

**THE NAVAJO NATION VETERANS
ADMINISTRATION**

**NAVAJO NATION VETERANS
HOME IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM POLICY**

January 11, 2021

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SECTION I.
INTRODUCTION

- A. POLICY STATEMENT.** It is the policy of the Navajo Nation Veterans Administration (hereafter referred to as the NNVA) to provide every eligible Navajo Nation Veteran, Gold Star Mother, or Surviving Spouse, an opportunity to apply for home improvement assistance under the Navajo Nation Veterans Home Improvement Program with the intent of improving current living conditions of residences owned by the qualifying applicant.
- B. PURPOSE.** The purpose of the Navajo Nation Veterans Home Improvement Program (NNVHIP) is to identify, assess and prioritize the home improvement needs of Navajo Veterans, Gold Star Mothers, or Surviving Spouses. The NNVA shall monitor, advocate, promote, and administer NNVA efforts towards home improvement needs of qualified applicants. The NNVHIP is to provide and assist with the maintenance and repair of homes, consistent with applicable industry standards, for qualified applicants.
- C. POSTING OF POLICIES.** A copy of these policies shall be prominently posted in every local NNVA office and shall be provided to all veterans and the general public upon request.
- D. AMENDMENTS/WAIVERS.** Upon determination of good cause, the NNVA Housing Selection Committee, after consultation with the NNVA Executive Director, may waive any provisions of these policies, which will not impede Federal or Tribal statutory requirements. Requests for an amendment or waiver shall be in writing and clearly indicate the provision of the policies requesting to be waived and shall be supported by documentation of the pertinent facts and grounds. All requests must be submitted to the NNVA Central Administration office for resolution.

SECTION II.
DEFINITIONS

- A. ABUSE.** The home deemed to have damage inflicted intentionally, or found to have damages caused by illegal activities.
- B. BUSINESS DAYS.** Working days from Monday through Friday, 8 am to 5 pm.
- C. CALENDAR DAYS.** Calendar days are any day of the week including weekends.
- D. DISABLED VETERAN.** An individual who has served on active duty in the Armed Forces, was honorably discharged, and has a service-connected disability or a disability that was aggravated during active duty, or is receiving compensation, disability retirement benefits, or pension because of a service-connected disability.
- E. ELDERLY PERSON.** A person who is sixty-two (62) years of age and older.

- F. FAILURE TO MAINTAIN.** Failure by the occupant to clean, repair, or replace consumable parts as required for continued safe, healthy, and efficient operation of a home or appliance.
- G. FAMILY.** Shall mean: a. Legally married couple with or without children; b. Single or widowed parent with children; c. Single person with guardianship or custody of children or is in the process of securing legal custody of children under the age of 18 years verified by supporting documents.
- H. GRANTEE.** A Veteran who is selected to be a recipient for housing improvement assistance from the Navajo Nation Veterans Housing Program.
- I. HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD.** The Veteran is the main adult family member who is held responsible and accountable for the family.
- J. HOME.** A residential dwelling, permanently located due to custom on-site construction, modular, or mobile with access to power, water, and sewer based on the needs of the occupant.
- K. PROJECT SELECTION COMMITTEE.** The Project Selection Committee, or Selection Committee, will consist of the Program Supervisor and Housing Specialists administering the Veteran Housing Program, and the Housing Improvement Program.
- L. HOUSING SPECIALIST.** As defined by Navajo Nation Department of Personnel Management.
- M. MILITARY SERVICE OF THE UNITED STATES.** The armed forces of the U.S. Government consisting of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard. Such service does not include the Merchant Marines, Red Cross, IHS or any other organization not part of the United States Department of Defense.
- N. MOBILE HOME.** A residential unit able to be moved from one location to another, either by towing or self-propulsion.
- O. MODULAR HOME.** A residential unit consisting of parts of a completed home constructed in a location other than the permanent residential location.
- P. NAVAJO NATION VETERANS ADMINISTRATION LOCAL OFFICES.** The five (5) Agency offices of the NNVA are:
- Chinle
 - Eastern
 - Ft. Defiance
 - Shiprock
 - Western
- Q. NNVHP.** Navajo Nation Veterans Housing Program.
- R. NNVHIP.** Navajo Nation Veteran Housing Improvement Program.
- S. NAVAJO.** A person who is an enrolled member of the Navajo Nation and whose name appears on the Certificate of Indian Blood (CIB) or Navajo Nation ID card issued by the Navajo Nation.
- T. NEGLECT.** The state of fact of being uncared for as demonstrated by the occupants lack of effort to care for the home.

- U. NORMAL WEAR & TEAR.** The deterioration of material and equipment through the proper use over a predetermined time and expected life expectancy.
- V. SPOUSE.** The legal domestic partner of the Navajo Veteran.
- W. STICK-BUILT HOME.** A residential structure built on location, un-moveable.
- X. VETERAN.** A person who served in the active military, naval, or air service and who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable. This definition explains that any individual that completed a term of service not less than 180 days for any branch of the armed forces classifies as a veteran as long as they were not dishonorably discharged.
- Y. WIDOW or WIDOWER.** A surviving spouse who was legally and validly married to and lived with a Veteran continuously from the date of marriage to the date of the Veteran's death and is not remarried.

SECTION III.

SCREENING FACTORS

- A. Applicant Screening Listing and Ranking System.** In order to ensure that the NNVHIP services veterans needing assistance with home repairs and minor renovations, applicants will be processed in the order in which they are received. Waiting lists within each agency will be generated and made available to the veteran population to be informed on their status.

Qualification criteria are summarized below. When a veteran completes the application form, they will be asked a series of questions that determine their qualifications relative to the selection criteria. It is very important that veterans read and understand (demonstrate understanding of) the entire application before submitting their screening packet. The local agency office will be available to answer any questions the applicant may have.

Once on the waiting list a veteran may be called in to update their application periodically. Failure to update the application within the first quarter of the fiscal year may result in the Veteran being removed from the waiting list. During the update process the information on the application will be verified.

SECTION IV.

ADMISSION ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

A. **Application for Eligibility and Selection.** The NNVA shall accept applications for all eligible Navajo Veterans provided that:

1. **PREVIOUS HOUSING ASSISTANCE.** Applicants must not have obtained prior housing improvement assistance from the NNVHIP within the past 5 years.
2. **PRIMARY RESIDENCE.** Applicants shall affirm that work to be performed is on their primary residence, i.e. shall not be considered a seasonal or secondary home.
3. **Sweat Equity.** The applicant shall participate in the improvement or renovation of their home to gain a sense of pride in homeownership. Participation may vary based on the applicant's ability to perform various tasks. Hours must be logged by either the applicant, a family member(s), or the local Chapter Veterans Organization. The number of hours shall be determined by the NNVA Executive Director and/or the Selection Committee. Failure to log the appropriate hours prior to the completion of the contracted work will result in the applicant being denied future assistance from the program.
4. **Vandalism.** The applicant shall not be held responsible for third party vandalism to the applicants home. Any and all damages shall be covered by this program. The applicant, prior to approval for repairs, shall obtain and provide a copy of a police report.
5. Normal wear and tear is covered under this program as needed and in accordance with these guidelines. Items identified under "failure to maintain" will only be replaced once, and the occupant will sign acknowledgement that they have received training/education on how to perform user-level maintenance.
6. Homes falling under the category of burn-out will be covered under this program. It will be at the discretion of the NNVA if the home will be repaired or replaced, and will be subject to the availability of funds within the program. If the home is replaced, it will also be at the discretion of the NNVA if the burn-out will be removed.

B. The NNVA Executive Director, alone, shall not make decisions regarding screening, and selection within the Navajo Nation Veterans Housing Improvement Program without first consulting the Selection Committee.

SECTION V.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES

- A. NNVA NNVHIP applications will be received and maintained by each local NNVA office through the respective agency Housing Specialist. The Housing Specialists will meet with individual veterans to discuss the family's housing situation and housing improvement assistance request. Housing improvement assistance will be explained to the veteran and the required procedures for acquiring assistance. Other available housing assistance programs will also be explained to each applicant and appropriate referrals will be made.
- B. NNVHIP eligibility determinations shall be made using the Eligibility Criteria sheet. The eligibility criteria are structured to assist applicants on a first come, first served basis. The Housing Specialists shall review and complete the Eligibility Criteria sheet ensuring that the forms are completely filled out. The Eligibility Criteria sheet will be added to the veterans permanent file that is maintained at the agency office.
- C. **VERIFICATION OF INFORMATION**
 1. Verification. All housing improvement needs and information provided by the applicant as part of the application process shall be verified by the NNVA.
 - a. An on-site visit will be made by the Program Supervisor, Senior Housing Specialist or Housing Specialist.
 - b. During the on-site visit, documentation supporting family structure and composition will be verified in person.
 - c. The NNVA will require successful submission of all required documentation prior to placing a Veteran on the waiting list.
- D. **CERTIFICATION OF APPLICATIONS.** Completed applications shall be certified by the Housing Program Supervisor. A letter will be mailed to the applicant notifying them if they have met the official requirements for completion of the application. This is not an approval of the application, simply an acknowledgement that the Veteran has submitted all required documentation and the application is being processed.

SECTION VI.

SELECTION OF NAVAJO VETERAN HOUSING IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM APPLICANTS

- A. **SELECTION OF NAVAJO VETERAN FOR HOUSING IMPROVEMENT**

The Selection Committee shall select potential grantees for the NNVHIP projects, to be added to the waiting list, according to the Eligibility Criteria sheet. The list shall be updated by the NNVA monthly.
- B. **NOTIFICATION TO ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS**

1. Once an applicant has been interviewed and completed submitting their documents, their application packet will be evaluated. Those applicants who are found to be eligible will be notified in writing within fifteen (15) days of the determination. The eligible applicant will then be placed on the waiting list.
2. If the applicant does not have a homesite lease, or equivalent, they will not be placed on the waiting list.
3. The NNVA shall establish individual folders on applicants placed on the waiting list. The NNVA shall maintain and secure all records of eligible applicants at the NNVA Agency Offices.

C. NOTIFICATION OF INELIGIBILITY & APPEAL PROCESS

1. Each applicant determined to be ineligible will be promptly notified in writing by the NNVA. The notice shall state the reason(s) for the applicant's ineligibility and will explain his/her right to request a meeting with the NNVA within thirty (30) days from the date of receipt of the notice. The applicant shall be given an opportunity at the meeting to appeal by:
 - a. Responding to the NNVA's reasons for determining his/her ineligibility, and;
 - b. Providing any other evidence of his/her eligibility, including any evidence that may overcome any discrepancies in his/her application.
2. Upon review of all information presented at the meeting, the NNVA shall make a determination on whether or not the applicant is now eligible.
3. The NNVA shall inform the applicant of his/her determination within five (5) days of the meeting.
4. The decision shall be final.
 - a. Applicants declared ineligible will have their information kept in the NNVA's inactive files for one (1) year from the date of initial application.
 - b. After the one year, the applicant may reapply.

D. VETERANS WAITING LIST. The NNVA shall maintain a waiting list of applicants that have been determined to be eligible for assistance from the NNVHIP. Eligible applicants will be placed on the respective waiting list according to time and date of the initial application so long as such application is updated as required by the applicant based on the date of the initial application.

1. Applicants on the waiting list shall have at least the following information on file:
 - Name and address of applicant(s) and household members
 - Census Numbers of all household members (if applicable)
 - Family composition
 - Completed Homesite Lease (or equivalent)
 - DD-214 with Honorable Discharge (case by case for other discharge types other than Dishonorable.)

2. Each applicant on file will be notified in writing to update their application annually, by the end of the first quarter of the fiscal year. At that time the NNVA will reaffirm the applicant's eligibility and need for housing improvement.
 3. Applicants who fail to update their application either by mail or in person will lose their place on the waiting list and their file will automatically become inactive after 6 months. Upon re-application, they shall be considered new applicants.
 4. Any applicant on the waiting list who wishes to be removed from the Veterans waiting list shall submit a notice in writing to the NNVA.
- E. **NOTIFICATION OF SELECTED APPLICANTS.** The NNVA shall notify each applicant selected for Veteran Housing Improvement which shall include the following:
1. The applicant has been selected for Veteran Housing Improvement.
 2. A complete description of the improvements to be made.
 3. The location of the home.
 4. The NNVA shall require the applicant to participate in all home maintenance orientation and education activities.

SECTION VII.

NAVAJO NATION VETERAN HOUSING IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM PRE-CONFERENCE AGREEMENT (NNVHIPPCA)

- A. The Agreement (hereinafter referred to as NNVHIPPCA) is an agreement prior to the beginning of the improvements, which will encompass the rights and responsibilities of the NNVA and the grantee.
1. The grantee will sign the respective NNVHIPPCA for the family. The Program Supervisor or the Housing Specialist will sign on behalf of the NNVA.
 2. The NNVHIPPCA shall be executed in duplicate originals. The grantee shall receive one original document and the other shall be retained in the Veteran's file.

SECTION VIII.

FINAL ACCEPTANCE

Upon completion of the improvements, the work will be verified jointly by the applicant, and the Housing Specialist, ensuring the work performs met the terms of the approved application, and that the Contractor left the project clean and in a safe condition. The

Housing Program Supervisor, Housing Specialist and Contractor of Record will conduct a 90-day follow-up and correct any deficiencies.

AMENDMENTS

This policy may be amended periodically with approval by the President of the Navajo Nation or designated authority within the Office of the President and Vice President of the Navajo Nation.

CERTIFICATION

Recommended and approved by the Navajo Veterans Advisory Council on January 5, 2021 in Resolution No. 3-21 and pursuant to Navajo Resolution No. 3-21 I accept and certify the recommended policy.

BY: 
Navajo Nation President

DATE: 01.27.2024