

**Department of
Veterans Affairs**

Memorandum

Date: July 8, 2021

From: Assistant Under Secretary for Health for Clinical Services/Chief Medical Officer (11)

Subj: Emergency Housing for Homeless and At-Risk Veterans During Summer Weather (VIEWS #5433968)

To: Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) Directors (10N1-23)
VISN Homeless Coordinators (10N-23)
Medical Center Directors (00)

1. The purpose of this memorandum to communicate that it is important to keep in mind that for many of our homeless Veterans, the summer is accompanied by unwelcome changes in the weather. Harsh summer weather conditions are already being experienced in several parts of the country and for our nation's homeless Veterans, severe weather presents real survival challenges.

2. Homeless Veterans living on the streets, under bridges and in encampments are particularly vulnerable to these weather conditions. The Veterans Health Administration (VHA)Homeless Programs have resources available to assist Veterans Affairs Medical Centers (VAMC) in conducting outreach, case management and finding emergency housing for homeless and at-risk Veterans.

3. There are more than 4,000 operational emergency residential beds throughout the nation that are part of VHA's Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV) program. These resources can assist in providing rapid placement in safe and secure settings. We recognize that during COVID-19, some transitional housing programs have needed to decrease bed capacity to put into place social distancing requirements. To mitigate this decrease in bed capacity, local homeless programs have the ability to place Veterans in hotels through collaboration with the Supportive Services for Veteran Families, Grant and Per Diem, and HCHV programs.

4. Case managers should work with formerly homeless Veterans, such as those housed in the Department of Housing and Urban Development-Department of Veterans (VA) Supportive Housing, to have operating disaster plans to include things such as emergency contact numbers, water, food, ways to safely store medications in the heat and other items needed for situations when there is the threat of extreme heat. For those Veterans with cell phones, ensuring that they are fully charged will be important to ensure they can reach out for assistance, if needed. For locations where the weather is not a factor, please take this time to ensure disaster planning is in place with formerly homeless Veterans.

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5. Additionally, VHA Financial Alert 2021-008 entitled *Guidance for Using Appropriated Funds for the Care of Homeless Veterans during a Declared Public Health Emergency (COVID)* allows for the purchase of specific items that enhance the safety, survival, wellbeing or living conditions of qualifying homeless Veterans. (Attachment 1). With this guidance is an opportunity for VAMC homeless staff to purchase certain items for qualifying Veterans related to the severe heat they may be experiencing. VHA Homeless Program Office has also published a frequently asked questions in support of this Financial Alert. (See Attachment 2).

6. It is imperative that VAMCs make every effort possible to use all the resources available to provide outreach and emergency housing and support services to our homeless Veterans as we rapidly approach the brunt of hazardous summer weather, especially in the midst of this national pandemic. Each facility's Homeless Program Coordinator should be identified as the point of contact for local information on these resources as well as other VA and non-VA community resources that can assist homeless Veterans and families who are at risk during this weather crisis.

7. Should you have any questions, please contact Ms. Eileen Devine, LCSW, National Director, HCHV Programs by email, at: Eileen.Devine@va.gov.



Kameron Leigh Matthews, M.D., J.D., FAAFP

Attachments

Financial Alert 2021-008: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

VHA Homeless Programs

This document addresses frequently asked questions related to the Financial Alert 2021-008: Guidance for Using Appropriated Funds for the Care of Homeless Veterans during a Declared Public Health Emergency (COVID).

Version: June 24th, 2021.

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When is this authority applicable?

This Financial Alert is applicable during a covered public health emergency with respect to COVID-19.

Who is responsible for declaring a “covered public health emergency”?

A Federal, State, or local authority.

Do VAMC Homeless Program staff have to vendorize each business (example: grocery store, landlord)?

Each business must be vendorized according to applicable fiscal policy. It is the responsibility of the VAMC’s Fiscal or Logistics service to vendorize local businesses or landlords. It is not the responsibility of homeless program staff.

What is the effective date of this financial alert?

April 28, 2021.

Is there a per-Veteran limit for expenditures under this authority?

No. A cap on expenditures per Veteran has intentionally been omitted. It is incumbent upon VAMC homeless program personnel to exercise discretion based on Veteran need and equitable distribution of goods or services to the homeless Veterans served by the VAMC.

Who is responsible for Microsoft (MS) Forms entries for purchases and distribution?

VAMC homeless program personnel are responsible for [MS Forms](#) entries.

What is the guidance from VHA Finance on obtaining funding to execute this authority?

Additional CARES Act funding will not be distributed in support of this authority, as there should be enough funding at each station to cover anticipated expenses. It is the expectation of the VHA Homeless Program Office (HPO) that every VAMC will execute this authority. VHA Finance has assured HPO that there is enough funding to cover anticipated expenses.

Guidance from VHA Finance:

1. VAMCs should work with their VAMC CFO to determine if there is CARES Act funding available to cover expenses. If CARES Act funding is not available, VAMCs should consult with their CFO to determine if other funding is available.
2. If VAMCs do not have any funding to support execution of this authority, the VISN CFO should be contacted to determine if funding can be transferred to the station.
3. If the VISN does not have any funding, HPO and VHA Finance can be contacted to allocate funds.

Are these expenditures time limited, or will the authority roll over into the next Fiscal Year, similar to CARES Act funding for HCHV Contract Residential Services?

This authority will expire when the public health emergency is declared over. This authority is not bound by a particular funding source, so there is no individual timeframe associated with funds that can be used in support of this authority.

VAMCs are being instructed to use 0100 C2 funds for providing hotels, meals, etc. Is there any further guidance from VHA Fiscal on how this can be implemented?

In order for your facilities to utilize existing CARES Act funds, an account specifically set up for Homeless Programs must be established. After that step is complete, facilities have two options to execute this mandate:

1. Purchase the goods or services from the General Post Fund Control Point and transfer the expenditure to the homeless account.
2. Transfer funds from 0160C2 to the homeless account, and then make the purchases from the homeless account.

ELIGIBILITY

Are stably housed HCHV, VJP, and SSVF Veterans eligible for purchases under this authority?

No. Stably housed Veterans in HCHV, VJP, and SSVF are not eligible recipients under the law. The law authorizes purchases only for Veterans who are homeless or those housed in the HUD-VASH program.

Does this apply to Veterans living in United States territories?

Yes. This authority extends to all United States territories that fall under the jurisdiction of United States Federal Government.

What is the definition of “Homeless Veteran” according to this Financial Alert?

Under this authority, the term “homeless Veteran” utilizes both the McKinney-Vento Homeless Act, as amended by Section 896 of The Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act of 2009, Section 103. [42 USC 11302] [GENERAL DEFINITION OF HOMELESS INDIVIDUAL](#) and the term Veteran as defined by Section 2002 of Title 38: “a person who served in the active military, naval, or air service, regardless of length of service, and who was discharged or released therefrom.” This excludes a person who “received a dishonorable discharge from the Armed Forces; or was discharged or dismissed from the Armed Forces by reason of the sentence of a general court-martial.”

Does the Veteran have to demonstrate a negative impact due to COVID-19 to be eligible for goods or services under this authority?

No. It is not required that the Veteran experienced a negative impact related to COVID-19 to receive support under this authority.

Are MHR RTP Residents eligible to receive goods/services under this authority?

Domiciliary residents are eligible under this authority if they meet the two primary criteria: 1) Veterans who are homeless; and 2) Veterans with very low or extremely low income. Reference the financial alert for income definitions. It is possible for Domiciliary residents to meet the definition of a homeless Veteran if they were homeless at the time of admission and their length of stay is under 90 days. After 90 days, the Veteran is no longer considered homeless.

The financial alert references extremely low and very low-income thresholds as qualification criteria for eligible participation in this authority. Is there an area median income (AMI) limit?

Yes. The AMI limits are determined based on HUD criteria as defined in section 5 of the financial alert.

Extremely Low-Income: A very low-income family whose annual income does not exceed the higher of: (1) The poverty guidelines established by the Department of Health and Human Services applicable to the family of the size involved (except in the case of families living in Puerto Rico or any other territory or possession of the United States); or (2) Thirty (30) percent of the median income for the area, as determined by HUD, with adjustments for smaller and larger families, except that HUD may establish income ceilings higher or lower than 30 percent of the area median income for the area if HUD finds that such variations are necessary because of unusually high or low family incomes.

Very Low Income: A family whose annual income does not exceed 50 percent of the median family income for the area, as determined by HUD with adjustments for smaller and larger families, except that HUD may establish income ceilings higher or lower than 50 percent of the median income for the area if HUD finds that such variations are necessary because of unusually high or low family incomes.

Are Veterans at imminent risk of homelessness outside of HUD-VASH eligible?

Yes. Veterans at imminent risk of homelessness are considered homeless within Financial Alert 2021-008. This authority utilizes the definition of a homeless individual, as established by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Act, as amended by Section 896 of The Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act of 2009, Section 103. [42 USC 11302] [GENERAL DEFINITION OF HOMELESS INDIVIDUAL](#).

Is there any flexibility regarding the Very Low-Income requirement listed in the Financial Alert based on specific circumstances of the Veteran?

Yes. Although there are set income limits in the financial alert, the intent is to ensure that the assistance goes to those who need it. Requests for flexibility due to specific Veteran circumstances will be reviewed on a case by case basis. Please have VAMC Homeless Program staff email 11HPO_4201_Policy@va.gov if they have a homeless Veteran needing assistance with exceptional circumstances that do not fall within the limits set within the Financial Alert.

FOOD, PERSONAL ITEMS, AND HOUSEHOLD GOODS

Are gift cards authorized for purchase and distribution to homeless Veterans under this authority?

No. The ability to purchase and distribute gift cards under this authority is prohibited. In the initial version of Financial Alert 2021-008, gift cards were removed from one section of the alert, but other references were inadvertently not omitted. Gift cards are not authorized purchases under this authority and have been removed from the alert. Please refer to the revised version of the alert, dated May 13, 2021.

Are bulk purchases permitted under this authority?

Yes. Bulk purchases are permitted; the number of Veterans served must be annotated on the [MS Forms](#).

Are VAMC Homeless Program Staff required to follow VA Financial Policy Volume II Chapter 4 [Awards, Ceremonies, Food or Refreshments, Gifts or Mementos Volume II Chapter 4 \(va.gov\)](#) for food purchases for meals, groceries, and meal delivery services (including getting GS-15 or above approval)?

No. VA Policy Volume II Chapter 4 Awards, Ceremonies, Food or Refreshments, Gifts or Mementos covers the requirements and special rules for the approval and purchase of food; however, the policy is specific to purchasing food for VA employees or quasi employee (e.g., test group individuals) and volunteers at awards, ceremonies, conferences and the like. Vol II Ch 4 does not cover veteran related benefits. The approval requirements in Vol II Ch 4 for purchasing food do not apply to PL116-315. NOTE: When utilizing the purchase card for food purchases under this legislation the card holder must cite this exception to Vol. II Chapter 4 rules.

Are meals purchased from a restaurant covered under this authority? If so, how must we process the transaction since restaurants are not an allowable merchant category if using a Government Purchase Card (GPC)?

Yes. The law authorizes the direct purchase of meals, groceries and meal deliver services for Homeless Veterans and those enrolled in the HUD-VASH program during a public health emergency (COVID). Food purchases from restaurants are acceptable as they would meet the intent of the law as long as the item purchased will enhance the safety, survival, wellbeing, or living conditions of the Veteran; and if the item or service is not provided, it will increase the Veteran's risk of adverse outcomes, including but not limited to loss of housing or continuation of homelessness, infection, hunger, hypothermia, poor hygiene, unemployment, missed health care and service appointments, social isolation, or exacerbation of physical and mental health symptoms.

Restaurants in this scenario are not a restricted category and the purchase card may be utilized.

TRAVEL AND TRANSPORTATION

Can this funding be utilized to provide temporary lodging for eligible Veterans (ex: hoptel, temporary lodging beds, VA Fisher Houses)?

Yes. Temporary lodging is a covered expenditure under this authority; however, it must not displace or deprioritize Veterans who need beds for the originally-intended purpose.

SHELTER AND STORAGE

Can this funding be used for landlord incentives (e.g., double deposit payment)?

Yes. Landlord incentive expenditures are allowed if it facilitates housing placements for eligible Veterans.

Are reconciliation of rental/utility arrears for eligible Veterans permitted under this authority?

Yes. Payment for rental or utility arrears are authorized under this authority if the Veteran's housing is at risk as a result of these debts. Please note that section 6 of the Financial Alert specifies that other debts (unrelated to the Veteran's safety and survival) are not authorized under this authority.

Are legal fees related to finding and maintaining housing (such as court-ordered payments to former landlords) allowable?

Yes. We consider court-ordered payments to landlords a covered expenditure if these payments are jeopardizing the Veteran's ability to obtain or sustain housing. To be eligible, the Veteran must also meet the recipient criteria set forth in section 6 of the Financial Alert.

Are necessary home repairs to mitigate safety issues covered under this authority?

Yes. This meets the criteria for ensuring the safety of the Veteran, as outlined in the financial alert.

Are home cleaning services for Veterans covered under this authority?

Regular home cleaning services for Veterans are not be permitted under this authority. The only exception is a one-time deep cleaning due to dire situations which could result in eviction or could jeopardize the safety, security, or wellbeing of the Veteran (e.g., hoarding).

Can the funds be used to rent a storage unit to hold items that are authorized until distribution (e.g., apartment start-up kits, or necessary furniture)? If that is allowable, can a facility pay for a year of storage in this FY that would cover the majority of next FY?

Yes. Although the Financial Alert does not directly address facility infrastructure needs related to storage and distribution of goods, it is considered an allowable expenditure as an extension of the authority given in section 4201. Pre-paying for 12 months is also permitted, as it will secure storage space and allow the VAMC to effectively plan and distribute items purchased under this authority.

Can VAMC homeless program staff pay for storage of Veteran items while homeless under this authority?

Yes. Storage space may be rented under this authority if the storage will support the homeless Veteran's safety, security, or wellbeing as he/she searches for housing. Storage provides homeless Veterans the ability to secure equipment, clothing, and other goods that may be necessary for safety, security, and wellbeing when they move into permanent housing. The authorized time period should be temporary in nature, and once the Veteran has moved into permanent housing the storage should be discontinued.

How do we pay for rental deposits on behalf of Veterans to lessors?

These options are available for rental deposit payment:

1. A convenience check may be used up to \$5,000 to remit payment for rental deposits based on VA Financial Policy Vol. 16 Chapter 1C Convenience Checks (va.gov).
2. If the Vendor will accept a purchase card, they can be paid with a purchase card. Up to the Micro purchase threshold amount, vendorization is not required.

Note: VA Form 1358 (Obligation or Change in Obligation) is not authorized for rental payments.

SERVICES

Are Stand Down promotional items covered by this authority?

No. As the intent of this Financial Alert is to secure items or services that will enhance the safety, survival, wellbeing, or living conditions of the Veteran, promotional items are not permitted under this authority.

Are recreation therapy expenditures permitted under this authority?

No. The intent of this Financial Alert is to secure items or services that will enhance the safety, survival, wellbeing, or living conditions of the Veteran. Therefore, providing recreation therapy expenditures for the Veteran is not permitted under this authority. It is recommended that VAMC homeless program staff coordinate with recreational therapy, occupational therapy, and volunteer services to facilitate recreational needs such as event tickets and craft kits. Reference section 6 of the Financial Alert.

Can VAMC homeless program staff pay for training for homeless Veterans under this authority?

No. As the intent of this Financial Alert is to secure items or services that will enhance the safety, survival, wellbeing, or living conditions of the Veteran, providing training for the Veteran is not permitted under this authority.

Is the intent for VHA to directly reimburse the Veteran for covered service expenses (e.g., childcare, utilities) or does the VAMC need to make payments directly to the vendor?

Convenience checks up to \$5,000 may be utilized to pay for expenses of utilities and childcare assistance. Further options for payment are being reviewed by the HPO because Government Purchase Cards (GPC) require the individuals account number be accessible and the card cannot be retained on file.

HPO SUPPORT AND OVERSIGHT

How will expenditures made under this authority be tracked?

VAMC homeless program staff are required to input a [Microsoft Forms](#) entry for purchase and distribution of goods or services under this authority.

Is there a way for staff to view MS Forms entries?

No. Staff are not able to view MS Forms responses. HPO will publish a recurring report distributed to Network Homeless Coordinators and VAMC Homeless Coordinators. If additional details are needed beyond the report, send a request to: 11HPO_4201_Policy@va.gov.




What should I do if I make a mistake on my MS Forms entry?

If an MS Forms entry was made in error or needs correction, send a detailed request to: 11HPO_4201_Policy@va.gov.

What do I do if I have additional questions?

Questions or inquiries regarding the contents of this Alert should be sent to “VHA Financial Policy (10A3C)” mailbox: VHAFinancial.Policy@va.gov. Homeless Program-specific questions should be sent to 11HPO_4201_Policy@va.gov.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Financial Alert 2021-008	Financial Alert 2021-008 final draft on HPO Operational Planning HUB.
 Attachment A BOCs.pdf	Attachment A: Budget Object Code (BOC) crosswalk
 Attachment B Durable Goods User	Attachment B: User agreement required for each purchase/distribution of durable goods.
 Attachment C Smartphone User Ag	Attachment C: User agreement required for smartphone purchases made under this authority.
https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/il.html https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/il/il2021/select Geography.odn	Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Area Median Income (AMI) Resources
Section 4201 General Use Purchase and Distribution	Microsoft Forms for tracking of purchases and distribution of goods or services purchased under this authority.
VHAFinancial.Policy@va.gov	Fiscal support.
11HPO_4201_Policy@va.gov	Homeless-Program support related to Financial Alert 2021-008.



VHA OFFICE OF FINANCE

Financial Management & Accounting Systems

ALERT



VOLUME 2021, ISSUE 008

MAY 13, 2021

Guidance for Using Appropriated Funds for the Care of Homeless Veterans During a Declared Public Health Emergency (COVID)

1. PURPOSE. This Financial Alert provides guidance on the use of appropriated funds for expenditures to support homeless Veterans during a covered public health emergency. The term “covered public health emergency” means an emergency with respect to COVID–19 declared by a Federal, State, or local authority.”

2. AUTHORITY. The Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020 (PL 116-315) section 4201(a) authorizes the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to use amounts appropriated or otherwise made available to the Department of Veterans Affairs to carry out sections 2011, 2012, 2031, and 2061 of title 38, United States Code, to provide to homeless Veterans and Veterans participating in the program carried out under section 8(o)(19) of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437f(o)(19)) (commonly referred to as “HUD-VASH”), as the Secretary determines is needed.

3. IMPLEMENTATION. Effective immediately, VA has the authority to utilize appropriated funds to support homeless Veterans during a covered public health emergency. Equitable Veteran access to funding is a high priority for the Homeless Program Office, and VAMCs must make every effort to ensure that funding is made available to Veterans from underserved communities, including women, racial and ethnic minorities, rural, and tribal Veterans.

4. BACKGROUND. Public Law (PL) 116-315 section 4201(a) provides VA with the authority to use appropriated funds (i.e., funds appropriated directly to VA or otherwise made available to VA by law) for homeless Veterans and those enrolled in the HUD-VASH program during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency. Under this authority, VA may provide homeless Veterans and those enrolled in the HUD-VASH program with assistance required for safety and survival, transportation, communications devices, and other assistance as the Secretary determines is needed.

5. DEFINITIONS:

- **Covered Public Health Emergency:** The term “covered public health emergency” means an emergency with respect to COVID–19 declared by a Federal, State, or local authority. Public Health Emergencies are issued by the Secretary of the Department of

Health and Human Services (HHS), under section 319 of the Public Health Service Act. The declaration lasts for the duration of the emergency or 90 days but may be extended by the Secretary of HHS.

- **Extremely Low-Income:** A very low-income family whose annual income does not exceed the higher of: (1) The poverty guidelines established by the Department of Health and Human Services applicable to the family of the size involved (except in the case of families living in Puerto Rico or any other territory or possession of the United States); or (2) Thirty (30) percent of the median income for the area, as determined by HUD, with adjustments for smaller and larger families, except that HUD may establish income ceilings higher or lower than 30 percent of the area median income for the area if HUD finds that such variations are necessary because of unusually high or low family incomes.
- **Homeless Veteran:** Under this authority, the term “homeless Veteran” utilizes both the McKinney-Vento Homeless Act, as amended by Section 896 of The Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act of 2009, Section 103. [42 USC 11302] [GENERAL DEFINITION OF HOMELESS INDIVIDUAL](#) and the term Veteran as defined by Section 2002 of Title 38: “a person who served in the active military, naval, or air service, regardless of length of service, and who was discharged or released therefrom.” This excludes a person who “received a dishonorable discharge from the Armed Forces; or was discharged or dismissed from the Armed Forces by reason of the sentence of a general court-martial.”
- **Very Low Income:** A family whose annual income does not exceed 50 percent of the median family income for the area, as determined by HUD with adjustments for smaller and larger families, except that HUD may establish income ceilings higher or lower than 50 percent of the median income for the area if HUD finds that such variations are necessary because of unusually high or low family incomes.
- **Veterans Participating in HUD-VASH:** This includes any Veterans currently enrolled in the HUD-VASH program and those currently in receipt of a HUD-VASH voucher without VA case management services (also known as “graduated” Veterans).

6. GUIDANCE.

In order to comply with section 4201(a) of P.L. 116-315, VA must ensure that any assistance provided to homeless Veterans and those participating in the HUD-VASH program is only provided to those as the Secretary determines is needed.

- a. **Eligible recipients:** To qualify as an eligible recipient, the Veteran must meet criteria for the following, as defined in section 5 above:
 - Homeless or Participating in HUD-VASH; and
 - Extremely Low or Very Low Income.
- b. **Allowable purchases:** Items or services listed in this section are considered to meet a need by the recipient if the following criteria are met:
 - The item or service will enhance the safety, survival, wellbeing, or living conditions of the Veteran; and
 - If the item or service is not provided, it will increase the Veteran’s risk of adverse

outcomes, including but not limited to loss of housing or continuation of homelessness, infection, hunger, hypothermia, poor hygiene, unemployment, missed health care and service appointments, social isolation, or exacerbation of physical and mental health symptoms.

If the criteria above are met, expenditures are allowed for*:

a. Assistance required for safety and survival. This includes:

Food:

- Direct purchase of meals.
- Groceries.
- Meal delivery services.

Personal items:

- Clothing (socks, underwear, pants, shirts, footwear, coats, gloves, hats, etc.).
- Blankets and quilts.
- Sleeping bags.
- Tents.
- Personal Protective Equipment (masks, gloves, face shields, etc.).
- Hygiene items (toilet paper, toothpaste, toothbrushes, soap, deodorant, sanitary napkins, etc.).
- Personal items required for employment.

Household Goods:

- Apartment start-up kits.
- Small household appliances.
- Furniture.
- Cookware.
- Household cleaning supplies.

Shelter:

- Hotel/motel vouchers.
- Rental deposits (maximum of one security deposit during a 2-year period).
- Rental payments.
- Utilities.
- Childcare assistance.
- Application and document fees.
- Pet fees.
- Laundry vouchers.

- Mobile emergency housing units (“tiny houses”, temporary manufactured housing units).
- Legal fees related to maintaining housing.

*Note: funds must be distributed directly to the vendor of these services for the specific purpose identified.

b. Transportation required to support stability and health. This includes:

- Taxi vouchers.
- Public transportation vouchers (bus, subway, rail, etc.).
- Rideshare vouchers (Uber, Lyft, etc.).
- Chartered transportation services (buses, etc.) for transportation from congregate living environments or permanent housing locations where multiple homeless or HUD-VASH Veterans reside for COVID-19 testing and vaccination.

Transportation services can be utilized for appointments with VA and non-VA medical providers, for housing searches, for obtaining food and supplies, and for employment-related purposes (employment searches, interviews, and to be transported to/from employment location).

c. Communications equipment and services. This includes:

- Smartphones.
- Disposable phones.
- Tablets.
- Service plans.
- Wi-Fi utility payments.
- Cell phone boosters.

Communication equipment and services can be purchased to support stability and health (such as maintaining contact with VA and non-VA providers, with prospective landlords, for telehealth, for employment searches, and with family).

Expenditures are not allowed for:

- Gift Cards
- Debts/payments such as credit card bills, car loans, or personal loans.
- Purchase of items that are not directly related to safety and survival during a covered public health emergency (personal entertainment equipment, etc.).
- Purchase of items after the covered public health emergency has ended.
- Utilities, travel, technology equipment expenses for VA employees, contractors or grantees.
- Hazard pay for VA employees, contractors or grantees.
- Overtime (OT) for VA employees or contractors.

- Items purchased with the intent of resale.

7. PROCEDURES.

VHA Homeless Program Office. Responsible for disbursement of additional CARES Act funds to VA medical centers in support of this Financial Alert. This additional funding will be disbursed to each medical center via our Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV) account. Below is the mnemonic and ACC associated with HCHV CARES Act funding.

Program Code	Specialty	Mnemonic	ACC	Name
SP08	SP8B	SP8B-ADMC260	SP80BP5?1	Health Care for Homeless Veterans

VAMC Fiscal Office. VAMC Fiscal staff will ensure funds are received and placed into the appropriate CARES Act Fund Control Point (FCP) for approved items to be purchased. Cost Center 8214 must be used for all purchases made under this authority (Note, station 556, North Chicago, appropriation 0169 will use cost center 7214).

Cost Center Descriptions
821400 Homeless Veteran Care During a Declared Emergency. Costs associated with the care of Veterans during a declared emergency to include the purchase of consumables, durable goods, and services for homeless Veterans or Veterans that are at-risk for homelessness. (Fund 0160)
721400 Homeless Veteran Care During a Declared Emergency. Costs associated with the care of Veterans during a declared emergency to include the purchase of consumables, durable goods, and services for homeless Veterans or Veterans that are at-risk for homelessness. (Fund 0169)

Attachment A below provides a listing of the Budget Object Class Codes (BOC) that should be used in conjunction with any expenditures made under this authority. CARES Act funds expenditures for authorized purchases will be tracked to ensure allocated/available funds are not exceeded. CARES Act funds are available for use until September 30, 2021. In addition to the above directives, local allocated funds can be used during this covered public health emergency for these purposes as applicable under the law and the guidance in this document.

ATTACHMENT A



Attachment A
BOCs.pdf

VAMC Homeless Program Personnel. VAMC homeless program coordinators must coordinate with their VAMC fiscal office to ensure that they can account for and report on purchases made under the authority detailed in this financial alert. VAMC homeless program personnel are responsible for assessing homeless Veterans and those enrolled in the HUD-VASH program to determine eligibility for assistance under section 4201(a) and the criteria outlined in section six above. Procedures for purchasing, distributing, and reporting on goods and services allowed under section 4201(a) are outlined below by type of purchase:

- a. **Consumables.** VAMC homeless program personnel are responsible for determining the critical need for consumable items listed in section six of this financial alert. VAMC homeless program personnel must document the expenditure amount, type, description and number of Veterans served on the [4201 General Use Distribution and Purchases form](#) located on the VHA Homeless Programs Operational Planning Hub after item distribution.
- b. **Durable Goods.** To prevent abuse, when providing any form of durable good listed in section six of this financial alert, the Veteran recipient must sign the VHA Homeless Program Durable Goods User Agreement (Attachment B). VAMC homeless program personnel are responsible for collecting and storing signed user agreements. VAMC homeless program personnel must document the expenditure amount, type, description and number of Veterans served on the [4201 General Use Distribution and Purchases form](#) located on the VHA Homeless Programs Operational Planning Hub after item distribution.

ATTACHMENT B



Attachment B
Durable Goods User

- c. **Services.** VAMC homeless program personnel are responsible for determining the necessity of services listed in section six of this alert. VAMC homeless program personnel must document the expenditure amount, type, description and number of Veterans served on the [4201 General Use Distribution and Purchases form](#) located on the VHA Homeless Programs Operational Planning Hub after service payment.
- d. **Shelter.** VAMCs are responsible for agreements with motels and hotels around length of stay, cost per night, and method of payment. Any local or state laws pertaining to rentals, sheltering, and squatters' rights should be reviewed. It is incumbent upon the VAMC homeless program personnel to determine reasonable rent. VAMC homeless program personnel must document the expenditure amount, type, description and number of Veterans served on the [4201 General Use Distribution and Purchases form](#) located on the VHA Homeless Programs Operational Planning Hub after item distribution or service payment.
- e. **Smartphones/Telephones.** If the VAMC makes its own purchase of a smartphone and/or other digital device and/or service plan under this authority, homeless program personnel must obtain a signed VHA Homeless Programs Smartphone User Agreement (see Attachment C), and document the expenditure amount, type, description and number of Veterans served on the [4201 General Use Distribution and Purchases form](#) located on the VHA Homeless Programs Operational Planning Hub.

ATTACHMENT C



Attachment C
Smartphone User A

8. QUESTIONS. Questions or inquiries regarding the contents of this Alert should be sent to "VHA Financial Policy (10A3C)" mailbox: VHAFinancial.Policy@va.gov. Homeless Program-specific questions should be sent to 11HPO_4201_Policy@va.gov.