



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
NATIONAL CEMETERY ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON DC 20420

JUL 25 2016

Mr. David Gerard, Chief
California Department of Veterans Affairs
Facilities & Business Services Division
1227 O Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Mr. Gerard:

This is a letter of viability for the proposed State Veterans Cemetery project located in Irvine, California. I am pleased to inform you this project meets the initial requirements for funding consideration under Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Veterans Cemetery Grants Program. **However, the requested grant in the amount of \$38M is not an amount that is sustainable for our grant program. Your project will be annotated on the FY17 Priority List in the amount of \$10M. In doing our due diligence, this is the amount awarded to our large cemeteries taking into consideration geographical locations.** Further discussions will need to be conducted "as a way forward" to meet the needs of the Veterans and their eligible family members. The pre-application for Federal assistance for the purpose of establishing a cemetery in Irvine, California has been assigned Federal Application Identifier (FAI) Number CA-16-10. Please use this FAI number in all future correspondence regarding this project. Because of changes made by Public Law 105-368, up to 100 percent of allowable costs may be funded through this grant program.

Your project will be assigned a priority ranking in accordance with VA's Title 38 Code of Federal Regulations Part 39 and included in the FY 2017 Priority List of Pending Veterans Cemetery Construction Grant Pre-applications. The FY 2017 Priority List will be approved by VA's Secretary and be used as the basis for offering grant opportunities during Federal Fiscal Year 2017. Once assigned a priority ranking, your project will continue to compete each year with other projects until it is either funded or you formally request VA to withdraw the project.

While your initial pre-application is sufficient to determine the project's eligibility for funding consideration, several important items remain to be completed before the project may be awarded a grant. In order for VA to give the highest consideration to your pre-application, the state must pass legislation authorizing the project and providing the necessary architectural/engineering (A/E) funds to allow the project to be developed. One hundred percent of allowable A/E costs will be reimbursed to the state following grant award. This legislation and funding action will ensure that your pre-application receives the highest FY 2017 Priority List ranking.

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Mr. Gerard

Once a site has been selected, you must fully comply with all the Veterans Cemetery Grants Program requirements, especially the Environmental Assessment (EA) and compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act. If, as expected, the completed EA results in a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), you should inform the public of the FONSI by publishing a Notice of Availability (NOA) in a major local daily newspaper. The NOA should take the form of a legal notice and be published at least once a week for two weeks. A model NOA statement is enclosed. The cost of publishing the notice would be allowable under the terms of the grant. A copy of the FONSI documents should be kept on file at the nearest state office and/or public library so as to be available for public review. More information on the process can be acquired by using the following hyperlink to access Chapters 6 and 7 of VA's Office of Construction & Facilities Management - Environmental Compliance Manual:
http://www.va.gov/facmgt/standard/env_idx.as.

As soon as your office has contracted with an A/E firm to establish the cemetery in Irvine, California we would like to schedule a "pre-design conference." Representatives from my office may travel to Irvine, California to view the site and conduct the pre-design conference. In the conference, we would meet with representatives of your office, any other state offices involved in the design and construction of state facilities, and the A/E firm to ensure that all parties are oriented to VA's grant process and veteran cemetery design standards. As your office begins the design process, please use the information found on my website to assist you:
<http://www.cem.va.gov/grants/>.

We look forward to working with you on your proposed cemetery establishment, receiving the master plan update, subsequent drawings and specifications to be advertised or placed on the market for bidding. The proposed project may not be advertised or placed on the market for bids prior to our approval of the final plans and specifications. The grant can be awarded only after VA's favorable review of the final application and the bid tabulations. The amount of the grant award will be based on cost as determined by bids.

Please contact me at (202) 632-7369, if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,



George D. Eisenbach Jr., Director
Veterans Cemetery Grants Program

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

**[PROJECT TITLE]
[LOCATION]**

**NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs announces the preparation and availability of a document titled "Finding of No Significant Impact" (FONSI) for the proposed construction associated with the [state agency] [project title] at [location]. The FONSI has been prepared as a result of an Environmental Assessment accomplished in accordance with the regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Section 1508.13.

For further information and/or a copy of the FONSI or Environmental Assessment, please contact [title and address of appropriate state official].