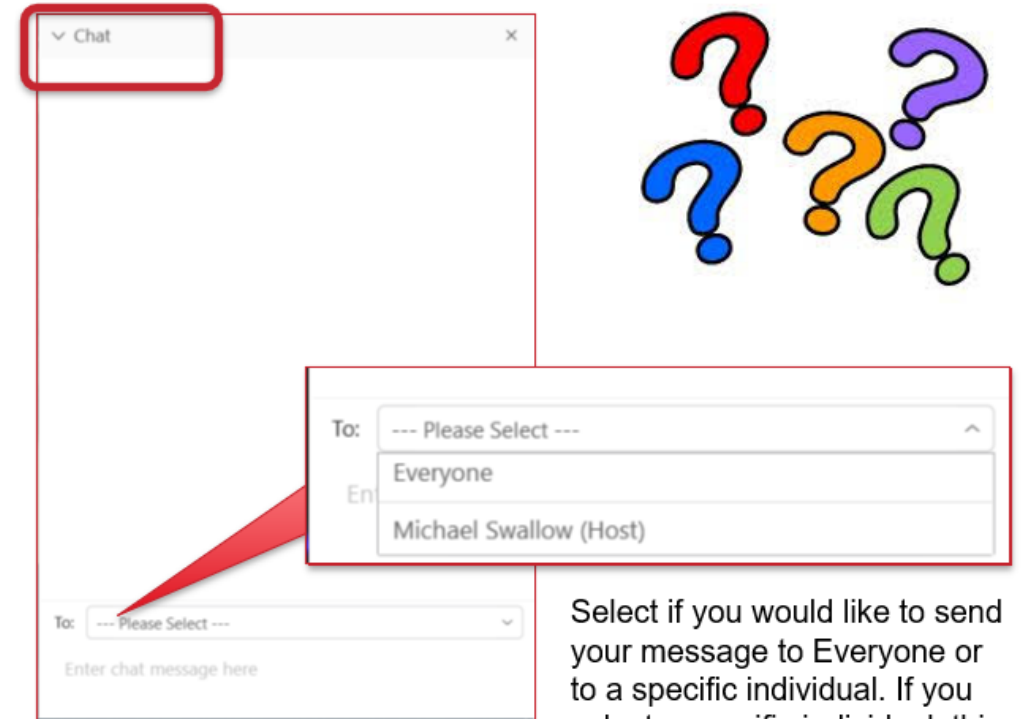
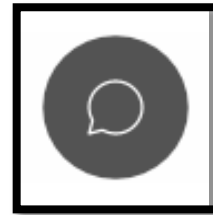
**RECORDING LINK:** <https://veteransaffairs.webex.com/webappng/sites/veteransaffairs/recording/2548c57eacd0103cbf73e6b7311d184d/playback>

**RECORDING PASSWORD:** Homeless1!

# HOUSEKEEPING

- This meeting is being recorded.
- Past recordings are available on the GPD provider website:  
[https://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/GPD\\_ProviderWebsite.asp](https://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/GPD_ProviderWebsite.asp)
- The webinar will last approximately 60 minutes.
- Mics and video are disabled (but always check to make sure you're on mute).
- Questions can be submitted using the Chat function.

Select the Chat icon on the tool bar at the bottom of the screen.



Select if you would like to send your message to Everyone or to a specific individual. If you select a specific individual, this will send the message privately so no one else in the meeting will see it.

# AGENDA

- **Announcements & Reminders** Chelsea Watson, National GPD Director
  - Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)
    - Legal Services for Homeless Veterans and Veterans At-Risk for Homelessness (LSV-H) Grant
    - Special Need Renewal Grant
  - Case Management Grant Monthly HMIS Upload Requirement
- **Presentations**
  - **Learning from your peers: Strategic Outreach & Reengagement**
  - Tandra Axel, Program Manager Volunteers of America Los Angeles
  - Allyson Savala, LPCC, Area Clinical Assistant Director II, Volunteers of America Los Angeles
- **CHALENG Survey:** Jessica Blue-Howells, Deputy National Director Veteran Justice Programs
- **Financial Management Updates:** Nancy Hegel, Supervisory Financial Analyst

# ANNOUNCEMENTS



Choose **VA**

**VA**



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

# FY 24 LEGAL SERVICES FOR HOMELESS VETERANS AND VETERANS AT-RISK FOR HOMELESSNESS (LSV-H)

**FY24 Legal Services for Homeless Veterans and Veterans At-Risk for Homelessness (LSV-H) Grant Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) is now open!** The application period will close on **Friday, February 23, 2024 at 4pm EST**. Please distribute widely to your community and legal service partners. Helpful links are noted below; however, all information can also be located through the Legal Services for Veterans website: <https://www.va.gov/homeless/lsv.asp>

- **To view the LSV-H NOFO:** [Legal Services for Homeless Veterans and Veterans At-Risk for Homelessness Grant Program](#)
- **VA Press Release:** [VA to provide millions in grant funding to help homeless Veterans following an uptick in homelessness](#)
- **To view a sample application:** [Sample Application](#)
- **To Apply:** Login to add your organization to our electronic Grants Management System (eGMS): [hmlsgrants-va.mod.udpaas.com/s\\_Login.jsp](https://hmlsgrants-va.mod.udpaas.com/s_Login.jsp)
- If you have any questions, contact [lsv@va.gov](mailto:lsv@va.gov)

# FY25 GPD SPECIAL NEED NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY (NOFO)

**Special Need NOFO:** two-year renewal grant to the **16 currently operational** GPD special need grantees to defray the cost of facilitating transitional housing and supportive services for eligible Veterans.

- [Current Special Need grantees](#)

**Deadline: applications must be received by 4:00 p.m. Eastern Time on April 15, 2024.** In the interest of fairness to all competing applicants, this deadline is firm as to date and hour.

Find more information and applicant resources on our [main website](#) or on our [GPD Provider site](#).

## Grant Applicant Resources

- [FY2025 Special Need Notice of Funding Opportunity \(NOFO\)](#)  published 2/2/2024
  - [FY2025 Special Need NOFO FAQ's](#) 
  - [FY2025 Special Need NOFO Webinar](#) 
  - [FY 2022 Special Need NOFO](#)  published 3/4/2021
  - [FY2022 Special Need Award List](#)  (March 2022)
  - [Sample Special Need Letter of Support](#) 
  - [Sample Terms and Conditions](#)  (March 2023)

Please reach out to us at [GPDgrants@va.gov](mailto:GPDgrants@va.gov) with any questions.

# GPD CASE MANAGEMENT – FY2024 HMIS UPLOAD

All GPD Case Management (CM) **grantees** must participate in their local Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) to document GPD CM services.

## HMIS

- The first [HMIS Repository](#) opened November 1, 2023, for GPD CM uploads and closed Tuesday, November 7, 2023
- Accessing Technical Assistance: [GPD\\_HMIS@abtassoc.com](mailto:GPD_HMIS@abtassoc.com)
- **NEXT UPLOAD:** March 4, 2024

Month in FY 24	First Upload Due	Final Upload Due	Export Start/End
October	Thursday, November 2, 2023	Tuesday, November 7, 2023	October 1, 2023, to date of upload
November	Monday, December 4, 2023	Thursday, December 7, 2023	October 1, 2023, to date of upload
December	Wednesday, January 3, 2024	Sunday, January 7, 2024	October 1, 2023, to date of upload
January	Friday, February 2, 2024	Wednesday, February 7, 2024	October 1, 2023, to date of upload
February	Monday, March 4, 2024	Thursday, March 7, 2024	October 1, 2023, to date of upload
March	Tuesday, April 2, 2024	Sunday, April 7, 2024	October 1, 2023, to date of upload
April	Thursday, May 2, 2024	Tuesday, May 7, 2024	October 1, 2023, to date of upload
May	Monday, June 3, 2024	Friday, June 7, 2024	October 1, 2023, to date of upload
June	Tuesday, July 2, 2024	Sunday, July 7, 2024	October 1, 2023, to date of upload
July	Friday, August 2, 2024	Wednesday, August 7, 2024	October 1, 2023, to date of upload
August	Wednesday, September 4, 2024	Saturday, September 7, 2024	October 1, 2023, to date of upload
September	Wednesday, October 2, 2024	Monday, October 7, 2024	October 1, 2023, to date of upload





## Early Engagement:

*Early Intervention Approach to promote re-engagement and prevent returns to Homelessness*



# This is WHAT we do:

## *Agency Overview*

- ▶ Volunteers of America Los Angeles helps the most vulnerable and under-served populations achieve their full potential
- ▶ Our GPD portfolio currently consist of the following:
- ▶ Ballington Plaza
  - ▶ -86 bed THP located in DTLA with a current census of 82
  - ▶ 5 bed female Special Needs program which maintains excellent occupancy rates – currently sitting with a census of 5

Our site staff is made up of:

- ▶ Monitors
- ▶ Administrative Assistants
- ▶ Case Managers
- ▶ Program Manager

# This is HOW we do it:

## *Early Engagement = RE-engagement*

*Early Engagement promotes stability and leads to increased success of re-engagement in the future*

- ▶ WE build our program from the ground up- **Staff Development is CRUCIAL!**
  - ▶ Monitor teams interact with our Veterans 6x on average per day, whereas a case manager may only interact with them 1x or 2x per week.
    - ▶ The interactions between monitor staff and Veterans is an important step to helping them navigate the program and sometimes their lives
      - ▶ Talk about their **LIVES** not just their treatment plan
- ▶ We also tap into developing strong relationships with our liaisons
  - ▶ we build trust and learn to communicate in order to work together when noticing or reporting AWOLS



# This is HOW we do it:

## *Early Engagement = RE-engagement*

- ▶ Our training model uses Humanistic, REBT principles including:
  - ▶ a. promoting unconditional acceptance & positive regard
  - ▶ b. humor
  - ▶ c. rapport building
- ▶ By building a caring culture and training our support staff on humanistic intervention strategies we provide an orientation to set the veteran up for success- whatever success looks like for them

***This type of engagement doesn't happen in the office it happens everywhere else***

# Why focus on re-engagement?

## Proactive vs. Reactive

- ▶ We **DO** know the challenges of retention and barriers to successful reintegration into permanent housing
  - ▶ Chronic health issues (treated/untreated)
  - ▶ Substance Use
  - ▶ Mental Health Issues (w/without medication)
  - ▶ Incarceration Experiences
  - ▶ Trauma (recent, historic, generational)
  - ▶ Military Experiences
  - ▶ Maladaptive Behaviors, Self-Doubt, self-sabotaging patterns

**THE DAY THEY ENTER OUR PROGRAM IS PROBABLY NOT THEIR BEST DAY**



# Why focus on re-engagement?

Proactive vs. Reactive

- ▶ We **DON'T** know what the Veteran has gone through.

*Using this approach we can anticipate challenges that may present and we can be ready with open arms when they are ready to be a part of our program*

- ▶ In order to be ready- THEY HAVE TO FEEL SAFE/THEY HAVE TO FEEL ACCEPTED
- ▶ OFFER FOOD -*Stimulating the autonomic Para sympathetic NS (rest & digest)*
- ▶ **STARTS AT FIRST TOUCH-** phone/in street/screening/etc.
- ▶ ALWAYS promoting a **culture** of unconditional positive regard and self-acceptance encourages program re-entry even after a relapse, “failure,” or pause.



# To begin at the beginning

- ▶ Early Engagement is a focus at orientation
  - ▶ When a Veteran arrives on site to receive bed assignment
  - ▶ When a Veteran is completing intake packet
  - ▶ Staff to client orientation

# To begin at the beginning

- ▶ Multi-level staff approach means each member of the team plays a crucial role
  - ▶ Case manager builds rapport – Veteran is expert on Veteran/Case Manager is expert in social services and navigating Veteran care
  - ▶ Monitor is ally – building rapport by helping them get oriented to the site and schedule
  - ▶ Program Manager/Site Leaders provide face time and support-recognition of veteran achievements, showing up to veteran house meetings, having open door hours, keeping motivated, positive presence, staying informed



# Re-engagement process

- ▶ Groups of at least 2 staff- strategic in choice of staff
- ▶ Physically go into streets and/or friends homes/tents/kick-it spots
- ▶ Tailoring services/resources to meet individual needs without pressure to return to site, but providing an options and services menu
- ▶ Thinking outside of the box
- ▶ Motivational Interviewing

# What is required onsite

- ▶ Staff Training
  - ▶ Sensitivity training
  - ▶ **Safety protocols**
  - ▶ Communication skills
  - ▶ **Motivational Interviewing Training, roleplay, and refreshers**
  - ▶ Remembering why we are doing this (perspective taking; humility check-ins)
  - ▶ Debrief following Re-Engagement Attempts and/or Crisis




# What is required offsite


- ▶ Community Collaboration
- ▶ Indirect Partnerships-
- ▶ Direct Partnerships-
- ▶ Collaboration with law enforcement and social services
- ▶ Encouraging community members to report sightings

# Success Story 1: Charles

- ▶ Charles is a 62 year old Veteran who first came to VOALA Transitional Housing in 2020. He had spent over 10 years on skid row after losing his family to an incident of street violence.
- ▶ Charles was greeted by Monitors and Case Management Staff and the intake process began. It took three days to complete all of the paperwork for intake due to Charles' difficulties sitting through meetings longer than 15 minutes. He would begin to become visibly uncomfortable and antsy, and his responses became short. Staff worked together to ensure the intake packet was completed in short, bite-size time periods
- ▶ After 2 weeks of the program, Charles left the site and didn't return.




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- ▶ Charles did not have a second point of contact or a working cell phone
  - ▶ Charles did, however connect with a member of the monitor staff,, and disclosed information related to his friends in the streets and their approximate location
  - ▶ This information had been charted in his intake packet and placed in his file
  - ▶ The case manager, site leader, and monitor team met together to formulate a re-engagement plan for Charles
  - ▶ The next day, the program manager accompanied the monitor who had documented the information at intake and they walked skid row to find the green tent that Charles had told him about
  - ▶ They brought some bag lunches and hygiene items with them
  - ▶ When they arrived at the tent, the resident was not cooperative, until he understood that they were genuinely trying to help Charles. He was able to give them information to find Charles

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- ▶ Charles was located almost a whole day later, and the team gave him information and referrals – and several options in case he did not want to go back to the transitional housing site
  - ▶ Charles said he wasn't ready to come back to the housing program
  - ▶ Two additional days later Charles returned.
  - ▶ He was ready to face his barriers, and said that he came back because he believed that VOALA was the “first and only agency that he felt wanted to help him even if it wasn't under their roof”
  - ▶ Charles was able to acquire permanent housing 26 months later- after two more program AWOLS, and three hospital stays
  - ▶ Charles currently resides in VASH housing and has almost reached a full year of housing and two full years of sobriety.
  - ▶ Charles sees his PCP and mental health clinician regularly, and has 2 fish that he cares for in his apartment, “Maxine and Joe”




# Success Story 2: Jorge

- ▶ Jorge was referred to VOALA after moving from West Virginia without a place to call home
- ▶ He had lived on the riverbanks and was used to street life
- ▶ During his intake process he talked to case managers and monitors about his comfort levels and worried that he wouldn't be able to live inside after such a long time living a nomadic lifestyle outdoors.
- ▶ After 27 days of program, and successfully collecting documents, registering with the WLAVA, and seeing a doctor for the first time in over 35 years, Jorge was AWOL
- ▶ Staff met as a team to see if there had been any mention of where he could have gone. Staff also checked hospitals and jails- the staff wasn't able to connect any clues to Jorge's whereabouts

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- ▶ When swing shift came on, one of the monitors from the new shift saw that Jorge was missing and suggested we talk to a few of the residents in his bunk area
  - ▶ That staff had noticed that during Jorge's stay, he had befriended two of the other men in program
  - ▶ Both of these other veterans were still onsite and were starting to make their way to the dining area for dinner
  - ▶ The program manager called each separately, accompanied by the swing shift monitor, letting the monitor lead the conversation, and asked them if they knew where Jorge may have gone or why he left
  - ▶ The veterans wanted to help, however they were also loyal to their friend, and so they were not easily persuaded to give the details of Jorge's whereabouts
  - ▶ Finally, they gave staff a general description of where Jorge might have gone



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- ▶ The next day, the swing monitor and Jorge's case manager went to an encampment near the LA River
  - ▶ They found Jorge- looking a little worse for wear
  - ▶ They offered him some food and sat down with him to talk
  - ▶ They didn't pressure Jorge to return to the site, but encouraged him to reach out if and when he was ready
  - ▶ They learned that Jorge had started drinking and he was embarrassed and thought he might get "kicked out" of the program had he returned drunk
  - ▶ Staff explained harm reduction and that the most important thing was Jorge's safety
  - ▶ Jorge returned the next day on his own
  - ▶ Jorge received his VASH voucher 7 months later and was able to move into his new apartment another 3 months after that
  - ▶ Jorge was housed within 1 year of re-engagement into program.

# Wrapping Up Key Points

- ▶ Number of veterans returning to street can be impacted through early engagement and re-engagement
- ▶ Early engagement starts with the staff to veteran orientation from the minute they are asking for help- whether it is the first touch on the phone for a phone screening, coming into the facility for their first day, or in the streets
  - ▶ Focus should be on building rapport
    - ▶ Should be done using humor, empathy, storytelling, and offering food/drink/warmth
- ▶ Re-engagement should be conducted strategically, using best staff and most appropriate levels of staff for the intervention, and offering a menu of options, not just one.
- ▶ Training such as cultural competencies and motivational interviewing with regular training opportunities, role playing, and feedback help all levels of staff feel comfortable in this role and improve rate of success



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# **COMMUNITY HOMELESSNESS ASSESSMENT, LOCAL EDUCATION AND NETWORKING GROUPS FOR VETERANS (CHALENG)**

# HISTORY: WHAT IS CHALENG

- Community Homelessness Assessment, Local Education and Networking Groups (CHALENG) for Veterans
- Started in 1993 in response to Public Law 102-405, Section 107 and Public Law 103-446, Section 1002: Services for Homeless Veterans: Assessment and Coordination
- Requires an assessment of the needs of homeless Veterans at every VA medical center
- Facilitates interactions between VA and stakeholders
- Two components: CHALENG meetings and CHALENG survey

# MOST RECENT CHALENG DATA

- Fact Sheet is posted on the [public CHALENG website](#)
- Top MET needs: medical services, mental health services, case management, substance use treatment, food, clothing, glasses, emergency shelter
  - Veterans residing in Transitional Housing, which includes GPD locations, identify Transitional Housing as the #3 top met need
- Top UNMET needs: housing for registered sex offenders, legal assistance in 6 areas: family law, credit issues/debt collection, child support, expungement of a criminal record, outstanding warrants and fines, and tax issues
  - Veterans residing in Transitional Housing, which includes GPD locations also identify discharge upgrade appeals, drivers license restoration, and domestic violence/protection orders as unmet needs

# 2022 CHALENG RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

- Veterans, 1,992, 45% of respondents
  - 9% female, 90% male, 2% transgender/nonbinary/other gender
  - 19% 44 or younger, 81% 45 or older
  - 53% White, 32% Black/African American, 9% American Indian or Alaska Native, 1% Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, 1% Asian
  - 7% Hispanic/Latino
  - Living Situation:
    - 23% Literally Homeless/Emergency Housing
    - 27% Transitional Housing
    - 31% Permanent Subsidized Housing (i.e. HUD-VASH)
    - 19% Permanent Unsubsidized Housing
- Providers, 2,411, 55% of respondents
  - 54% VA Providers
  - 17% Community based homeless providers
  - 16% Other federal, state, local government providers
  - 13% Interested members of the community

# TRENDS IN FINDING: UNMET NEEDS

- First 10 years: Permanent Housing, Child Care, Dental Care, Glasses
- Second 10 years: Child Care, Dental Care, Financial Guardianship
- Most recent 8 years: Housing for Registered Sex Offenders, Child Care, Family Reconciliation Assistance, Legal Assistance
- Note on Legal
  - Early years had a general category of Legal Assistance
  - Category expanded in 2008
  - Number of legal needs in top 10 Unmet Needs has grown steadily from 4 to 6
- Take away: Unmet Needs emphasize services VA cannot provide alone



# CHALENG QUALITATIVE RESPONSES

- The current CHALENG instrument includes an open ended question for Veterans:  
*Please tell us in your own words: What is the most important resource/service that could help end your homelessness now, or if you are formerly homeless, what is the most important resource that will prevent you from being homeless in the future?*
- In 2022, Veterans residing in Transitional Housing identified permanent housing in 53% of qualitative responses
  - Many specifically mentioned HUD-VASH, some mentioned TIP
  - 25% Employment/Income, 17% Clinical (physical health, mental health, SUD treatment), 4% mentoring, 1% legal
- Qualitative responses also include gratitude and self-reflection:
  - “Being here and going through the program. This time I came back to finish what I started, the program is a positive and spiritual environment for me.”
  - “Better communication with family and that can be done by reaching out to others that can direct me on the right path. The opportunity to stay connected and just socialize.”
  - “I appreciate the effort to keep me living indoors, it was horrible during my time on the streets.”
  - “I also need to work on my low self-esteem and feelings of unworthiness.”
  - “The most important thing is committed staff who recognize there are a myriad group of challenges facing homeless vets.”

# CHALENG DATA USES

- National level
  - Development of legislative proposals
  - Support for new program development or expansion
    - For example, CHALENG data has been used to support the need for Homeless Veterans Dental Program, expansion of HUD-VASH, expansion of Supportive Services for Veterans and Families, creation of Legal Services for Veterans
- Local level
  - Strategic planning between medical center and community partners
  - Preparation for CARF accreditation surveys
  - Demonstration of need in grant applications

# INNOVATIVE PRACTICES

- White Paper available on VHA Homeless Programs [HUB](#)
- Received input from two VISNs and six VAMCs with high CHALENG participation
- Innovative practices include:
  - Designate a CHALENG champion
  - Promote online survey link *and* collect pen and paper surveys
  - Encourage Veteran and community partner input at Stand Down
  - Discuss CHALENG at all community meetings
  - Share local results with Community Veteran Engagement Boards and VAMC leaders



# REQUESTED ACTION

- Take the survey!
  - We want your input to design future programming
- Promote the survey!
  - Ask Veterans who would like to give input and community providers you work with for their participation
- Use the data!
  - Review the national Fact Sheet and look at your own data

# FOR MORE INFORMATION

Jessica Blue-Howells, LCSW

Deputy National Director, Veterans Justice Programs

HPO Subject Matter Expert, Project CHALENG

[Jessica.Blue-Howells@va.gov](mailto:Jessica.Blue-Howells@va.gov)

Website: <https://www.va.gov/homeless/challeng.asp>

- general information
- current fact sheet
- link to current year's survey

# FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT UPDATES



# FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT - REMINDERS

- [Federal Financial Report SF-425](#) submissions were due January 30, 2024
  - Submit the completed SF-425 ***and*** the supporting documentation (general ledger) to [GPD425@va.gov](mailto:GPD425@va.gov)
- Request approval for all expenses over \$5,000, includes both equipment and capital expenditures and [\(2 C.F.R. § 200.439\)](#) and maintenance and repair costs [\(2 C.F.R. § 200.452\)](#)

# FY24 CASE MANAGEMENT QUARTERLY REPORTING

Case Management:

- **CM-24 Quarterly financial reporting in eGMS**
  - ***Required*** on Case Management awards
  - Quarterly Reporting due within 30 days after end of the quarter. The quarter period ends December 31, March 31, June 30, and September 30; therefore, this requirement must be submitted no later than January 30, April 30, July 30, and October 30.
  - Failure to report may result in payments being withheld or suspended.
  - 1st quarter financial reporting of Case Management awards was due January 31st
  - Quarterly Reporting Data Requested
    - Quarter: First Quarter, Year 1
    - Cash Receipts
    - Cash Disbursements
    - Cash on Hand

# INDIRECT COSTS

## Indirect Costs [\(2 C.F.R. §200.412-415\)](#) :

- Must have a signed Federally Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) that is not expired or signed [Certification of De Minimis](#) uploaded into eGMS organization profile if charging indirect costs
- Per diem rate modification request review includes verification of indirect cost NICRA or Certification of De Minimis
- Contact [GPDFiscal@va.gov](mailto:GPDFiscal@va.gov) with questions on NICRA



# OFFICE OF BUSINESS OVERSIGHT

## •Federal Contractors (NEW):

–Tribility, BDO, RMA & Associates

## Upcoming Fiscal Reviews:

- Dignity's Alcove, Inc. – February 12, 2024 – February 16, 2024
- Volunteers of America of Greater Sacramento and Northern Nevada, Inc. – February 12, 2024 – February 16, 2024
- Maryland Center for Veterans Education and Training, Inc. – February 12, 2024 – February 16, 2024
- Diakonos, Inc. – February 19, 2024 – February 23, 2024
- Open Door Ministries of High Point, Inc. – February 19, 2024 – February 23, 2024
- El-Ada, Inc. – February 25, 2024 – March 1, 2024
- Supportive Housing and Innovative Partnerships, Inc. – February 25, 2024 – March 1, 2024
- Interfaith Community Services Inc. – February 26, 2024 – March 1, 2024
- Volunteers of America of Eastern Washington and Northern Idaho – March 4, 2024 – March 8, 2024
- Good Samaritan Shelter – March 11, 2024 – March 15, 2024
- Volunteers of America Southwest California, Inc. – March 11, 2024 – March 15, 2024
- Volunteers of America Los Angeles – March 11, 2024 – March 15, 2024
- California Veterans Assistance Foundation, Inc. – March 11, 2024 – March 15, 2024
- The Salvation Army – March 25, 2024 – March 29, 2024
- Home Sweet Home Ministries, Inc. – March 25, 2024 – March 29, 2024
- First Step House, Inc. – March 31, 2024 – April 5, 2024
- Homeless Veterans Fellowship – March 31, 2024 – April 5, 2024

## GPD Grantee Training FY24

- [How to Prevent Questioned Costs and Unobligated Funds](#) – password: Homeless1! (link and password to training presented Dec 2023)
- Upcoming* April 2024 – Indirect Costs

*Thank  
You*

**Next Call: Tuesday, March 12th @ 2 pm ET**