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September 30, 2022

The Honorable Karen Umberger, Chairman
Fiscal Committee of the General Court, and

His Excellency, Governor Christopher T. Sununu
And the Honorable Council
State House
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

REQUESTED ACTION

Pursuant to RSA 14:30-a, VI, authorize the New Hampshire Veterans Home to accept and expend \$1,120,000 of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) State Fiscal Recovery Funds (SFRF) to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the information technology infrastructure throughout the facility, effective upon approval by the Fiscal Committee and Governor and Executive Council through June 30, 2023. This is an allowable use of ARPA SFRF funds under Section 602(c)(1)(A), to respond to the public health emergency with respect to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) or its negative economic impacts. **100% Federal Funds.**

Funds will be assigned to the new accounting unit 05-43-43-430010-2XXX0000¹ New Hampshire Veterans Home, NH Veterans Home IT Infrastructure and Resident Safety Improvements, as follows:

Class/Object	Description	FY23 Requested Action
000-400338	Federal Funds	\$1,120,000
	Total Revenue	\$1,120,000
034-500152	Design/Study	\$70,000
034-500099	Major IT Systems	\$664,320
037-500173	Computer Hardware - New	\$50,000
040-500800	Indirect Costs	\$4,480

¹ All direct program costs will be accounted for using activity 00FRF602PH4301A and all administrative and indirect costs will be accounted for using activity 00FRF602PH4301Z. Accounting classifications may be subject to technical changes at the discretion of the Department of Administrative Services' Division of Accounting Services.

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041-500801	Audit Fund Set Aside	\$11,200
066-500545	IT Training & Development	\$20,000
103-502664	Contracts for Operational Services	\$300,000
	Program total:	\$1,120,000

EXPLANATION

The State has experienced unprecedented pressure on its existing workforce, seeing staff shortages across agencies and increased wage competition with the private sector, as the negative effects of the COVID-19 health crisis continue to unfold. This reality has forced State agencies to attempt to operate with a high number of vacancies and find other means to adapt in order to achieve core responsibilities and required outcomes or deliverables.

This has resulted in the development of the State Workforce Efficiency Enhancement Program (SWEEP), an initiative focused on one-time investments in technology, systems, or other tools that will make it easier for State agencies to perform required functions over the long term as they adjust their roles and needs to the realities brought on by the pandemic and move toward a more sustainable staffing model that helps avoid burnout and encourages retention. This request is part of the overarching SWEEP effort.

The NH Veterans Home (NHVH) is charged with providing the best quality of life for NH Veterans with dignity, honor, and respect. To execute this mission, staff, residents, as well as families must be able to communicate and collaborate both efficiently and effectively while mitigating risk to our residents. The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) will afford us an opportunity to further prepare the NHVH as we continue to endure the sustaining impacts of COVID-19 and learn to live in an era of persistent pandemic events.

The complicated and unpredictable nature of the COVID-19 pandemic continues to remain a threat. The NHVH has come in and out of outbreak status four times since 2020. It is critical that the NHVH update current operations, and better position our existing IT infrastructure to prepare for ongoing COVID-19 as well as future pandemics.

The NHVH is requesting ARPA SFRF funds to improve the effectiveness of NHVH's short staffed team, provide higher reliability WiFi throughout the facility, strategically placed e-message boards for real time staff communication, and hybrid virtual meeting capabilities in

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conference rooms. Additionally, a separate virtual resident wireless network would be implemented, and existing one expanded on the same technology, to provide access to family during isolation situations resulting in better care and family connectedness for our veterans. We are also requesting funds to sustain this effort for the remainder of the biennium through consultant services and staff training.

Funds are budgeted as follows:

Class 034 - Design, Study, and Purchase Major Information Technology Equipment – used for study and design of WLAN design and deployment for their Veteran's Home in Tilton, NH . The design and deployment will provide the blueprint for a successful wireless deployment for the facility. The wireless design and execution will be based on the latest 802.11a/b/g/n/ac standards using a Hybrid site-survey method and installation deployment.

Class 037 – Computer Hardware - Purchase of various display devices, communication enhancements, and meeting management infrastructure/peripherals,

Class 040 - Indirect Expenses - at a rate of 0.004%

Class 041 - Audit Fund Set Aside - at a rate of 1 %

Class 066 – IT Training & Development – Efforts to ensure staff obtain maximum and efficient use of this new technology and they understand how to appropriately utilize this new technology.

Class 103 Contracts for Operational Services – Funds vendor contracts to support and sustain these and other recent endeavors necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic until we can properly program for these costs in future years.

In the event that Federal Funds are no longer available, the NHVH will have to incrementally fund these items through additional programmatic needs in future operating budgets. The New Hampshire Veterans Home requests approval of this request.

Respectfully Submitted,


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