Department of Veterans Affairs
OFFICE OF RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT (ORD)

RELEASE DATE: January 3, 2024

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY ANNOUNCEMENT: LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT FOR VA EMPLOYEES AFFILIATED WITH AN ORD PROGRAM/SERVICE

Purpose. The VA Office of Research and Development (ORD) announces an opportunity for VA employees affiliated with ORD funded projects, as part of any ORD service or program, to apply for FY24 funds to participate in a leadership development course or program.

ORD is seeking to promote professional development opportunities and grow future leaders that reflect the diversity of the Veterans VA serves.

Funding Available. Applicants can request up to $8,000 to support participation in a leadership development course or program (excludes attendance to meetings and conferences). The professional development training must be organized by an accredited institution or federal agency and focus on leadership skill development (e.g., Graduate Health Administrative Training Program, Partnership for Public Service leadership development programs). **Funds must be expended by September 30, 2024. Training must be completed within a year of the award. Availability of funds is dependent on Congressional appropriation.**

Eligibility. This opportunity for professional development is open to all VA employees who are currently affiliated with an ORD program/service and are from populations that reflect the diversity of the Veterans VA serves. Individuals must meet all VA requirements, including VA appointment status to apply. Without compensation appointments do not qualify for funding.

These populations may include and are not limited to: *
> A. Individuals from racial and ethnic groups that have been shown by the National Science Foundation (NSF) to be underrepresented in health-related sciences on a national basis (see data at http://www.nsf.gov/statistics/showpub.cfm?TopID=2&SubID=27), and in particular data for doctoral degrees awarded to by field of degree, ethnicity, and race of recipients: 2008–18 at: https://ncsesdata.nsf.gov/sere/2018/html/sere18-dt-tab016.html As an example, the following racial and ethnic groups have been shown to be underrepresented in biomedical research: Blacks or African Americans, Hispanics or Latinos, American Indians or Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians, and other Pacific Islanders. In addition, it is recognized that underrepresentation can vary from setting to setting; individuals from racial or

ethnic groups that can be demonstrated convincingly to be underrepresented by the grantee institution should be encouraged to participate in this program.

B. Individuals with a disability, who are defined as those with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, as described in the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended. See NSF data at https://wayback.archive-it.org/5902/20160211080540/http://www.nsf.gov/statistics/wmpd/2013/pdf/tab7-5_updated_2014_10.pdf

C. U.S. Veterans, defined as a person who served in the active military, naval, or air service, and who was discharged or released therefrom under conditions other than dishonorable, are encouraged to apply.

D. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons.

E. Other groups that may be underrepresented in a specific VAMC or scientific Discipline.

*The criteria above are intended to increase the applicant pool but will not be used as a determinative factor in selecting participants for this initiative.

Eligible applicants include investigators and staff that are affiliated with an actively funded ORD service or program project/center and have a bachelor's degree. **Each VA medical Center may submit one application or two with strong justification, with preference given to investigator/staff who have not already completed a comprehensive leadership development curriculum.**

Application Process. All applications should be submitted by the PI's local VA research office as a single PDF document that includes the following sections. Applications should not exceed 4 pages, excluding cover page, budget documents, CV/Biosketch (5-page limit), and letter of support from the VA research office.

Applications should include the following:

- Cover page (1 page)
  - VA Medical Center
  - Name of the person to receive the training
  - Role in ORD-funded center/project for person receiving training
  - Name of Principal Investigator or Director of the VA ORD funded project/center
  - eRA number or project ID and title of the VA funded project/center
  - Point of contact (if different than the person to receive the training)

- Personal statement (1-2 pages)
  - Description of accomplishments and why the training is important for their career goals
  - Statement of short and long-term career goals (career development plan)

- Proposed training program (1-2 pages)
  - Training title and website for more information

- o Training location (if in-person or hybrid)
- o Goals of the training (must be focused on developing leadership skills with clear translational goals)
- o Identified gap in current knowledge that the training will address (i.e., how will the training contribute to the achievement of professional objectives)

- Itemized budget table and justification for the funds requested using the attached spreadsheet. Budget table and justification are not included within the page limit.

- CV or Biosketch (up to 5 pages) CV/Biosketch is not included within the page limit).

- Signed letter of support from the applicant's local VA research office (i.e., ACOS or their designee) to indicate that the person requesting the training will have protected time to complete the training.

Applications should use black 11-point (or larger) Arial font with at least 0.5-inch margins (top, bottom, left and right) for all pages. No information should appear in the margins. Applications should not exceed 4 pages, excluding cover page, budget documents, CV/Biosketch (5-page limit), and letter of support. **Submit only the materials listed above; additional items/appendices will not be accepted.** All applications must be self-contained (i.e., without the use of URLs/hyperlinks), within specified page limits. The use of URLs/hyperlinks is prohibited except in the Biosketch/CV. Any submission with URLs placed anywhere else except in the Biosketch/CV will be withdrawn from review.

Applications must be submitted to the mailbox VHACOORDDEIWG@va.gov with the subject line "Professional Development Training" by **April 3, 2024.** Please include **applicant name and station name** in the subject line.

Review and Funding Notification. Applications will be reviewed for responsiveness, feasibility, and potential impact, including:
- Does the proposed VA employee demonstrate commitment to the VA with clear potential to develop as a researcher as evidenced by training and research experience?
- Does the VA employee show evidence of productivity and excellent performance?
- Is it clear how the proposed training will enhance the performance/career of the VA employee and close identified gaps in knowledge?
- Are the training program and the goals of the proposed training program clearly described?

Applications will be administratively reviewed by ORD. If selected for funding, awardees will be required to submit a report or present information about the training and its impact at an ORD event. **Notifications will be sent out by email by May 30, 2024.**