

FUNDING NCA CEMETERY DEDICATIONS AND GROUNDBREAKING EVENTS

1. PURPOSE: The policies and responsibilities outlined in this notice provide formal guidance for National Cemetery Administration (NCA) employees on matters related to funding NCA dedications and/or groundbreaking events for new cemeteries and expansion sites.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

a. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Financial Policies and Procedures Volume II, Chapter 4 (December 2010), discusses expenses associated with traditional ceremonies such as groundbreakings and dedications. Based on that guidance, the Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs has determined that the maximum amount to be spent on a dedication or groundbreaking event where there is no supporting infrastructure (e.g., no roads, parking, potable water) is \$35,000. At all events, costs will be limited to those reasonable and necessary to support activities that demonstrate NCA commitment to establishing and maintaining cemeteries as national shrines and ensure the safety of attendees.

b. The event will be funded from the same appropriation that is used to construct the project (i.e., the major or minor construction appropriation). Other appropriations or funds, such as the Operations and Maintenance appropriation or the National Cemetery Gift Fund, cannot be used to supplement the funds from the construction appropriation.

c. NCA, Communications and Outreach Support Division, is responsible for planning dedications and groundbreaking events, preparing a budget plan specifying all estimated costs, monitoring the running total of all expenditures, and ensuring that VA/NCA documentation, reporting, and approval procedures are properly followed. Communications and Outreach Support Division staff will ensure all planned activities and expenses funded by NCA are directly related to the dedication or groundbreaking event.

(1) The following categories of expenditures are allowable:

- printing of programs and invitations;
- ceremonial hard hats and shovel(s);
- a plaque documenting the event;
- transportation and security;
- rental of platforms, carpets, tents, flooring, chairs, portable restrooms/wash stations;
- heating equipment;
- floral arrangements; and
- public address systems.

(2) The use of appropriated funds is prohibited for:

- entertainment (including associated expenses such as transportation for a band);
- food (including table linens and tableware); or
- purchase of mementos or gifts for event participants and attendees.

3. ACTION: Funding for dedications and/or groundbreaking events will not exceed \$35,000 per event. All budget plans will be approved by NCA, Office of Finance and Planning - Budget Service and Office of Management - Design and Construction Service. All funding requests will be submitted for approval from the Deputy Under Secretary for Finance and Planning to the Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs (USMA) for approval of the expenditure of funds to support event activities necessary for properly executing an authorized purpose of NCA/VA.

4. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE: NCA, Office of Finance and Planning - Budget Service, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20420, is responsible for the contents of this notice.

5. EXPIRATION: The information contained in this notice will remain in effect until updated or incorporated into official directive or handbook.

/s/
Ronald E. Walters
Deputy Under Secretary for Finance
and Planning

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