

## **\$30 Million to New Partnership that Improves Access to Jobs and Community Services for America's Veterans**

*Proposals due Sep. 16*

WASHINGTON – U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood has announced the availability of \$30 million for a new Veterans Transportation and Community Living Initiative which will soon make it easier for servicemen and women, their families, veterans and people with disabilities to access transportation services in their communities. The deadline for proposals is Sep. 16.

The Veterans Transportation and Community Living Initiative will award competitive capital assistance grants from to local transportation providers and other groups around the country so they may better coordinate and deliver important information through “one-call” or “one click” centers.

This approach means that with just one phone call, or through a familiar website, military families can readily learn, for instance, about the availability of commuter van services that travel to employment centers, vehicles equipped with wheelchair lifts that can provide rides to a local rehab center or buses that stop by the local mall. Typically, such information is not available in one convenient place. Better coordination will also help transit operate more cost-effectively by eliminating redundant service and outreach.

The initiative is being launched under the auspices of the federal Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility (CCAM), which is chaired by Secretary LaHood. CCAM is a permanent partnership of federal departments working together to better coordinate federal programs on behalf of people with disabilities, the elderly and low-income individuals.

In addition to the Department of Transportation, which is contributing \$30 million from the Federal Transit Administration's Bus and Bus Facilities Program, two other CCAM member agencies are contributing money and support. The Department of Veterans Affairs' Transportation and Community Living Initiative is contributing up to \$3 million for the VA health care network to coordinate veterans' transportation needs with community transportation systems. The Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy is contributing \$250,000 for social media tools and training to include veterans and the military in community transportation decision-making. The Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Defense are also lending critical support, in part through their extensive networks of community-based advocates. Additional in-kind support is provided by over a dozen national veteran service organizations.

For more information about this new initiative and to see the Notice of Funding Availability, [click here](#).

## **Department of Veterans Affairs DRAFT RFP for BURR Initiative**

*Comments accepted until Aug. 25*

The Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of Asset Enterprise Management (OAEM) has released the DRAFT Enhanced-Use Lease (EUL) Request for Proposals (RFP) template to carry out the

implementation of the Building Utilization Review and Repurposing (BURR) initiative through public-private partnerships. The BURR initiative is a VA strategic effort to identify and repurpose unused and underutilized VA land and buildings nationwide in support of VA's goal to end veteran homelessness. This notice represents an opportunity for interested parties to participate in the development of the EUL solicitation vehicle before its finalized release.

OAEM strongly encourages interested parties to review the draft document and submit their comments to: [VA\\_BURR@va.gov](mailto:VA_BURR@va.gov). Phone calls will not be accepted.

Interested parties may submit comments, questions, or recommendations concerning any element or aspect of the draft RFP (Technical, Administrative, Contract, Legal, etc) until 9 a.m. EST on Aug. 25.

Interested parties should bear in mind that the draft RFP is a working copy, which does not represent an active solicitation. OAEM is not seeking proposals at this time, but rather contributions from industry to further improve and refine the vehicle and ultimately lease performance. OAEM anticipates release of a finalized RFP in the first week in September 2011 with awards to be made in December of 2011.

To learn more about VA's Building Utilization Review and Repurposing (BURR) initiative and Enhanced Use Lease process, [click here](#).

## **DOL Women's Bureau Hosts Stand Downs**

*Aug. 27 in San Antonio, Sep. 10 in Tampa*

The Department of Labor (DOL)'s Women's Bureau is holding two Stand Downs specifically for women veterans. These events will be held Aug. 27 in San Antonio, Texas, and Sep. 10 in Tampa, Florida. These events are designed as one-stop shops for women veterans, bringing together government agencies and community-based organizations to provide free information and resources, including training and employment services.

For more information about the San Antonio Stand Down for women veterans, [click here](#). For more information about the Tampa Stand Down for women veterans, [click here](#).

For a full listing of 2011 Stand Down events, as well more information on the program, visit NCHV's Stand Down page [here](#).

## **Free Training from the National Health Care for the Homeless Council**

*Sep. 19-20 in Southfield, MI*

The National Health Care for the Homeless Council, Genesee County Community Mental Health and Vanderbilt School of Medicine will hold a free regional training featuring Health Care for the Homeless experts from around the country from Sep. 19-20 at the Westin Hotel in Southfield, Michigan.

This training is tailored for clinicians, administrators, students and advocates of homeless health care services and will feature ACCME-accredited courses. Registration is limited. For more information and to register, [click here](#).

## VA Reaches Out to Veterans to Explain GI Bill Changes

*Changes effective Aug. 1*

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is reaching out to inform veterans of recent changes made by Congress to the Post-9/11 GI Bill that take effect in 2011.

General Allison Hickey, Under Secretary for Benefits, said: “The Post-9/11 GI Bill is incredibly important because it reduces the financial burdens of higher education so that veterans have an opportunity to achieve their education goals. VA believes it is important for veterans to be aware of changes to the GI Bill this year and learn more about how these changes may affect them.”

Changes to the Post-9/11 GI Bill – effective Aug. 1, 2011 – include paying the actual net cost of all public in-state tuition and fees, rather than basing payments upon the highest in-state tuition and fee rates for every state; capping private and foreign tuition at \$17,500 per academic year; and ending payments during certain school breaks, to preserve veterans’ entitlement for future academic semesters. Also, certain students attending private schools in select states can now continue to receive benefits at the same rate payable during the previous academic year.

Beginning Oct. 1, 2011, eligible individuals will be able to use the Post-9/11 GI Bill for programs such as non-college degrees, on-the-job training, and correspondence courses. They will also be eligible to receive a portion of the national monthly housing allowance rate when enrolled only in distance learning courses.

VA has already begun processing fall 2011 enrollment certifications. Outreach by VA has helped to increase participation by colleges and universities in the Yellow Ribbon program, which helps students avoid out-of-pocket costs that may exceed the benefit. Today, more than 2,600 schools are participating in the Yellow Ribbon program.

Complete information on the Post-9/11 GI Bill is available at [www.gibill.va.gov](http://www.gibill.va.gov). VA’s education information phone number is 1-888-GIBILL-1. For ongoing benefit information, veterans and service members can log into the VA eBenefits website at [www.eBenefits.va.gov](http://www.eBenefits.va.gov). To ask a question in a secure e-mail, [click here](#).

## Funding Opportunities

**Bank of America** provides grants to nonprofit organizations in communities it serves. Its local grant making activities vary depending on each community’s needs. Local market presidents and their teams develop relationships with community leaders to determine the best use of philanthropic dollars in each community. There are no deadlines to apply for local grants. To complete an eligibility quiz, [click here](#).

**Caesars Foundation** supports civic organizations, charitable organizations and faith-based groups that help address vital, unmet needs in cities and towns where Caesars employees live and work (AZ, CA, IL, IN, IA, LA, MS, MO, NV, NJ, NC and PA). The Foundation’s focus includes: health and wellness organizations, social-services providers, youth groups, programs for persons with disabilities, and scholarships that enable access to higher education. Whatever the need, the Foundation seeks out the right partners to help make meaningful, long-term impacts. Check with your local Caesars

Entertainment property or properties to learn more about their civic focus. For more information, [click here](#).

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**National Coalition for Homeless Veterans**

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**Mission:** The National Coalition for Homeless Veterans will end homelessness among veterans by shaping public policy, promoting collaboration, and building the capacity of service providers.

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