



BRAVE Technology Transfer Funding FY24 Program Announcement

Part I - Overview Information Participating Organization(s): VA Technology Transfer Program (TTP) BRAVE Funding

Announcement Type: Supplemental funding to develop VA-owned technologies toward commercialization/partnering

Key Dates*

RFA Release/Posted Date: June 1, 2023

LOI Submission Deadline: June 21, 2023

Invitation to Apply: July 12, 2023

Application Deadline: August 7, 2023, 11:59pm local time

Review Process: August 10 – August 30, 2023

Award Decision Letter Date: September 5, 2023

Start Dates: October 1, 2023, or contingent upon release of funds by VA Finance

Submission Process: Applicants must submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) to be considered for application (see your Technology Transfer Specialist with questions - [Technology Transfer Program Contacts \(va.gov\)](#)). After invitation to provide a full application, applications must be submitted electronically through the VA's Sophia Knowledge Management System @ <https://va.wellspringsoftware.net/kms/auth/login/?r=1&from=%2F>

Part II – Funding Opportunity Description

1. Award Objectives

The VA TTP funds continued innovation of VA-owned technologies that require gap funding, go/no-go decisions, proof of concept, and commercially driven research that will better position the technology for partnering with companies for the benefit of the veteran and broader use in the United States.

Specifically, a BRAVE project should fall into one of the following categories:

- Minimum Viable Prototype production
- Prototype testing
- Clinical grade prototype production
- Chemical synthesis and testing
- *in vitro* proof of concept testing
- *ex vivo* proof of concept testing
- *in vivo* animal model testing
- Pharmacokinetic or pharmacodynamic testing
- Clinical pilot study
- Equipment and/or reagents to develop a prototype or to support one of the above categories
- Other commercially relevant aims



2. Mechanism of Support

This award Mechanism is an intramural funding mechanism to support investigator and TTP development of innovations developed at the VA. Applications will be electronically submitted through <https://va.wellspringsoftware.net/kms/auth/login/?r=1&from=%2F>.

3. Funds Available

Duration of Award: Awards should be completed in the Fiscal year in which the award begins and should be capped at \$100,000. Budget should be commensurate with the project goals.

Exceptions to the Budget Cap and/or Duration: Rare exceptions to the budget cap and/or maximum duration may be granted. The application submission must provide fully justified and compelling circumstances for a waiver.

Requested funds should not duplicate any other VA, Federal, State, or Private funding.

Part III – Eligibility Information

1. Eligible VA Institutions

Applications may be submitted from any VAMC with an active Federal-wide Assurance (FWA) of compliance with the U.S. Federal regulations for the protection of Human Subjects in research.

2. Eligible Individuals

The BRAVE Award Program is an intramural program to fund research conducted by VA-salaried investigators at VAMCs or VA-approved sites – including researchers or clinical staff that have or can obtain a research appointment prior to funding. The Technology Transfer Program may partner the investigator with another investigator if there is a need for additional skill sets to complete the project. This could include, but is not limited to, partnering with one of the VA's Technology Transfer Assistance Programs (TTAP) sites – discuss prototyping with your Technology Transfer Specialist.

Part IV – Application and Submission Information

1. Letter of Intent

A LOI is required for the BRAVE funding opportunity. Please reach out to your Technology Transfer Specialist before completing the LOI. [Technology Transfer Program Contacts \(va.gov\)](#)

2. Content and Form of Application Submission



The following sections will be included in your on-line application if invited to apply following the LOI submission:

(<https://va.wellspringsoftware.net/kms/auth/login/?r=1&from=%2F>):

a. Project Abstract

Please provide description of your project (need, solution, project cost) in 250 words or less. Indicate the date of consult with your TTS.

b. Intellectual Property

- 1) Title of the Invention Disclosure(s) and VA ID Number(s) (please consult with TTS if not known)
- 2) Is this IP subject to an existing license, option to license, or any other agreement (e.g., sponsored research agreement, SBIR, etc.)? If yes, please provide an explanation and details.

c. Background, Significance, Unmet Veteran Need and Solution: (Limit to approx. 350 words)

- 1) a summary understanding of the clinical problem to be solved and/or the quality-of-life issue to be addressed,
- 2) the standard of care and/or currently available solutions, and
- 3) the current state (level of development) of your technological solution. If you know the technology readiness level (TRL), please provide.
([https://ncai.nhlbi.nih.gov/ncai/resources/docs/Technology_Readiness_Guidelines%20\(May2016\).xlsx](https://ncai.nhlbi.nih.gov/ncai/resources/docs/Technology_Readiness_Guidelines%20(May2016).xlsx) or <https://tier7.us/biomedical-dod-trls-medical-devices/>)

d. Impact: (Limit to approx. 350 words)

Please provide a description of how the development, and subsequent commercialization of this technology could impact Veteran health and benefit the American public. Consider including the prevalence and/or incidence rates for the clinical problem and/or veteran's quality of life issues within the VA and the greater American population.

e. BRAVE Study Selection and Goals: (Limit to approx. 350 words)

TTP recommends focusing on a single, short-term, aim/objective/outcome and a technical approach aligned with the intent of the BRAVE funding program.

- 1) Please provide a technical description of the study or experiment set to be performed using BRAVE funds.
- 2) Explain why this study or experiment set was selected and how it may advance the technology along the commercialization journey. Studies or experiments that lead to a "pursue, pivot or pause" decisions are encouraged.
- 3) Include 2-3 potential licensees for this technology. Letters of interest from potential licensees should be written on company letterhead and may be attached to your application. Has this technology been reviewed by a company and input provided?



f. Risk: (Limit to approx. 200 words)

Describe the technical risk, decision points, and risk mitigation efforts in executing the technical plan and achieving the desired goals.

g. Proposed Budget Justification and Timeline:

- a. Attach an itemized budget including an explanation/justification for each line item.
- b. Attach a detailed project timeline, including milestones, planned reviews and estimated completion date.
- c. If the proposal requests funds in excess of 100K or with timelines exceeding 1 year, please provide a compelling narrative. For example, if a prototype cost is \$25,000, then that amount should be requested. Budget feasibility will be part of the review process.

***Certify that the above information is accurate and correct, and that the funding proposal does not overlap with any current or previously funded research.**

Part V – Review Criteria

Research Project Evaluation Criteria Reviewers will consider the following questions when reviewing applications.

- Is VA Lead on the Technology or an affiliate?
- Budget commensurate with need
- Likelihood that proposed project will improve overall value of the technology patent or licensing concerns
- Technology relation to the VA mission and Veteran population
- Value of technology overall (market value)
- Other: prior commercial interest, feasibility

Other Considerations

If any approvals, including but not limited to, IACUC, IRB, ISSO, COI, contracts, etc. are required to complete the BRAVE project, these must be obtained prior to funds being sent to the site. Investigators should start the appropriate process at the time of BRAVE application with a completion/approval date no later than December 29, 2023.

Part VI – Award Administration Information

1. Award Notices

Decision notices will be sent out via e-mail to the investigator by or on September 5, 2023.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Research Integrity: VA is committed to the highest standards for the ethical conduct of research. Maintaining these high ethical standards requires that VAMCs and investigators applying for (and receiving) BRAVE have appropriate procedures to prevent unethical research practices.



As a condition of accepting the award, the investigator and others associated with the research must:

- Subscribe to accepted standards of rational experimental research design
- **Accurately record data and provide reports to VA TTP at the end of the award and at other times upon request of the VA TTP**
- Conduct unbiased data reporting
- Respect the intellectual property of other investigators
- Adhere to established ethical codes and legal standards for protecting Human and Animal Subjects
- Properly manage research funds

Deliberate falsification or misrepresentation of research data will result in withdrawal of an application, possible suspension or termination of an award and, potentially, suspension of the investigator's eligibility to submit applications to VA-ORD.

Acknowledging VA Research Support: By accepting a BRAVE Award, the investigator agrees to properly acknowledge VA affiliation and support in all public reports and presentations (see VHA Directive 1200.19). Failure to acknowledge VA affiliation and support may result in termination of the award.

Intellectual Property Rights: By accepting a BRAVE award, the investigator agrees to comply with VA policies regarding intellectual property disclosure obligations and Federal Government ownership rights resulting from the proposed work (see VHA Directive 1200.18).

Part VII – TTP Contacts

All questions should be directed to the Technology Transfer Specialist that handles your state or region: https://www.research.va.gov/programs/tech_transfer/contacts.cfm

FAQs

- **What can the funding be used for?-** BRAVE funding monies can be used for the same purpose as all other VA research funds.
- **Can the funding be used for salary?-** BRAVE funds can be used to support salaries as long as the investigator is eligible to receive salary from the VA or is eligible to receive funds under an IPA.
- **Can this be used to pay for non-US citizens?** Salary support is only available for individuals who are VA employees or eligible for IPA.
- **Can the funding be used to purchase equipment or reagents?** – Yes. BRAVE funds can be used to purchase equipment and reagents as long as these are necessary for the proposed project.
- **Are progress reports required?-** Yes, progress reports are due 30 days from project end date
- **Do teams participating in VA-TEAMS get special consideration?-** This is not currently, part of the review criteria; however, former VA-TEAMS participants may be better able to formulate pre-commercial proposals.



TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER PROGRAM

- **Is there an appeal process** – there is no appeals process. However, where appropriate, we will instruct promising projects to reapply, or participate in VA TEAMS or the Spark, Seed, Spread programs.
- **Spark Seed Spread – can I do both?**- Yes; however, the BRAVE funding proposal must be addressing a unique pre-commercial problem.
- **How long do I have to spend BRAVE funds?** – BRAVE funding is one-year funding so must be spent within FY24.
- **What happens if I can't spend it all in FY24?**- If there's any doubt, let TTP and your ACOS know ASAP to ensure alternate project aims can be developed or the funding can be re-allocated.
- **Do I need to comply with standard regulatory and compliance reviews?** Yes, if your project requires compliance (R&D review, IRB, ISSO, IACUC, etc) approval must be obtained by Dec 29, 2023.
- **Can I make any changes to the project aims?**- Aims may be altered until the application deadline. If project aims need to be altered after funding is awarded, please consult with your TTS to determine if the new aims are still appropriate to the RFA.
- **Does the VA need to be the Lead Party?** -VA Lead technologies will be given priority, but Affiliate Lead technologies will still be considered.