



TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER  
PROGRAM

# **Transforming Strategy into Action**

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## **FY 22 Strategic Plan**

*Department of Veterans Affairs  
Veterans Health Administration  
Office of Research & Development*

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# Introduction

The VA Technology Transfer Program (VA TTP) is a program within the Office of Research and Development (ORD). ORD is headquartered in Washington, DC, but includes an estimated 5,000 VA investigators and 10,000 research staff located at over 100 VA Medical Centers nationwide, all of which are federal laboratories. Over sixty percent of VA Medical Centers have an embedded on-site research program that mirrors the VA hospitals' diversity in size, scope, and complexity.

VA TTP provides services for all VA employees nationwide. VA TTP is currently staffed with eighteen (18) full-time employees that includes one (1) Director, seven (7) regional Technology Transfer Specialists (TTSs), four (4) program specialists, and six (6) field TTSs located in Atlanta, Tampa, Cleveland, Palo Alto, New York City, and San Diego.

## Mission

VA TTP's mission is to facilitate the commercialization of VA inventions to benefit Veterans and the American public. VA TTP is a program within the Office of Research and Development (ORD).

VA TTP has three main areas of focus:

- The protection and commercialization of VA intellectual property (IP).
- Facilitating technology transfer and cooperative research and development activities between academic partners, local VAMCs, and industry.
- Educating VA employees about their rights and obligations regarding IP and technology transfer activities.

## Advantage

VA TTP receives over 700 invention disclosures a year. VA and its university affiliates execute over 40 licenses a year. In FY21, VA collected over \$3Mil in royalty income. More than 80 patents were issued, and over 250 patents were filed in FY21. VA TTP has grown exponentially over the years. VA TTP Invention Disclosures have increased more than 250% in the past ten years. Since 2014, royalty revenue has risen by \$2.8Mil. VA TTP is growing and reaching more VA investigators and researchers nationwide. Many VA's research investigators are dual appointed personnel (DAP) holding a joint appointment with an academic affiliate. As a result, VA and an academic affiliate jointly own many VA inventions, making technology transfer a collaborative effort between the two entities. With the increase in Invention Disclosures, royalty income, and the number of VA investigators and research staff, including our joint affiliates, VA TTP will handle more IP and facilitate commercialization to benefit Veterans and the American public.

# Strategy

Support from ORD and VA TTP leadership has championed VA TTP to expand and reach more investigators, researchers, and VA employees throughout the VA medical centers nationwide. With this expansion, VA TTP has a strategy to positively handle the growth and responsibility.

## Defined Process and SOPs

VA TTP will iterate and optimize their Standard Operating Procedures to ensure all new and current personnel are providing same level of service to each VAMC they serve. Utilizing the strengths and experience of all staff to review current processes, VA TTP will identify procedures needing further refining to ensure there are no gaps in service. VA TTP must create backup procedures and retrain all VA TTP staff on best practices.

VA TTP will create a working group in FY22 to review the current processes and develop and update SOPs. The group will consist of 1 Program Specialist, 2 Regional TTSs, and 2 Field TTSs. Expectations and best practices will be created on when and how to reach out to sites and connect regularly. The group will ensure that new hire resources are well defined and available to get the expanding staff onboarded and up to speed in a timely and organized manner. Retraining for all staff will occur in FY22 and FY23.

## Educating Sites

VA TTP will plan and implement education programs nationwide at all sites, including VA Medical Centers and University affiliates. TTSs will instruct appropriate personnel in the Invention Disclosure process. Site and affiliate staff will learn when to disclose inventions, who to disclose to, how to complete an Invention Certification, and the entire Invention Disclosure process. TTSs must reach out to all sites on a semi-regular basis and notify VAMC personnel of new and updated resources. Delivering education programs and providing sites with pertinent information will be easier to implement with the prevalence of Field TTSs on location and the projected increase of hiring more field staff.

With VA TTP's cloud-based knowledge management system, Sophia, VA TTP staff can utilize its functionality and customized features to enhance all VA TTP processes. Cloud-based features will internally strengthen Invention Disclosure processing for VA TTP and VA corporate enterprise. It will also expand to provide secure access to external Technology Transfer stakeholders, which will streamline the Invention Disclosure process utilizing cloud-based Invention Disclosure submissions, electronic workflows/approvals, detailed reporting, and data analytics.

The improvement of the recently updated VA Technology Transfer Program online training in the Talent Management System (TMS) will also help educate all VA staff. The VA TTP Overview eLearning is designed to educate staff about technology transfer policy and specific information about technology transfer at the VA, including who is required to report inventions and how to submit a whole Invention Disclosure package with fully completed forms. VA Researchers who are full-time and part-time VA employees, Without Compensation (WOC) employees, and Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) employees must complete this training annually. VA TTP must keep this eLearning current with all

updated processes, procedures, or pertinent technology transfer information to ensure the training will enhance all VA staff, not only those required to complete this training.

VA TTP website must remain up to date. VA TTP must monitor all documentation and links to pertinent technology transfer information to stay current. Improvement of handouts and educational materials will also enhance educating sites.

## **Internal Control of Other Processes**

VA TTP will seek to move the determination of rights (DOR) process from the Office of General Counsel to VA TTP internally. A VA TTP attorney on staff will be assigned to manage the process with OGC consultation. VA TTP ownership of the DOR process will reduce the overall burden of OGC and reduce the time to process IEs and issue a DOR.

VA TTP will also seek to disperse royalty payments. Currently, there is an 8-month backlog of payments being issued to inventors and research sites. Internal control of the royalty payment, which is dispersed per federal regulations and Veterans Health Administration Directive, will ensure timely royalty payments to all.

VA TTP BRAVE funding aims to help VA scientists obtain data to further develop VA-owned technologies by providing additional money to supplement existing VA research programs. VA TTP will pursue a funding line to issue BRAVE funding. The current process causes consistent delays and restrictions on which projects we can fund. Internal control of BRAVE funding better positions VA technologies for commercialization by providing essential data to make VA-owned technologies more attractive to potential licensees.

## **Commercializing VA Technologies**

VA TTP aims to make VAMC's aware of VA-owned technology and allow non-competitive purchases of products incorporating licensed VA technology. There should also be OGC guidelines agreed upon by OGC and VA TTP for streamlined ethics review dual appointed personnel and non-dual appointed personnel matters. VA TTP also seeks to reduce Conflict of Interest (COI) restrictions for translational research.

## **FY 22 Goals**

Over the last few years, VA TTP has built a strong foundation for effectively managing the technology transfer program across the VA enterprise. However, TTP is also building a larger, more effective team and actively preparing for the future in response to existing and new challenges. VA TTP has created FY 22 goals to translate the "Strategic Plan" into action. VA TTP's goals align with VA TTP staff's individual goals, objectives, and opportunities, seek and implement efficiencies, track/manage progress, and make more significant impacts across the board.

- Execute 12 exclusive licenses
- Eliminate all Cooperative Technology Administration Agreements (CTAAs) by replacing with Invention Management Agreements (IMAs) or terminating CTAAs
- Achieve \$4M in royalty payments
- Create Sophia accounts for all ACOSs and AOs
- Implement on-line submission of Invention Disclosures and Invention Certifications
- Obtain delegation of signature authority for TTP Director to sign Power of Attorney (POAs), Assignments, etc.
- Collect, evaluate, and utilize 100% of Annual Reports for all academic affiliates
- Field TTSs help drive new research and identify technology gaps via TechLink
- Engage with Office of Small & Disadvantaged Business Utilization to launch Veteran-owned businesses using VA technologies
- Streamline royalty distributions and ensure inventors are paid within 90 days
- Decrease the number of incomplete Invention Disclosures
- Improve management of Affiliate licenses for joint IP
- Establish at least one field TTS in each region
- Rescind 38 CFR 1.650 et. al. so DOR process will be handled by VA TTP
- Perform a review of all TTP templates (IMA, CRADAs, etc.) and update as needed led by TTS with help from new hires and field
- Engage with U.S. Government technology transfer efforts such as Lab-to-Market, etc.
- Complete listing of VA licensed technologies and publicize these technologies throughout the VA