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Agency Information Collection Activities; Proposals, Submissions, and Approvals: Application in Acquiring Specially Adapted Housing or Special Home Adaptation Grant [FR Doc No: 2026-08628; OMB Control No. 2900-0132]

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Comment from Brian Sawyer on VA-2026-VACO-0001-0167

Submitter Information

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General Comment

Subject: Support for Expanding Eligibility Criteria for SAH/SHA Grants to Better Address Service-Connected Mobility Impairments

Dear Department of Veterans Affairs, I am writing in response to the Agency Information Collection Activity notice regarding VA Form 26-4555 for Specially Adapted Housing (SAH) and Special Home Adaptation (SHA) grants. I strongly support the VA's ongoing efforts to administer these critical programs and appreciate the opportunity to provide public comment. The SAH and SHA grants are essential tools that enable severely disabled Veterans to live independently and with dignity in their homes. By funding necessary adaptations—such as ramps, widened doorways, accessible bathrooms, and modified kitchens—these grants directly reduce barriers, prevent secondary injuries, and lower long-term healthcare costs for the VA and taxpayers. I commend the VA for regularly updating grant amounts to reflect construction costs.

However, the current statutory and regulatory eligibility criteria are overly narrow and do not fully capture the range of service-connected disabilities that significantly impair mobility and safe home navigation. Qualifying conditions are largely limited to loss or loss of use of multiple limbs, specific blindness thresholds, certain severe burns, and limited post-9/11 single lower extremity cases. Many Veterans with other severe, service-connected mobility impairments—such as progressive neuromuscular conditions, complex spinal or hip disorders, or other functional mobility limitations (e.g., FSHD or similar conditions causing profound weakness, balance issues, fatigue, and reliance on assistive devices)—are currently excluded despite facing equivalent daily challenges.

In my own case, I have a service-connected condition (FHSD) that has greatly impacted my mobility. While I do not have anatomical loss of limbs or qualifying burns, the functional limitations—difficulty with ambulation, transfers, stair navigation, and performing activities of daily living—create the same critical need for home adaptations as those who currently qualify. Many fellow Veterans in similar situations must choose between unsafe living conditions, institutional care, or out-of-pocket expenses that deplete their resources. I respectfully request that the VA consider advocating for or supporting modest legislative or regulatory expansions to the eligibility criteria. This could include adding a functional mobility category, such as: Service-connected disabilities resulting in the loss of use of lower extremities or overall mobility equivalent to the existing standards (e.g., requiring wheelchair, crutches, or other assistive devices for safe locomotion, or severe limitations in balance, strength, or endurance due to neuromuscular, orthopedic, or neurological conditions).

Such an expansion would align the program more closely with the intent of promoting independence for all severely disabled Veterans, not just those with specific injury types. It would also reflect advances in medical understanding of functional impairment and disability. Any changes should maintain rigorous medical documentation requirements (e.g., physician statements on functional limitations, VA disability ratings, and evidence of need) to ensure fiscal responsibility and target those with the greatest need.

Thank you for considering this important update to better serve Veterans. Expanding access modestly would have a profound, positive impact on quality of life while remaining true to the program's mission. I am happy to provide additional details about my situation or connect with VA staff if helpful.

Sincerely,
Brian Sawyer
California