How to Prepare a Budget for an IIR Grant Application and Strategies for Utilizing the $40k for CDA-2 Award Budgets

HSR&D Career Development Award Enhancements Initiative Cyberseminar Series (September 8, 2020)

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Poll Question #1

What is your primary role in VA?

❖ Student, trainee or fellow

❖ Project staff

❖ Career Development Awardee (CDA)

❖ Early career investigator

❖ Mid-career investigator

❖ Senior investigator

❖ Non-research (e.g., clinician, administrator, policymaker)

Poll Question #2

What best describes your grant writing experience?

❖ I have never written or assisted with a grant

❖ I have only written or assisted with a CDA grant or equivalent (e.g., K award)

❖ I have written or assisted with a few grants (e.g., 2-3)

❖ I have written or assisted with five or more grants

General Strategies

❖ Never cut back staff time at the end of the project because you think that you will be done with the analysis and will just be writing papers
   ❖ Things always take longer than anticipated

❖ Do not list TBN staff
   ❖ TBN staff are listed at the lowest grade/step
   ❖ Name someone from your center who is experienced in the role
      ❖ Looks better to name someone with prior experience
      ❖ Experienced person will be at a higher salary level, decreasing the chance of not having enough funds
      ❖ It's okay if a different staff person ends up filling the role

❖ Consult with senior colleagues/mentors to get their input on how much staff time you will need.

❖ Figure out how much staff time you will need using a worst-case scenario, and then double it.

Strategies for Utilizing the $40k for CDA-2 Award Budgets

❖ Share an RA with another PI
  ❖ Potential pitfalls:
    ❖ More senior PI may no longer be willing to share RA if they end up needing more of the RA's time than originally anticipated
    ❖ RA may "shop around" and end up going to the highest bidder and the CDA will no longer be able to afford the RA

❖ Buy a percentage of time for a programmer/qualitative analyst/statistician from another PI or from your Center, if applicable

❖ Some centers maintain a pool of RAs:
  ❖ Buy RA time from the center RA pool

❖Other suggestions or thoughts?

❖Questions?

IIR Budget Basics

❖ Check for new guidance documents and updates to existing documents prior to each application submission:
https://vaww.research.va.gov/funding/electronic-submission.cfm

❖ Carefully read the RFA and the budget section (section 3.7) of the VA-ORD Application Guide SF424 (R&R) and create budget accordingly
    ❖ RFA includes budget instructions unique to HSR&D
    ❖ SF424 includes instructions to complete the Budget Justification, Summary Budget Worksheet and SF424 (R&R) Budget Form

❖ Review the ORD "Revised Budget Submission Process: A Step-by-Step Guide" cyberseminar if you are unfamiliar with the budget format or need a refresher: https://vaww.research.va.gov/funding/ord-021116.cfm

❖ Draft budget early and take time to fine tune

❖ Total project budget may not exceed $1.2 million and project duration is limited to 4 years.

Budget Cap and Project Duration Exceptions

❖ Exceptions are rare and a waiver must be obtained

❖ A detailed justification and narrative for the additional time and/or budget amount requested must be submitted in the form of a waiver (instructions on pages 7-8 of the RFA)

❖ Waiver request must be submitted to vhacoscirev@va.gov

❖ If the waiver is granted, a copy of the waiver approval letter from HSR&D must be included in the "Letters of Support" section

❖ A waiver does not guarantee that a project will be funded at the requested level

HSR&D-Specific Budget Instructions

❖ Clerical support may not be included for study personnel

❖ Consultant services may be obtained by contract or through a letter of agreement
  ❖ Limit of $500 per consultation
  ❖ Limit of $2,500 per annum
  ❖ Physicians may not be paid as consultants

❖ Cost of living adjustments (COLA)
  ❖ Maximum of 2% per year for current VA salaried personnel for Years 2, 3 and 4 and may not exceed the total project budget cap
  ❖ **Not permitted for IPAs** or any other budget category

❖ Computers and IT expenditures should not be listed in the budget section

HSR&D-Specific Budget Instructions - IPAs

❖ Cost of living adjustments are NOT permitted

❖ Include salary and fringe benefit reimbursements in the annual total

❖ Do not include "overhead" costs

❖ May not be used for physicians or other clinical medical service providers

❖ May not be used for the PD/PI role

❖ A waiver must be requested and approved if:

  ❖ Studies at sites with an HSR&D COIN: the total cost for IPAs exceeds 30% of the core budget (excluding estimated costs for donated time)

  ❖ Studies at sites with no HSR&D COIN: the total cost for IPAs exceeds 40% of the core budget (excluding estimated costs for donated time)

Steps to Complete Budget

❖ Develop project budget

❖ Complete Budget Justification narrative

❖ Complete Summary Budget Worksheet (SBW)
  ❖ Excel table that presents a single page budget summary view "at a glance" and contains details not included on the SF424 R&R budget form

❖ Transfer required information from SBW to SF424 R&R Budget Form

❖ Combine SBW and Budget Justification into one PDF
  ❖ SBW must be the first page of the PDF
  ❖ Upload PDF to SF424 R&R budget form in Section L

Develop Project Budget

❖ Recommend using a Word or Excel document to list all expenses prior to creating the budget justification
  ❖ See sample Word document on next slide

❖ Make sure correct locality is used for salary costs
  ❖ Link to 2020 General Schedule (GS) Locality Pay Tables: https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/2020/general-schedule/

Summary Budget Table

							Expense Category			
Primary Site Personnel	Degree	Primary Site	Role	Grade	Step	% Effort	Year 1 Salary+ Fringe	Year 2 Salary+ Fringe	Year 3 Salary +Fringe	Year 4 Salary+ Fringe
Site Subtotal							0	0	0	0
Additional Site Personnel	Degree	Additional Site	Role	Grade	Step	% Effort	Year 1 Salary+ Fringe	Year 2 Salary+ Fringe	Year 3 Salary +Fringe	Year 4 Salary+ Fringe
Site Subtotal							0	0	0	0
Project Total for Personnel							0	0	0	
Consultant	Site						Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Equipment (total-do not itemize)							Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Supplies (total-do not itemize)							Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Project Travel (total from Travel Table do not itemize)							Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Other (Do not list IT expenses from Planned IT Expenses Table)	Degree for IPA	Site	% Effort for IPA				Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
						TOTAL	0	0	0	0

Calculating Calendar Months

Hours per 40 hour work week spent on the project	Calendar Months Effort	Percent Effort (based on 40 Hour Work Week)
1	0.3	2.5
5	1.5	12.5
10	3.0	25.0
15	4.5	37.5
20	6.0	50.0
25	7.5	62.5
30	9.0	75.0
35	10.5	87.5
40	12.0	100.0

❖ Use only VA hours worked and VA time spent on the project

❖ Calendar months for VA investigators must be based on the VA 40-hour workweek (e.g., a 5/8th VA appointment = 25 hours/week = 7.5 calendar months)

Budget Justification Narrative

❖ Must be in compliance with font and margin guidelines

❖ Be concise and explicit

❖ Double check all calculations

❖ Include separate justifications by performance site

❖ Transfer salary, fringe and calendar months effort to the Summary Budget Worksheet (SBW)

Budget Justification: Examples

Example: PI

Jane Smith, PhD, Principal Investigator (2.4 cal mos, GS 14/3, 5/8th VA, salary $21,874/yr, fringe $9,374, years 1-4). Dr. Smith will oversee all aspects of the project. She will hire, train and supervise all personnel at the primary site. She will provide oversight of all aspects of participant recruitment, data collection, analysis and dissemination.

Example: Co-I, no salary requested

John Brown, PhD, Co-Investigator (0.1 cal mos, GS 14/9, 5/8th VA, no salary requested in years 1-4). Dr. Brown is a licensed Clinical Research Psychologist specializing in research on family interventions. He will refine the study intervention and participate in data analysis and reporting.

Budget Justification: Additional Examples

Example: TBH Project Staff

Project Director, TBH, (6.0 cal mos, GS 11/1, 5/8th VA, $25,964/yr salary, $11,128/yr fringe, years 1-4). The project director will work with the research assistant to oversee participant identification, recruitment and scheduling study assessments, maintain IRB approval and regulatory documents, ensure baseline and follow up assessments are completed and will oversee the maintenance of study records in a secure fashion.

Example: Consultant, no salary requested

Maria Diaz, PhD, Consultant (no salary requested)
Dr. Diaz is a Research Sociologist and qualitative methods expert at ABC Center of Innovation at ABC VAMC. Dr. Diaz will provide guidance on qualitative methods for Aim 1, including cognitive testing of interview guides, codebooks, conducting interviews, and data analysis of transcripts using Atlas.ti. She will also assist in manuscript development of qualitative data and will consult with the principal investigator bi-weekly during Aim 1.

Travel

❖ **Four categories of travel:**

  ❖ **Travel necessary for the conduct of research**

  ❖ **Travel to implement or disseminate findings within VHA**
    ❖ Must include a dissemination plan with an estimated budget in the proposal
    ❖ Funds will not be disbursed until study results are available

  ❖ **Travel to present final research results at professional meetings**
    ❖ Do NOT include in project budgets

  ❖ **Professional development travel**
    ❖ NOT allowed in project budgets

Travel Table

	Status (VA, IPA, or consultant)	Purpose	Destination	Date	Estimated Cost
Total					

❖ Table format required in budget justification
  ❖ includes travel by VA personnel (salaried and WOC), IPAs and consultants

❖ Project-related travel expenses must be fully explained and a cogent justification provided
  ❖ Must explain why emails, conference calls or teleconferencing are not adequate to accomplish the goals of the requested travel

Travel Example

Travel ($3000): We request funds for Dr. Smith and Ms. Lee to travel to the ABC VAMC in Palo Alto, CA, to lead a 2-day training workshop for the site study team in Year 1. Requested costs will cover domestic flights, 2 nights lodging, M&IE, and local transportation. There are no travel expenses in years 2-4.

Traveler	Status (VA, IPA, or consultant)	Purpose	Destination	Date	Estimated Cost
Jane Smith	VA	Train study team	ABC VAMC	2 days	$1,500
Gloria Lee	VA	Train study team	ABC VAMC	2 days	$1,500
Total					$3,000

Transcription Services

❖ HSR&D funds a Centralized Transcription Service Program (CTSP) to fulfill transcription needs for HSR&D research

  ❖ CTSP may be able to provide a more cost effective, secure and efficient mechanism without the need for contracting

❖ Use of this service is not mandatory; however, if a proposal includes transcription services, the following is required:

  ❖ Research team must contact CTSP or Dr. Susan Zickmund, PhD, to request a formal proposal, including cost, for the potential use of CTSP's services in the study

  ❖ If CTSP is not chosen, a brief summary of the reason(s) for not utilizing the CTSP must be included in the budget justification

Transcription Services - CTSP

If you plan to utilize CTSP services:
- ❖ Include a brief description of the transcription services required in the budget justification
- ❖ List "N/A" for Dr. Zickmund's percent effort and list her salary as "contributed"
- ❖ List "CTSP Transcription Services (SLC)" under "Other direct costs" on the summary budget worksheet

- ❖ Use this text for the budget justification if Dr. Zickmund is ONLY included for CTSP:

  Zickmund, Susan PhD (Effort: NA, Salary: Contributed): Dr. Zickmund is a Research Scientist at the Veteran Health Administration Salt Lake City and Director of the VA HSR&D-funded Centralized Transcription Services Program (CTSP). She has supervised thousands of hours of qualitative data collection and analysis including transcription. She supervises employees dedicated to producing verbatim transcriptions for research investigators.

Transcription Services – CTSP (continued)

❖ Add Salt Lake City (SLC) as an additional site if not already listed
  ❖ List Susan Zickmund as the site investigator who is responsible for the funds sent to, and the work performed, at SLC
  ❖ If SLC is already a research site, Susan Zickmund does not need to be listed as site investigator, if one already exists

❖ Instructions for create a Key Person Profile for Dr. Susan Zickmund if she is NOT a collaborator or co-investigator in the research:
  ❖ Add as "Other Professional"
  ❖ Type in "CTSP" under the Other Project Role Category
  ❖ Biosketch and Other Support are not required
    ❖ Must upload an attachment to both the Biosketch and Other Support fields with the words "Not Required" or you will receive a system error

❖ If Dr. Zickmund is a collaborator or co-investigator in the research, follow the general instructions for adding a Key Person Profile

Summary Budget Worksheet (SBW)

❖ Select tab that most closely matches the number of project sites:
    ❖ One performance site
    ❖ Up to 5 performance sites
    ❖ Up to 20 performance sites

❖ There are separate sections for each performance site

❖ Only VA personnel on paid appointments or WOCs should be listed in the personnel section

❖ Other Direct Costs
    ❖ The only required subcategories with costs that must be itemized are IPAs, Consultants and any subcategory exceeding $5,000 per year. All remaining costs must be aggregated on the last line under Other Direct Costs

Summary Budget Worksheet

❖ Subtotals are auto-calculated
  ❖ Years 2, 3, and 4 auto-populate from year 1 entries for most budget categories (except equipment and travel). If costs vary, user can overwrite auto-populated values.
  ❖ Year 5 does not auto-populate (must obtain a waiver if project exceeds 4 years)

❖ Transfer information in highlighted cells to the SF424 R&R budget form
  ❖ Tip – to quickly check that costs were correctly transferred to the SF424, check to make sure that the costs for the entire project match the grand total listed on the SBW

❖ Combine summary budget worksheet and budget justification into a pdf before uploading to Section L of the R&R budget form
  ❖ SBW should be listed before the budget justification narrative. See example here: https://vaww.research.va.gov/funding/docs/ExampleBudgetJustification.pdf

R&R Budget Form

❖ Do not cut and paste from any other program to complete fields on the SF424 (R&R) budget form
  ❖ font may not transfer correctly and may cause erroneous characters (e.g., "&", "¿" or "□") to be introduced
    ❖ Carefully check the e-Application in eRA Commons for such errors

❖ Total project costs needs to match total project costs on Summary Budget Worksheet

❖ Budget information is condensed to entries on 3 lines only:
  ❖ PI name, effort, salary and fringe
  ❖ Other VA personnel: number, effort, salary, fringe
  ❖ All other direct costs are listed on Line 8 in Section F
  ❖ All other lines/boxes on form should remain blank

R&R Budget Form

❖ A separate budget for each year of support requested must be completed

❖ If no funds are requested for a required field (highlighted in yellow), enter "0" (zero)

❖ If no funds are requested for a field that is not required, leave the field blank

❖ Round figures to the nearest whole dollar

❖ Fields highlighted in yellow and outlined in red are required
   ❖ Information will auto-populate successively for each budget period
   ❖ Auto populated information, such as dates, must be manually updated for each budget period

R&R Budget Form – Section A

- <mark>Organizational DUNS # will auto-populate from SF424 R&R form</mark>
- Name of Organization will auto-populate from SF424 R&R form
- Budget Type: check the box labeled Project
- Start Dates and End Dates
  - Will auto-populate from SF424 R&R form for Budget Period 1
  - For Budget Periods 2-4, the project start and end dates are auto-populated from Budget Period 1 and must be manually updated to reflect the correct budget period.
  - Use MM/DD/YYYY format

R&R Budget Form – Section A (continued)

- ❖ Senior/Key Person
  - ❖ Include only one name of a single PD/PI
  - ❖ Required fields: First, Last, Requested Salary ($), Fringe Benefits
    - ❖ Retype the PD/PI salary from the SBW
    - ❖ Retype the PD/PI fringe from the SBW
  - ❖ Auto-calculated fields: Funds Requested, Project Role, Total Senior/Key Person
  - ❖ Do NOT use the suffix field to indicate degrees
  - ❖ Do NOT select "Add Additional Key Person" or "Add Attachment" buttons

R&R Budget Form – Section B

B. Other Personnel

Number of Personnel	Project Role	Cal.	Acad.	Sum.	Requested Salary ($)	Fringe Benefits ($)	Funds Requested ($)
	Post Doctoral Associates						
	Graduate Students						
	Undergraduate Students						
	Secretarial/Clerical						

Add Additional Other Personnel

Total Number Other Personnel

Total Other Personnel

Total Salary, Wages and Fringe Benefits (A+B)

Section B
❖ Include all additional VA personnel effort (VA personnel on paid appointments or WOCs) on the last line in Section B
  ❖ Enter the total number of personnel
  ❖ Enter "Unique VA Personnel" for project role
  ❖ Enter the total number of calendar months
  ❖ Enter the total requested salary
  ❖ Enter the total requested fringe benefits
❖ Do not include salary support for non-VA personnel
  ❖ IPAs, consultants and contract costs are listed in Section F, Line 8

R&R Budget Form

F. Other Direct Costs

F. Other Direct Costs	Funds Requested ($)
1. Materials and Supplies	
2. Publication Costs	
3. Consultant Services	
4. ADP/Computer Services	
5. Subawards/Consortium/Contractual Costs	
6. Equipment or Facility Rental/User Fees	
7. Alterations and Renovations	
8.	
9.	
10.	
Total Other Direct Costs	

❖ Section F, Line 8, Other Direct Costs
- ❖ List all direct costs here
  - ❖ IPA, contract and consultant effort and costs
  - ❖ Costs for equipment and travel are subtotaled with all other direct costs and entered here
  - ❖ All costs from other performance sites are entered here
  - ❖ Do not itemize costs in other lines of Section F or elsewhere in the SF424

Other Information

❖ No URLs allowed in budget

❖ Present the budget by project years, not calendar or fiscal years

❖ Costs requested in the SBW, SF424 and Budget Justification must match for all budget categories, all sites and all project years

❖ Follow instructions from your local grants administrator for uploading budget documents into ASSIST

❖ How to pay study participants and focus groups

Links to Proposal Guidance and Templates

❖ Proposal guidance and templates:
   https://vaww.research.va.gov/funding/electronic-submission.cfm

❖ Summary Budget Worksheet template:
   http://vaww.research.va.gov/funding/docs/SummaryBudgetWorksheetTemplate.xlsx

❖ Example of completed R&R budget form:
   https://vaww.research.va.gov/funding/docs/ExamplePackageBudgetForms.pdf

Other Useful Links

❖ RFAs and Program Announcements:
  https://vaww.research.va.gov/funding/rfa.cfm

❖ HSR&D Merit Review Award (Parent I01):
  https://vaww.research.va.gov/funding/docs/HX-20-001-Parent.pdf

❖ VA-ORD Application Guide SF424 (R&R):
  https://vaww.research.va.gov/funding/docs/VA-SF424-RRGuide.pdf

❖ ORD Revised Budget Submission Process: A Step-by-Step Guide
  Cyberseminar: https://vaww.research.va.gov/funding/ord-021116.cfm

❖ PDF handout for ORD Revised Budget Submission Process: A Step-by-Step
  Guide: https://vaww.research.va.gov/funding/docs/BudgetSubmission.pdf

❖ Questions?