

Department of Veterans Affairs
Office of Research and Development (ORD)
October 4, 2022

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY ANNOUNCEMENT:

FIELD-BASED PLANNING MEETINGS TO FOSTER COLLABORATIVE MULTI-DISCIPLINARY, MULTI-SITE STUDIES TO IMPROVE VETERAN HEALTH

Collaborative research projects and efforts that involve researchers from across different disciplines can make significant contributions toward improving the scientific body of knowledge, the care of Veterans, and to the health of the Veteran. In that light, ORD is accepting requests for funding of field-based planning meetings with the following requirements:

- The request must come from a VA investigator who is currently funded as a PI by an ORD Service (i.e. Biomedical Laboratory, Clinical Science, Health Services, or Rehabilitation Research and Development) in the subject matter area of the proposed meeting.
- The meetings must be focused on planning collaborative research involving VA investigators which will lead to solutions to the health issues of Veterans.
- The planning meetings must address an area of high importance for the health of Veterans with a clear translational pathway and should focus on health issues that are Veteran priority areas (traumatic brain injury, post-traumatic stress disorder, military-related exposures, suicide prevention, pain and addiction, war-related illness or injury, or as indicated by being the focus area of a Congressionally mandated center (GRECC, MIRECC, etc.) or of a center funded by one of the ORD services (HSRD COIN, RRD Center, etc.).
- Planning meetings that address Veteran health needs using new and innovative approaches (artificial intelligence, etc.) and/or which utilize existing VA data sets and/or biorepositories will be given priority.
- Outcomes of the meeting should include:
 - the development of a roadmap informed by VA clinical priorities laying out the path forward for the proposed research and its clinical translation. [Publication costs (up to \$3K) may be requested separately to support the publication of the meeting proceedings and/or roadmap.]
 - a final report summarizing the meeting accomplishments and conclusions (submitted to within 45 days of the meeting).
 - An application for funding (i.e. VA collaborative merits, VA merits, NIH program project, DOD collaborative funding). Groups of investigators planning multi-site applications may apply for planning awards of up to \$5K within the 12 months following the meeting.

The proposed meetings must be comprised of at least 50% VA investigators drawn from at least two different disciplines (biomedical, clinical, health services, rehabilitation), with non-VA investigators included for specific relevant expertise.

- No more than 50% of the proposed attendees may come from one VA medical center.
- The proposed meeting **must** include at least one participant from the relevant VA clinical program office or equivalent.
 - Planning meetings involving members of VA clinical programs and centers (GRECCs, MIRECCs, PADRECCs, ECoEs, HCoEs and MSCoEs) and ORD funded centers are encouraged.

While one or two-day face-to-face meetings will be considered, a series (4 to 8) of shorter (2 to 4 hour), virtual or hybrid meetings are preferred.

- Total meeting costs must be under \$10,000 for virtual meetings but may be up to \$20,000 for face-to-face meetings.
- Requestors are responsible for all planning and logistics including:
 - Identifying an appropriate virtual platform for the meeting and managing its use for the meeting.
 - finding any required meeting space.
 - managing any attendee travel locally.
 - completing local facility/VISN approval processes as applicable, and
 - completing any required formal VA Sponsored Internal Conference Package Approvals and after reporting (available through VA EES).
- The request must be submitted through the PI's local VA research office.
- Stations are discouraged from submitting multiple requests.

Each funded proposal will be assigned to the relevant Scientific Portfolio Managers who may participate in the meeting with any related costs being borne by ORD, not the meeting funding.

Interested parties must submit:

- a 1–2-page proposal including
 - Principal Investigator (must be a currently funded VA PI)
 - Point of contact (if other than the PI)
 - Designated meeting planner (who is specifically assigned to work on meeting planning and execution)
 - Meeting Title
 - Goals of meeting (must be focused on developing collaborative research with clear translational goals and an application for further support)
 - Identify the gap in current knowledge, the VA research portfolio or in VA care that the meeting product will address
 - Participant list
 - Virtual platform and estimated timing (location, if applicable) and
 - Proposed product of the meeting and timeline.
- an itemized budget for the funds requested using the attached spreadsheet.
 - No more than 10% of the award should be for support personnel.
- a justification for each item requested.

Proposals must be submitted to the mailbox vhablrd-csrd@va.gov with the subject line “ORD Planning Meeting proposal” **by October 31, 2022.**

When considering the request, keep in mind that all funds received:

- **must** be obligated in FY 2023 and
- **cannot** be carried over into FY 2024.

Field-based meeting funds may only be used for:

- Consultant services and IPAs and salaries of personnel supporting meeting activities.
- Meeting space rental and any associated AV expenses.
- Travel costs for meeting attendees.

Do **not include**:

- Requests that require hiring of personnel not yet identified.
- Requests that require use of funds in FY24.
- Travel expenses for any Central Office Staff who will attend the meeting. CO staff will make their own travel arrangements and CO staff travel is paid for directly by ORD.
- Funds for refreshments or for meals or for office supplies or peripherals.

Proposals will be reviewed administratively for responsiveness and feasibility.

Funding notifications will be sent out before December 1, 2022.

Funds will not be transferred to the station until Central Office receives notification of the meeting’s Conference Package approval.

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