

# TRIBAL HUD-VASH DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### INVITEE QUESTIONS

#### **1. Can you elaborate on types of training and technical assistance available?**

It will consist of group training and individual technical assistance, as needed, for grantees with mitigation plans to ensure they meet their mitigation benchmarks. Exact details will be determined once the grantees are awarded.

#### **2. Why is there such a quick application turnaround?**

HUD would like grants to be awarded by the end of the calendar year. Additionally, once the grants are awarded VA can then officially begin hiring caseworkers.

#### **3. What is the overall timing of housing a Native veteran?**

The VA must wait to find out who will be awarded the Tribal HUD-VASH rental assistance. Then, it will take between 3-6 months to hire and train the VA caseworker. The Native veteran cannot be housed under the Tribal HUD-VASH demonstration program until the VA has determined eligibility and referred the Native veteran to the tribe/TDHE.

One way to help expedite the timing for housing a Native veteran would be for the tribe/TDHE to begin working on housing stock and developing a landlord list of those interested in working with the program.

#### **3. Can we get a copy of our VA data? For example, gross numbers on how many veterans were identified in our service area?**

Due to VA privacy restrictions, HUD is unable to release the data.

#### **4. What happens if the invitee does not apply? When should we notify HUD of intent not to apply?**

Please contact HUD as soon as possible if you are not intending to apply for HUD VASH.

#### **5. How long will it take to fill out the application?**

It will depend on whether you intend to apply for Tenant Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) or Project-based Rental Assistance (PBRA). PBRA has additional requirements in the application.

**6. Is there a format for the mitigation plans?**

HUD has developed a model mitigation plan. Regional ONAP staff will work with you to develop your timeline for achieving corrective actions/milestones.

**7. What level sex offender must be excluded from the Tribal HUD-VASH demonstration program?**

Any veteran or any member of the household that is subject to the lifetime registration requirement (Tier III offense) under any state sex offender registration program.

**8. Is there a template for working with Indian Health Service for case management services?**

There is no current template. Involvement with the IHS will be on a site-by-site basis and will be determined in conjunction with the VA and the tribe after the grant agreement has been awarded.

**9. Please define "at risk of homelessness".**

View the second to last slide on the "Tribal HUD-VASH Implementation" power point presentation. The power point can be found at: [www.hud.gov/codetalk](http://www.hud.gov/codetalk)

**10. How will the lump sum grant be determined?**

The grant will be determined based on the number of rental assistance units awarded to a tribe/TDHE times the identified rents by unit size. The tribe/TDHE may request between 15-25 units of assistance. HUD may lower the amount requested based on budgetary factors.

**11. What is the admin fee?**

It is a flat fee of \$85 per month, per unit.

Administrative fees can be used for eligible Tribal HUD-VASH administrative expenses only, which include, but are not limited to: (1) Eligibility determinations; (2) intake and briefings; (3) owner outreach efforts; (4) unit inspections; (5) rent negotiations; (6) annual and interim reexaminations; (7) tenant fraud investigations and hearings; (8) processing subsequent moves; (9) the costs associated with making rental assistance payments to owners; and (10) complying with reporting requirements.

**12. What are the administrative requirements for the program?**

The administrative requirements for the Tribal HUD-VASH program are laid out in Section VI of the Federal Register Notice announcing the Tribal HUD-VASH demonstration program. All of the statutory and regulatory requirements under NAHASDA and the IHBG program apply, unless the existing requirements conflict with the requirements laid out in

Section VI of the Federal Register notice. If there is a conflict, the requirements in Section VI of the Federal Register notice prevail. Section VI of the Federal Register Notice also lays out new requirements that apply in addition to the existing IHBG and NAHASDA requirements. It is important that Grantees rely on Section VI of the Federal Register Notice for the specific modification administrative requirements that apply to the Tribal HUD-VASH program.

**13. Please clarify tenant-based rental assistance vs. project-based rental assistance?**

In tenant-based rental assistance the assistance stays with the Native veteran regardless of whether they move between units.

In project-based rental assistance the assistance stays with the unit. If the veteran moves out, the next person to occupy the unit must also qualify for Tribal HUD-VASH.

**14. Is it okay for the veteran to rent privately owned units?**

Yes, when the veteran has a tenant-based unit, they may choose to rent a privately-owned unit.

**15. Where will the VA case workers be housed?**

This is to be negotiated between the tribe/TDHE and the VA. Possible arrangements include: VA caseworker at VA Medical Center (VAMC) or Community-Based Outreach Clinic (CBOC), VA caseworker onsite at tribe, VA contracts with IHS or the VA contracts directly with the tribe and the tribe provided the case worker.

**16. Is a residential treatment center facility an eligible form of project-based rental assistance?**

The voucher cannot be used in nursing homes, or treatment facilities.

**17. For project-based assistance, when you say you want to know the type of structure, are you asking for “single-family detached” or “duplex,” for example? Or is there a different structure type description you are looking for?**

Please indicate whether the project-based units are single family homes, duplex, or multi-family, high rise, condo, etc.

**18. What evidence of site control are you looking for? (what type of document?)**

A document, such as a title or deed, that shows tribe/TDHE ownership.

**19. For evidence of registration with SAM, will a printout of the webpage showing the registration expiration date suffice?**

Yes. A print out of the web page showing registration status and expiration date is acceptable.

**20. For community involvement, must this have already taken place at the time of application? Or, can we describe how the community will be involved in the development and implementation of the program once funds are awarded? Is a public notice required?**

In your application you can identify how the community will be engaged once the program funds are awarded or you can describe your current outreach efforts. Early community engagement can include reaching out to your local VAMC contact, local PHA's, organizations serving the homeless, veterans groups both tribal and non-tribal, etc.

A public notice is not required.

**21. We aren't sure what bedroom sizes we need at this point and are estimating what the potential need will be. Can we change the bedroom sizes once we know what actual bedroom sizes are needed?**

Grantees will not be held to an exact bedroom unit size. You will just need to assist as many eligible Native veterans as possible with your grant award and keep in mind the Case Manager's workload constraints.

**22. If you apply for 15 project-based vouchers and 10 tenant-based vouchers now, but once funds are awarded you realize it would be better to have more tenant-based vouchers, can you change your numbers? Or do you have to try to implement the project as planned in the application and then if you can't use all of your project-based vouchers they can then be converted to tenant-based? (Just wondering about flexibility in the split between types once funds are awarded.)**

Yes, you can switch at a later date. However, if you are switching from tenant-based rental assistance to project-based rental assistance you'll need to comply with the project-based rental assistance submission requirements as outlined in the *Federal Register*, "Implementation of the Tribal HUD-VA Supportive Housing" notice.

**Eligibility and Admission**

**1. If a Native veteran is interested in participating in the Tribal HUD-VASH program, whom should he/she contact?**

The veteran should ask the tribe/TDHE which VAMC they are partnering with and get in touch with the VA case manager.

The Case Manager will also be doing outreach to Veterans who need assistance and local community agencies to make them aware of the program. The Case Manager will meet with other service agencies regularly to help with referral and coordinated approaches when working with homeless Veterans.

**2. Does the tribe/TDHE have any role in determining or verifying the veteran's homeless status?**

No, only the VA case manager will make that determination. The tribe/TDHE can refer potential applicants to the VA case manager.

**3. What responsibility does a tribe/TDHE have to determine a family's eligibility to participate in the Tribal HUD-VASH demonstration program?**

After the VA Caseworker refers an eligible homeless veteran to the tribe/TDHE, the tribe/TDHE will determine income eligibility, determine if the veteran is an eligible Native American, and screen for lifetime sex-offender registrants.

**4. What if a family is over-income?**

As in the regular PHA voucher program, the tribe/TDHE must determine whether a family is income eligible prior to the provision of the Tribal HUD-VASH assistance. If the family is over-income based on the most recently published income limits for the family size, the family will be ineligible for the Tribal HUD-VASH program. After admission, income limits do not apply.

**5. Can a tribe/TDHE deny assistance to a HUD-VASH family that owes money to the housing department in connection with a past tenancy in the housing units?**

No. A tribe/TDHE will not be able to deny admission to the Tribal HUD-VASH Program to an otherwise eligible Tribal HUD-VASH family that previously participated in the tribe's housing program (that presumably left owing money or was not in good standing). A tribe/TDHE will only be able to screen for, and deny admission to, a family member that is subject to a lifetime registration requirement under a state sex offender registration program.

However, when new family members are added to the household after the veteran is on the program, regular tribe/TDHE screening criteria applies.

**6. Are Vouchers portable?**

No. The rental assistance provided under the Tribal HUD-VASH demonstration program is not portable.

**7. What if a family member, other than the veteran, is subject to a lifetime registration requirement under a state sex offender registration program?**

Unless the family member that is subject to lifetime registration under a state sex offender law is the homeless veteran, the remaining family member/s may be served if the family agrees to remove the sex offender from its family composition.

**8. Can admission be denied to an adult family member, other than the veteran, based on the previous behavior of that family member? For example, the co-head was previously terminated from the housing program for committing repeated violations of the lease (e.g. non-payment of rent)?**

No. The prohibition against screening families for anything other than lifetime sex offender status applies to all family members, not just the veteran.

However, when new family members are added to the household after the veteran is in the program, regular tribe/TDHE screening criteria applies.

**9. Do we need to include the Tribal HUD-VASH program in our Indian Housing Plan? If so, do we include in the FY16 plan or revise the FY15 plan? Does this occur after we receive our grant agreement?**

Yes. Grant funds received under this program must be reported annually in a tribe/TDHE's Indian Housing Plan and Annual Performance Report. Information on grant funds and program income received under this program must also be reported quarterly on the Federal Financial Report (SF-425).

After the grant has been awarded, the tribe/TDHE will need to include Tribal HUD-VASH as a new activity in the FY16 Indian Housing Plan.

**10. My service area includes multiple counties. Which Fair Market Rents(FMR's) do I use? Do FMR's include utilities?**

You may use the county with the highest FMRs. FMR's do not include utilities.

**11. For purposes of Tribal HUD-VASH and accessing private units for TBRA am I limited to my formula area or Indian area? And, can I serve clients outside of my formula area?**

The Federal Register Notice, *Implementation of the Tribal HUD-VA Supportive Housing Program*, requires that the tribe work within its *Indian Area*, not Formula Area. Indian Area is defined under the regulations very broadly to mean "the area within which an Indian tribe operates affordable housing programs or the area in which a TDHE, as authorized by one or more Indian tribes, operates affordable housing programs." For purposes of Tribal HUD-

VASH, your request to serve Native American veterans that are homeless or At Risk of Homelessness living on or near a reservation or Indian area is allowable and does not require a waiver.

**12. I see throughout that income eligibility is capped at 80% of area median income rather than the higher of the area median income or the national median income. Is that correct or should the national median income option be available?**

Median income has the same definition of median income as found in Section 4(15) of NAHASDA.

**FUNDING**

**13. What is the administrative fee and what can it be used for?**

There is a flat administrative fee of \$1,020 per unit, for a 12-month period, which can also be used for start-up funding. These funds will be included as part of the grant issued.

Administrative fees can be used for eligible Tribal HUD-VASH administrative expenses only, which include, but are not limited to: (1) Eligibility determinations; (2) intake and briefings; (3) owner outreach efforts; (4) unit inspections; (5) rent negotiations; (6) annual and interim reexaminations; (7) tenant fraud investigations and hearings; (8) processing subsequent moves; (9) the costs associated with making rental assistance payments to owners; and (10) complying with reporting requirements.

Reserve accounts for administrative fees are not allowable.