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without requiring any further documentation from the organization during the 3 year period, unless VA receives evidence that an organization no longer meets the requirements of this section. VA will only take action on an initial request to designate an ecclesiastical endorsing official when VA receives an application from an individual who is seeking employment as a VA chaplain or is seeking to be engaged under VA contract or appointed as on-facility fee basis VA chaplains under 38 U.S.C. 7405.

(f) *Reporting requirement.* (1) To certify that VA chaplains continue to be endorsed by an ecclesiastical endorsing organization, such organization must provide VA an alphabetical listing of individuals who are endorsed by that endorsing organization and are employed as VA chaplains or are engaged by VA under contract or appointed as on-facility fee basis VA chaplains under 38 U.S.C. 7405 by January 1 of every calendar year.

(2) In order for VA to continue to recognize an ecclesiastical endorsing organization, such organization must provide written documentation that it continues to meet the requirements of this section every 3 years.

(g) *Rescission of ecclesiastical endorsing organization.* VA may rescind an organization's status as an ecclesiastical endorsing organization and refuse to accept ecclesiastical endorsements from such organization if it no longer meets the requirements of paragraph (c) of this section. VA will take the following steps before it rescinds the organization's status:

(1) VA will give the ecclesiastical endorsing organization written notice stating the reasons for the rescission and give the organization 60 days to provide a written reply addressing VA's concerns.

(2) VA will notify the ecclesiastical endorsing organization and all VA chaplains endorsed by the organization in writing of its decision after VA reviews the evidence provided by the organization or after the 60 day time period has expired, whichever comes first.

(3) Ecclesiastical endorsing organizations that are notified that they may no longer endorse individuals for VA chaplaincy because they do not meet

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the requirements of paragraph (c) of this section must resubmit all of the evidence stated in paragraph (d) of this section in order to be reconsidered as an endorsing organization.

(4) If an ecclesiastical endorsing organization is no longer able to endorse individuals for VA chaplaincy in accordance with this section, all ecclesiastical endorsements issued by that organization are considered to be withdrawn.

(The Office of Management and Budget has approved the information collection requirements in this section under control number 2900-0852.)

[82 FR 51772, Nov. 8, 2017]

GRANTS FOR TRANSPORTATION OF VETERANS IN HIGHLY RURAL AREAS

AUTHORITY: Sec. 307, Pub. L. 111-163; 38 U.S.C. 501 and as noted in specific sections.

SOURCE: 78 FR 19593, Apr. 2, 2013, unless otherwise noted.

§ 17.700 Purpose and scope.

This section establishes the Grants for Transportation of Veterans in Highly Rural Areas program. Under this program, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) provides grants to eligible entities to assist veterans in highly rural areas through innovative transportation services to travel to VA medical centers, and to otherwise assist in providing transportation services in connection with the provision of VA medical care to these veterans.

(Authority: Sec. 307, Pub. L. 111-163; 38 U.S.C. 501)

§ 17.701 Definitions.

For the purposes of §§ 17.700-17.730 and any Notice of Fund Availability issued pursuant to such sections:

Applicant means an eligible entity that submits an application for a grant announced in a Notice of Fund Availability.

Eligible entity means:

(1) A Veterans Service Organization, or

(2) A State veterans service agency.

Grantee means an applicant that is awarded a grant under this section.

Highly rural area means an area consisting of a county or counties having

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a population of less than seven persons per square mile.

Notice of Fund Availability means a Notice of Fund Availability published in the FEDERAL REGISTER in accordance with §17.710.

Participant means a veteran in a highly rural area who is receiving transportation services from a grantee.

Provision of VA medical care means the provision of hospital or medical services authorized under sections 1710, 1703, and 8153 of title 38, United States Code.

State veterans service agency means the element of a State government that has responsibility for programs and activities of that government relating to veterans benefits.

Subrecipient means an entity that receives grant funds from a grantee to perform work for the grantee in the administration of all or part of the grantee's program.

Transportation services means the direct provision of transportation, or assistance with providing transportation, to travel to VA medical centers and other VA or non-VA facilities in connection with the provision of VA medical care.

Veteran means a person who served in the active military, naval, or air service, and who was discharged or released therefrom under conditions other than dishonorable.

Veterans Service Organization means an organization recognized by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for the representation of veterans under section 5902 of title 38, United States Code.

(Authority: Sec. 307, Pub. L. 111-163; 38 U.S.C. 501)

§ 17.702 Grants—general.

(a) *One grant per highly rural area.* VA may award one grant per fiscal year to a grantee for each highly rural area in which the grantee provides transportation services. Transportation services may not be simultaneously provided by more than one grantee in any single highly rural area.

(b) *Maximum amount.* Grant amounts will be specified in the Notice of Funding Availability, but no grant will exceed \$50,000.

(c) *No matching requirement.* A grantee will not be required to provide match-

ing funds as a condition of receiving such grant.

(d) *Veterans will not be charged.* Transportation services provided to veterans through utilization of a grant will be free of charge.

(Authority: Sec. 307, Pub. L. 111-163; 38 U.S.C. 501)

§ 17.703 Eligibility and application.

(a) *Eligible entity.* The following may be awarded a grant:

(1) A Veterans Service Organization.

(2) A State veterans service agency.

(b) *Initial application.* To apply for an initial grant, an applicant must submit to VA a complete grant application package, as described in the Notice of Fund Availability.

(c) *Renewal application.* Grantees may apply for one renewal grant per fiscal year, after receiving an initial grant, if the grantee's program will remain substantially the same. The grantee must submit to VA a complete renewal application as described in the Notice of Fund Availability.

(d) *Subrecipients.* Grantees may provide grant funds to other entities, if such entities are identified as subrecipients in grant applications to perform work for grantees in the administration of all or part of grantees' programs.

(Authority: Sec. 307, Pub. L. 111-163; 38 U.S.C. 501)

(The Office of Management and Budget has approved the information collection requirement in this section under control number 2900-0790)

§ 17.705 Scoring criteria and selection.

(a) *Initial grant scoring.* Applications will be scored using the following selection criteria:

(1) VA will award up to 40 points based on the program's plan for successful implementation, as demonstrated by the following:

(i) Program scope is defined, and applicant has specifically indicated the mode(s) or method(s) of transportation services to be provided by the applicant or identified subrecipient.

(ii) Program budget is defined, and applicant has indicated that grant funds will be sufficient to completely implement the program.