

Transcript

October 16, 2024, 6:27PM

□ **Abreu, Hector M.** started transcription

AM **Abreu, Hector M.** 3:21

Well, let's go ahead and get started. It's 2:30.

First of all, I would like to thank you for joining today's meeting where we'll be discussing V as proposed.

Nationwide, programmatic agreement for its state home construction grant program.

Sometimes called the state veteran's home national programmatic agreement.

Virginia welcomes anyone joining today's call, but please know that today is specific to tribes and Native Hawaiian organizations and H OS and their unique role in the Section 106 process.

If you are not representing one of these groups, please consider joining the call on October 2020 first, which will be our third round of calls related to these proposed nationwide programmatic agreements for the state Veterans Home program.

So if you're not a tribe, please consider joining us on our October 21st call.

Virginia, of course, acknowledges that consultation is A2 way nation to nation exchange.

So if you if you would prefer VAHPO staff can meet with any tribe or Native Hawaiian organization in their leadership.

Or their designated Section 106 contacts and May request a private or one-on-one meeting or discussion concerning these proposed nationwide programmatic agreements.

If you wish to coordinate A1 on one meeting, please e-mail us at historicpreservationaltogether@va.gov and we can arrange that meeting so we're more than open and willing to engage any tribe in that way. If they or native wine organization, if they wish.

To do it that way.

Next slide.

So my name is Hector browse intro and I am V as federal preservation officer.

And I'm joined today by various members of our staff here at VA in our historic Preservation Office.

Which is part of the V as.

Construction and Facilities management office.

I have Alec Bennett with me, as well as Angela McArdle and Sophia Latz, and we may

I think we also have our, yes.

Va liaison at the Advisory Council.

Vanessa hanby.

So with that, I am going to turn over the MIC to Alec Bennett, who is our senior historic preservation specialist and is the historic Preservation Office lead for this state home nationwide program proposed nationwide programmatic agreement.

Thank you very much.

BA

Bennett, Alec (CFM) 6:32

Thank you, hector.

This meeting is being recorded, so those who are not able to participate can still get information.

PA is also taking notes and will retain a summary of this meeting for the administrative record.

The chat feature is live.

We ask you, please use the chat feature if you have a specific.

Document or web page reference that you have a question about so we can record the link correctly.

These notes will be included in the administrative record.

We'll pause the presentation at various points for questions.

Take questions at the end of the presentation as well.

These notes will also be included in the administrative record.

So after today's presentation, we will open the comment period and ask that you provide recommendations and suggestions by e-mail.

These comments will be collated, summarized and posted to the website V as Historic Preservation Office.

This is the second in V as opening round of meetings about the proposed state home nationwide programmatic agreement.

Our final meeting of this round will be next Monday, October 21st.

If you have a colleague or know of someone that could not attend today, please let them know that registration remains open for that meeting.

They can register by sending an e-mail to historicpreservation@va.gov.

Or by visiting the VA Historic Preservation Office website.

Finally, today's meeting is about historic properties and the National Historic Preservation Act, compliance related to the state home program.

It is not about how to secure funding for a state home.

We have posted links in the chat to address that. There's also information in the chat if you are, if you are veteran looking For more information about living in a state home.

Next slide please.

Today's meeting is largely an informational session about V as state home construction grant program and why VA has proposed nationwide PA and NPA.

But we have, as I mentioned, reserved some time for discussion and questions.

PA included the copy of its consultation plan for this proposal with the invitation to participate in consultation. That plan contains much information about the proposed MPA, but also includes several links to V as web pages and news stories.

The consultation plan is also available on the VA Historic Preservation Office website.

Most people. Oh, next slide, please.

Most people are familiar with V as mission to provide health care to veterans, and our home loan and education benefit programs.

The state home construction grant program you is an important initiative that VA has to make that commitment to serve veterans throughout their lives.

Next slide please.

So there are 170 active state veterans homes in the United States.

The state home construction grant program, or state home program, is a partnership between the Department of Veterans Affairs and states to construct, renovate or repair.

State.

Owned and operated nursing homes, domicil areas or Adult day healthcare facilities, which are all generally referred to as state homes.

V8 typically looks directly with state level Veterans Affairs agencies for the construction grant program.

And the state level VA executes the construction project.

In certain states, VA will work with the state level department of General Services.

Which will execute the project on behalf of the state VA.

In 2020, Congress passed the Isaacson and Roe Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act, which amended the statutory authority of the state home program

to include Indian tribes in the definition of state and state home.

Va received the first application for a project on tribal land earlier this year.

Now it's important to note that state veterans homes are not federal properties and are not owned by VAVA. The state home construction Grant program is a partnership between VA and the states.

But states.

Own the homes and are responsible for operations and maintenance.

So V as section 106 connection is.

Through the state Veterans Home Grant program.

We have no the VA does not have authority over how state veterans homes are are maintained.

Or the day-to-day operations.

Next slide please.

So this slide kind of shows the locations of state veterans homes nationwide.

As you can see, some states do have more state veterans homes than others.

Kind of to continue what I said on the previous slide, the decision to construct and operate a state home lies with the state, not with the A.

Va does not select the locations for for state homes.

Stay at home buildings.

Are typically around 33 stories or less in height with private and semi private rooms.

Va currently has.

A.

A small house design guide and does encourage state app applicants to use the small house design guest so the bedrooms.

In state homes or organized into pods or clusters with shared common areas.

Many state homes include amenities including, you know, libraries and Barber shops, as well as chapels.

Next slide please.

So under the stay at home program.

Va may reimburse applicants up to 65% for the cost of an eligible project.

And these guidelines are divine by statute.

We've include a references statute earlier on in the presentation.

Many state home programs. Our renovations of existing facilities such as.

Roof replacements.

HVAC system improvements.

Nurse call system installations.

And other interior projects.

Grants for projects related to health and safety.

Are prioritized within the program.

These can include.

You know HVAC system upgrades, upgrades, for instance and.

Nurse call systems.

The the VA grant program.

Does provide grants for states to construct entirely new facilities or to expand existing ones?

Funding for the state home program.

You know is variable, there are certain.

Years where funding for the state home program has has surged.

In addition to that, there are multiple factors that.

Can determine when a particular grant is. Is is funded.

As I mentioned earlier, you know life safety is prioritized.

The stay at home program.

The grant program is a matching program, so.

Va can match up to 65% for the cost of a project, but then states may must.

You know, bring in that 35%.

In addition to this, as I as I reference a little bit earlier, each state has a established number of beds allotted for that state.

And and states cannot.

Move above the allotted number of beds for that particular state.

The the grant program.

Works whereas.

You know, if a state has a grant application in with the program and it is not funded in a particular fiscal year, it can roll over until the next fiscal year.

And and and try again for funding that other fiscal year.

So it is kind of important to note that you know, grants that are submitted to the VA, you know, in our eligible.

You know for the program and meet the requirements.

You know those grants will will be awarded.

It's just kind of, you know, going through the process and and and going through this prioritization, which I've referenced earlier for for life safety projects.

So last month, the VA received a priority list for projects.

These.

Priority priority list was for fiscal year 2024.

And includes over 100 projects.

Next slide please.

So let me take a breath here.

And just wanted to see if there are any questions about that, that brief summary of the state Veterans Home program.

OK, hearing none, I will continue. Next slide please.

So you know, throughout the country, both within VA and outside of VA, you know across, you know nationwide, you know, nursing homes were particularly impacted by COVID-19.

As as I think we all know.

Through the CARES Act and the American Rescue Plan Act to, you know, big pieces of legislation that were passed and.

2021, you know right at the the heart of the pandemic.

Congress provided funds to VA specifically to help state veterans homes.

Install infraction control measures to help stop the spread of COVID-19.

Certain projects included, you know.

Interior projects.

Installed.

Infection control materials.

There were multiple projects related to upgrades of HVAC systems.

And other projects.

Allowed.

State states to.

To build, to establish private rooms within state homes.

You know, that was one of the big measures is try to ensure individual style.

Spaces for for patients in state homes.

So due to the disaster emergency.

You know, declaration by the president.

You know, VA utilized the emergency procedures.

Found at 36 CFR 800.12.

Over and over again during the pandemic.

To initiate consultation for these projects.

You know, these were, of course, expedited consultations.

And.

You know that certainly, you know, put a strain both on VA and and partners.

And.

You know consistently on, on multiple occasions in response to our initiations, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation encouraged VA to to develop.

A program alternative to address emergency actions within the position of grants or funds.

And that, I think is an important point because the, you know, VA as mentioned does not operate these facilities.

We are the kind of grant or funds, so it is a a, a different section 106 hook.

It's a different relationship between, you know, the federal agency and the facility.

And so you know, with that in mind, the the Advisory Council, you know, did encourage us to, you know, set up emergency procedures.

When we were the.

Of of fonts. Next slide please.

So we did review our procedures and we concur with the Advisory Council that a nationwide program of nationwide PA for emergency situations would be helpful.

You know, in kind of taking a look at the the larger program, you know, we also think there are other.

Benefits that could be incorporated.

You know, into the larger.

NPA that could help define the rules of responsibilities of applicants in the Section 106 process.

As well as develop guidance specific to these facilities.

You know, taking a look at the advisory councils.

Recommendations.

More program alternatives.

You know, we do think that the nature of the state Veterans Home program in which, you know, federal grants support similar types of undertakings at similar types of facilities across the country. You know that type of program would be a good fit for a nationwide.

PA.

You know, and so you know with our initiation.

With this meeting.

We.

Are seeking the input of our preservation partners. You know, in these proposals.
Next slide please.

So in the next couple of slides, I'm going to go into a little bit of the details of the nationwide.

PA and as mentioned, we would appreciate your feedback.

Thank you.

So first of all, you know, just to be perfectly clear, this nationwide programmatic agreement would be limited to the state Veterans Home Grant program.

So you know this proposal, you know, is focused on this grant program.

Other VA facilities other VA programs are not part of this proposal.

So you know it is.

I think you know important to note, and this was included in the in the consultation plan that.

Many of these facilities have been constructed.

In the last few decades so.

You know, almost 2/3 of state veterans homes.

Have been constructed since 19.

90 so we are talking about many types of facilities which are, you know, 45 years of age or less than that.

So we we are talking about a number of properties which are.

You know, only a few decades old.

You know, over the last number of years.

Va has engaged in a number of consultations.

For the the state Veterans Home program and a large majority of these consultations.

Result in no historic properties affected findings. So big picture is a number of these state homes are not historic properties.

Are are not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places?

To drill, to drill down a bit further.

We have calculated that more than 95% of our consultations over the last few years have resulted in either.

You know, no historic properties affected or or no adverse effect findings.

So we do have, you know, consultations that really.

You know, either steer us to, you know, their nose or properties in the project area

or.

The project will not adversely affect historic properties.

So for this reason.

Va is proposing a list of.

Of programmatic exemptions that would go under this simply because you know we are getting you know, a lot of the same.

Findings through the determinations through the National Historic Preservation Act, section 106 process.

We also.

Believe that this is an opportunity to establish.

Roles and responsibilities.

For, you know, VA and states.

You know, in the context of.

Natural disasters or emergency situations?

Versus.

Long term pandemic situations.

We also.

Think that you know through this.

Proposal.

You know, we would be able to better integrate consideration of historic properties into the applicant's design phase.

It is important to note here.

That.

You know, for this proposal this proposed MPA, it would not.

Apply when National Historic landmarks are within a defined area of potential effects.

Va is not identified.

Any state Veterans Home itself?

That is a National Historic Landmark, but.

We, we we would not apply this.

NPA, if there was an HL within a area of potential effect?

Next slide please.

So.

You know, this slide goes into a a little bit of detail about the.

Proposed exemption for for renovations.

So this is intended kind of summarize the part of the NPA that would apply to non-

emergency reviews.

Va has already.

Authorized.

State Veterans Affairs Agency.

To initiate Section 106 on our behalf.

With state historic preservation offices pursuant to 36 CFR 800.2 and that authorization would not change.

Va, you know, would not seek an exemption related to the construction of a.

New State veterans, home for an entirely new facility that would be outside of of this exemption.

What what we would propose.

Is to include state home projects that are limited to internal improvements, including some of the safety systems and materials and replacements that I touched on a little bit earlier.

On in the presentation.

Often times these these projects have a a very minimal potential to lead to an adverse effect to historic properties.

For renovations for.

Exterior work VA is proposing.

To exempt reviews if the property is 40 years of age or less.

Or it has been determined to be not historic through a prior consultation.

If exterior modifications.

If exterior changes would be necessary.

You know, VA would utilize the exemption.

If.

No historic properties.

Were were identified within.

The area potential effect.

Next slide please.

The case of emergency situations.

 **Christopher Koeppe** 33:37
OK.

 **Bennett, Alec (CFM)** 33:40

Is there a question?

In the case of emergency situations, VA would like to distinguish between an emergency.

And a.

And a longer term ongoing issue such as a pandemic.

You know, in that type of situation.

Va, you know, would roll over some of the proposed exempted actions, which I briefly discussed on the.

Last slide.

You know, for a long term pandemic.

Va would ask to retain the seven day review period.

For, you know, rehabilitation or renovation kind of smaller scale undertakings but provide a 30 day review.

For for larger undertakings.

For larger scale undertakings.

For emergencies such as a hurricane recovery, for instance.

You know, VA, you know, is asking to extend.

The 30 day designation to to 90 days.

That would be.

Helpful for us as the.

Grantor of.

Of federal funds, you know as.

You know, the federal agency that you know provides.

Funds to applicants, but doesn't necessarily operate.

Facilities.

Next slide please.

So let me take another breath and.

Open.

Open it up please.

You know, we are happy to answer any questions about the proposed MPA, the proposed exemptions or timelines.

RS **Rolene Schliesman** 36:10

Hello this is roline schleisman.

Can you hear me?

BA **Bennett, Alec (CFM)** 36:14

Yes.

RS **Rolene Schliesman** 36:15

I was wondering about the 91 percent that you mentioned of consultations that ended up in no historic properties or no adverse effect. Do you have the breakdown of each one of those?

BA **Bennett, Alec (CFM)** 36:27

Mm hmm.

Like a like a. Do you mean like a spreadsheet?

RS **Rolene Schliesman** 36:38

You no historic properties affected and and no adverse one of them requires quite quite a bit of consultation sometimes in order to bring it to that. No adverse effect. And so I was just curious if. You knew that the the breakdown of that 91% in each category.

BA **Bennett, Alec (CFM)** 37:02

Oh oh, how how? Oh, how many were no historic properties affected and how many were no adverse effect?

RS **Rolene Schliesman** 37:02

About 5050.
Correct.

BA **Bennett, Alec (CFM)** 37:10

You know, I I would not be able to pull those exact numbers at this moment, but we can make a note of that and and try to follow up with you with that information.

RS **Rolene Schliesman** 37:22

Thank you so much. I'd appreciate that.

BA **Bennett, Alec (CFM)** 37:25

OK.

Thank you.

I'm just making a note.

Of of.

Are there any other?

Are there any other questions related to the presentation?

OK, great.

Next slide please.

So you know, the comment period will be open for another month.

We ask that.

You please send any comments, any questions.

To our e-mail.

Historicpreservation@va.gov, I believe that e-mail is going to be on the next slide. So so you can you know.

Reference that there we are going to use the comments from these meetings.

And those received during the comment period to draft the nationwide.

PA.

You should have received a draft consultation plan.

It's kind of, you know, it's fairly bare bones, but there was a draft consultation plan, draft outline, excuse me for the MPA in the consultation plan that you received along with this invitation.

We certainly would. Would love to hear from you to to get your feedback on this proposal.

We do intend to host a second round of meetings, which will likely take place.

In early 2025 to discuss this draft, this proposal.

Next slide please.

So here's that e-mail I referenced. You know, we are monitoring it and will you know capture any feedback that that we receive on this proposal.

There are, you know, we can't say it enough.

I mean, you know, there are many opportunities to participate.

There are many opportunities to comment.

Certainly VA understands if it would be, you know parties preferences to.

You know, discuss internally with your colleagues with your offices.

You know, before submitting any any comments?

Next slide please.

So just wanted to say thank you to everyone that signed on that participated in the call.

We do.

We do appreciate your input.

OK. Thanks everyone.

- **Abreu, Hector M.** stopped transcription