

CONTENTS

CHAPTER 11. OUTREACH

PARAGRAPH	PAGE
11.01 Statutory Requirements.....	11-2
11.02 Required Activities.....	11-2
11.03 Establishing Outreach Goals.....	11-2
11.04 Outreach Coordination.....	11-2

11.01 STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Title 38 U.S. Code § 3762 requires that VA shall conduct an outreach program to inform and educate Native American Veterans of the availability of direct housing loans for Native American Veterans who live on trust lands.

11.02 REQUIRED ACTIVITIES

The law requires that VA personnel:

a. Attend conferences and conventions in order to work with the following organizations to provide information and training to tribal organizations and Native American Veterans regarding the availability of housing benefits and in assisting such organizations and Veterans with respect to such housing benefits:

1. The National Congress of American Indians,
2. The National American Indian Housing Council, and
3. The Department of Hawaiian Homelands.

b. Produce and disseminate information to tribal governments, tribal Veterans Service Organizations, and tribal organizations regarding the availability of such benefits.

1. Assist tribal organizations and Native American Veterans with respect to such benefits.
2. Outstation loan guarantee specialists in tribal facilities on a part-time basis, if requested by the tribal government.

11.03 OUTREACH GOALS

In order to meet the statutory requirements outlined above, VA Central Office has determined that each Regional Loan Center (RLC) with Federal Trust land within their jurisdiction is expected to achieve the following goals on an annual basis:

a. Must make contact with every federally recognized tribe in their jurisdiction, as well as related housing entities, at least once per year, and document content of discussion and contact information in the Contact Management System.

b. Must attend 3 outreach events each year, in person, choosing such events to maximize the exposure of the program.

11.04 OUTREACH COORDINATION

In order to reach their annual outreach goals, RLC staff should coordinate outreach efforts with partners within VA, with other Federal Agencies, and with Tribal Representatives.

a. Coordination within VA. There are a number of offices within VA which are charged with conducting outreach to tribal Veterans. These include the following:

1. The Office of Tribal Government Relations, within the Office of Intergovernmental Relations, has staff located across the country, with corresponding jurisdiction over tribal areas in the States listed below. This office's website is:

<http://www.va.gov/TRIBALGOVERNMENT/index.asp>.

2. Eastern Region. Eastern Region is responsible for outreach with Tribes in the following States: Alabama, Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland Massachusetts, Mississippi, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, Vermont, and West Virginia.

3. Central Region. Central Region is responsible for outreach with Tribes in the following States: Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

4. South Western Region. South Western Region is responsible for outreach with Tribes in the following States: Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas, and Utah)

5. Western Region. Western Region is responsible for outreach with Tribes in the following States: Alaska, California, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington.

6. VHA Office of Rural Health (<http://www.ruralhealth.va.gov/>)

7. VA Center for Minority Veterans (<http://www.va.gov/centerforminorityveterans/>)

b. Coordination with Other Federal Agencies. There are a number of Federal Agencies also charged with administering housing programs for Native Americans. Among these are the Department of Housing and Urban Development Office of Native American Programs, the Department of Agriculture Rural Housing Service, and the Department of the Interior Bureau of Indian Affairs. Regional Offices are encouraged to work with these agencies' field offices.

c. Coordination with Tribal Representatives.

1. Tribal Veterans Representatives (TVRs). The most direct method to conduct outreach is through the TVR program. This program requires permission from the individual tribe to allow the TVR an avenue to work with fellow Veterans. They receive training on VA benefits from The VA Learning University and Veterans Health Administration Employee Education Service, in conjunction with local VA staff and subject matter experts. Beyond that, they act as the liaison between various tribal entities and the VA staff. They are trusted by the tribe, the Veteran and the Veteran's family.

2. Tribal Housing Offices. These Offices are part of the tribal Government and are tasked with working with all tribal members in finding and placing them into affordable and quality living arrangements. They need to be experts in all sources of funding for tribal housing,

including grants. Often times, Veterans come to them and the TVRs for assistance. They might be especially useful in assisting VA negotiate the required Memorandums of Understanding.