

# Amid Climate Emergency, Dept of VA Denying Vets Grants for Emergency Water Systems

*Constant Water LLC Fighting for Disabled Veterans in U.S. and Puerto Rico for Department of Veteran Affairs Grants*

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Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) hospital administrators are denying disabled veterans grants for battery powered, whole-house, emergency water systems under the Home Improvement and Structural Alterations (HISA) grant program.

Disabled veterans in Florida, Idaho, and Virginia in the U.S. and in Puerto Rico, have been denied for a variety of reasons, some of which conflict with the VA's own HISA Program Directive.

Working With the VA Hard for Those Who Served



Judson Walls is the CEO of Constant Water LLC

Judson Walls, Founder/CEO of Constant Water, LLC, a veteran and service-disabled veteran owned small business owner, is leading the fight. "It's just painful to see," said Walls. "Some veterans are being denied outright. They have paid dearly in service to this country and have earned these benefits, are being denied because the VA doesn't seem to even know what is in their own guidance documents. In other cases, veterans have called the VA and received no reply."

"We have tried, for now approaching two months, to contact the Rehabilitation and Prosthetics Service office at VA Headquarters to talk with the Program Manager or senior staff. No one is answering the phone or returning voicemails." Walls continued.

Constant Water is a battery powered, whole house emergency water system that provides clean potable water throughout the home during any water outage event. For many veterans, traditional approaches for emergency water such as filling tubs or carrying pans of water just aren't options—their disabilities prevent them from lifting heavy containers.

Carrying water for basic sanitation and hygiene needs also creates fall risks from wet floors, particularly for elderly veterans.

### HISA Grant Directive Specifically Addresses Bathrooms and Plumbing Improvements

Under VHA Directive 1173.14, the governing document for the HISA program, the program:

provides the beneficiary access to the home or to an essential lavatory and sanitation facility (Para 2.b.(2)) defines essential lavatory and sanitary facilities as one bathroom equipped with a toilet and a shower or bath, one kitchen, and one laundry facility (Para 3.e.)

defines access to essential lavatory and sanitary facility as having normal use of the standard components (Para 3.a.)

Additionally, Directive 1173.14 lists “examples of modifications that meet the scope of HISA include, but not limited to”:

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Battery-powered emergency water systems ensure disabled veterans have normal use of their bathrooms and kitchens during increasingly common “water out” events.”

*Judson Walls, CEO, Constant Water LLC*

7.(5) Updates to plumbing systems to support medical equipment and other essential lavatories or sanitation facilities.”

“They told me that every home should already have water, so the home did not qualify for an emergency system,” said Irving Miranda-Feleciano (CW3 U. S. Army (Ret)), a disabled veteran in Florida who applied through the VA hospital in Gainesville FL. “I pointed out to them that every home is also required to have electricity, but whole-house

generators for emergency power outages do qualify.”



Whole-house emergency water system help provide normal use of bathroom and kitchen facilities during water out conditions.

"The directive provides for emergency electrical power (whole-house generator) to support life sustaining equipment prescribed by the primary care provider yet won't provide for emergency water systems for the bathrooms and kitchens that the VA directive says are essential equipment." said Miranda continued.

This Gainesville, FL VA hospital is the same hospital that in May refused treatment for a veteran brought to the hospital emergency room. That veteran was sent away without treatment and died at another hospital in the area. "This is just wrong. I'm fighting for my benefits and for veterans across the country who need systems like this," said Miranda.

#### Water-Out Events Increasingly More Common Across the U.S. and Puerto Rico

More areas of the country are suffering climate and infrastructure related events that impact both public and private (wells) water supplies.

Battery-powered emergency water systems ensure disabled veterans have normal use of their bathrooms and kitchens during these increasingly common "water out" events.

"For almost two months now, we have left voicemails for the HISA Program Manager at Rehabilitation and Prosthetics Service Office but haven't received a return call. We're convinced the VA will see the light, the logic, and the value of "in-place" emergency water systems for veterans with disabilities." says CEO Walls. "This is a relatively new concept to the water systems industry and something the VA simply never considered. It shouldn't be a fight for disabled veterans to receive the benefits they earned and deserve."

Judson Walls

Constant Water, LLC

+1 540-347-3440

info@constantwater.com

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CW3 US Army (Ret) Irving Miranda-Feleciano is disabled and denied a grant VA HISA grant for an emergency water system

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