

**FUNDING LIMITATION FOR NCA CEMETERY DEDICATIONS AND
GROUNDBREAKING EVENTS**

- 1. REASON FOR ISSUE:** This directive establishes National Cemetery Administration (NCA) funding limit for NCA dedications and/or groundbreaking events for new cemeteries and expansion sites.
- 2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS:** This new directive replaces outdated policy, establishes a new funding limit and reorganizes responsibilities for NCA dedication and groundbreaking events. A previous notice regarding the funding limitation for NCA cemetery dedications and groundbreaking events was issued to remind NCA staff of policy and procedures that apply when funding cemetery dedication and groundbreaking events and established \$35,000 as the maximum amount for such events. This directive now establishes mandatory NCA policy applicable to all NCA facilities and employees when funding cemetery dedications and groundbreaking events and increases the maximum amount to \$40,000.
- 3. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE:** National Cemetery Administration, Office of Finance and Planning, 810 Vermont Ave, NW, Washington, DC 20420, is responsible for the contents of this directive. For all inquiries, contact NCA Budget Service at VANCAWAS_42B2@va.gov.
- 4. RELATED PUBLICATIONS:** The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Financial Policies and Procedures Volume II, Chapter 4 (August 2017).
- 5. RESCISSION:** This directive will rescind NCA Notice 2013-04, Funding NCA Cemetery Dedications and Groundbreaking Events, (May 10, 2013).
- 6. RECERTIFICATION:** This document is scheduled for recertification on February 28, 2025.

/s/ Ronald E. Walters
Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs

Distribution: Electronic

**FUNDING LIMITATION FOR NCA CEMETERY DEDICATIONS AND
GROUNDBREAKING EVENTS**

1. PURPOSE/AUTHORITY:

a. This directive establishes National Cemetery Administration (NCA) funding limits for cemetery dedications and groundbreaking events. At all cemetery dedications and groundbreaking events, NCA limits costs to those reasonable and necessary to support activities that demonstrate NCA's commitment to establishing and maintaining cemeteries as national shrines and ensuring the safety of attendees.

b. This directive only addresses NCA funding policies for cemetery dedications and groundbreaking events. Information about NCA's execution of approved and funded cemetery dedications and groundbreaking events will be addressed in a separate document.

2. BACKGROUND:

a. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Financial Policies and Procedures Volume II, Chapter 4 (August 2017), discusses expenses associated with traditional ceremonies such as dedications and groundbreakings. Based on financial policy, NCA Notice 2013-04, Funding NCA Cemetery Dedications and Groundbreaking Events, (May 10, 2013) established 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) of \$35,000.

b. NCA cemetery dedications and groundbreaking events are often at locations where there is no supporting infrastructure (e.g., no roads, parking, or potable water).

3. POLICY:

a. For NCA ceremonies at locations with supporting infrastructure but without the basic requirements (e.g., need for tents, sufficient parking) for holding a cemetery dedication or ground-breaking event, the maximum amount that may be allocated for costs and expenses related to the event is \$40,000.

b. At all cemetery dedications and groundbreaking events, costs will be limited to those reasonable and necessary to support ceremonial activities and to also ensure the safety of event attendees.

c. The cemetery dedication or ground-breaking 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 cannot be used to supplement the funds from the construction appropriation. Use of other non-appropriated funds or donated goods or services will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

d. The following categories of expenditures are allowable but are not limited to:

(1) Printing of programs and invitations;

- (2) Plaque documenting the event;
- (3) Transportation and security;
- (4) Rental of platforms, carpets, tents, flooring, chairs, portable restrooms/wash stations;
- (5) Heating equipment;
- (6) Floral arrangements;
- (7) Ceremonial hard hats and shovel(s); and
- (8) Public address systems.

e. The use of appropriated funds is prohibited for items such as:

- (1) Entertainment (including associated expenses such as transportation for a band);
- (2) Food (including tableware); or
- (3) Purchase of mementos or gifts for event participants and attendees.

f. All other items not identified should be addressed with the Office of Engagement and Memorialization to make an initial determination whether an expense is allowable or otherwise prohibited and when uncertainty exists the determination is made after consultation with NCA Budget Service.

(1) Any expenditure for an item that will have a future use beyond the approved dedication or groundbreaking event, i.e., safety cones, vests and trash cans will not count toward the event funding limit.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES:

a. **Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs** is responsible for:

- (1) Approving NCA dedication and groundbreaking event plans that cost more than \$10,000 in advance of the event.
- (2) Requesting Secretarial approval for dedications and groundbreaking events that cost more than \$40,000.

b. **Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs** is responsible for:

- (1) Ensuring that event plans, budgets, and approval documents are coordinated and completed prior to the Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs approval determination.
- (2) Approving dedications and groundbreaking event plans that costs less than \$10,000.

c. **Deputy Under Secretary for Management** is responsible for:

(1) Coordinating with VA's Office of Construction and Facilities Management (CFM) on the transfer of major construction funds to the appropriate NCA cemetery office that is coordinating the cemetery dedication or groundbreaking event.

(2) Coordinating with CFM to monitor and approve the expenditures of major construction funds to support event activities necessary for properly executing an authorized NCA event.

d. **Deputy Under Secretary for Finance and Planning** is responsible for:

(1) Performing final financial review and approving budget plans to ensure all planned activities and expenses funded by NCA are allowable per appropriation language.

(2) Allocating minor construction funds to the appropriate NCA cemetery office for expenses related to the dedication or groundbreaking event.

(3) Monitoring and approving the expenditure of minor construction funds to support event activities necessary for properly executing an authorized NCA event.

e. **Director, Office of Engagement and Memorial Innovations** is responsible for:

(1) Assigning a dedicated project manager to plan, organize, and coordinate budget plan and execution of expenditures for cemetery dedication and groundbreaking events.

(2) Submitting budget plans for cemetery dedications and groundbreaking events to the Deputy Under Secretary for Finance and Planning for approval.

(3) Making initial determinations regarding whether an expenditure for a groundbreaking event or dedication is allowable or should be prohibited, and when necessary, consulting with NCA Budget Service for clarification.

(4) Coordinating with the appropriate officials from Cemetery Operations on event planning and execution.

(5) Reporting on completed events to NCA stakeholders to include an accounting of expenditures.

5. REFERENCE: Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Financial Policies and Procedures Volume II, Chapter 4 (August 2017).