

FAQs: Health Services Research Short-Term Project Review Opportunity

UPDATED – 2/19/2008

Q: I meet one of the three eligibility criteria listed, but not more than one of them? Am I still eligible to apply?

A: Yes. Each criterion should be read separately and is linked to the other two by “or.” Any one of the criteria will make you eligible to apply.

Q: I currently am employed by the VA, but I am less than 5/8 employed? Am I eligible?

A: You do not have to be 5/8 at the time you submit your application, BUT you must be 5/8 employed by the time of funding. If you will be a 5/8 (or more) by the start of funding, it would be helpful to clarify this point in your application.

Q: I am not a 5/8 VA employee now because I have a waiver. Am I still eligible to apply?

A: If you have been previously granted a K award waiver, or you have a current IIR waiver from VA HSR&D, then you are eligible to apply. You should attach a copy of the waiver letter to the application.

Q: I have not submitted an application to HSR&D in the last three years nor have I ever been funded by HSR&D, but I have submitted to Rehabilitation R&D? Am I eligible to submit?

A: Not under eligibility criteria (a) or (b) which require that the application or funding was with HSR&D. You may still be eligible under criterion (c) if you are currently affiliated with an HSR&D Center of Excellence (COE) or you have a letter of endorsement from an HSR&D COE, Research Enhancement Award Program (REAP), or Targeted Research Enhancement Program (TREP).

Q: I meet the 5/8 eligibility requirement, but have never submitted to or been funded by HSR&D. Unfortunately, we do not have an HSR&D COE at my institution? Can I still apply?

A: You must have a letter of endorsement from a HSR&D COE, REAP, or TREP, but you do not necessarily have to be located in the same institution. It will be helpful to the reviewers if the letter of endorsement, ideally from the Center director, can clarify any history of previous involvement with the COE, the nature of the proposed relationship and how it will be handled during the period of funding.

Q: I have been preparing to apply for a Career Development Award (CDA). If my application for this opportunity is successful, will I be disqualified from applying for a CDA?

A: No, you may still apply for the CDA.

Q: If I am now or have been the recipient of an HSR&D Career Development Award (CDA), do I meet the eligibility requirements in criteria (a) or (b)?

A: Yes, for the purposes of this announcement, you meet the eligibility requirements.

Q: If my application is approved, will this count toward my Center of Excellence's productivity?

A: No, projects for the Center productivity matrix report must be greater than 6 months in length to qualify.

Q: Is my application a "just in time" application?

A: That is correct. You do not need form 1313 signed at the time of submission, but should submit the formal application to the ACOS office at the same time you are submitting the application for review.

Q: I am planning on collecting information in a pilot study through interviews or surveys from a small number of veterans. Will this require Central Office OMB oversight, and prevent me from submitting a proposal?

A: Central Office OMB oversight, which does not apply to providers, is required for any HSR&D funded project that includes the collection of information through surveys, focus groups, interviews or similar mechanisms from more than nine (9) individuals (patients, veterans). Any project that requires a Central Office determination regarding OMB review (even if the study may be deemed exempt under the 5 criteria for exemption as part of research) will not be considered for this particular opportunity. However, if the proposed project will collect information from a total of 9 or fewer individuals, it is not subject to the OMB requirement, and you may submit an application for this review opportunity.

Q: How do I know if my idea for a project will require "clinical trials registration" and therefore, not be appropriate for this particular opportunity?

A: There is specific guidance on whether a study needs clinical trial registration that can be found under the "Clinical Trial Registration FAQs" here:

http://www.research.va.gov/resources/ORD_Admin/clinical_trials/default.cfm

Q: I am concerned that I will not be able to obtain IRB approval quickly? What should I do?

A: This opportunity is "just in time" and you do not need to have IRB approval at the time of submission. However, IRB approval is an ***absolute*** requirement for HSR&D researchers. Funds are NOT released until all the necessary and applicable approvals, especially IRB approval, have been obtained. For these short-term projects, we encourage requesting IRB approval at the time of submission. Your application should provide evidence that IRB review and timelines for other approvals will not affect the feasibility of the study or its successful completion by September 30th.

Q: Are reference citations part of the 5 page limit?

A: Yes, the entire text of the proposed project, including citations, drawings, tables, etc., is limited to 5 pages. Appendices will NOT be accepted.

Q: Where do I put my letters of support? What information should I give you to contact individuals who will be my references?

A: Please do NOT submit letters of support or the names of individuals to serve as references. These materials are NOT required with your application. A letter of endorsement is the only kind of letter that will be accepted and only when it is essential to the application and your eligibility to submit.

Q: Do I have to get a letter of endorsement from an HSR&D Center of Excellence, Research Enhancement Award Program (REAP) or Targeted Research Enhancement Program (TREP)?

A: A letter of endorsement is required ONLY if you are eligible to apply only under criterion (c) and are not currently affiliated with an HSR&D Center, REAP, or TREP.

Q: What kind of criteria will be used to judge submissions? How will proposals be scored?

A: The process is similar to the Merit Review process in that each proposal will be assigned to three main reviewers first, and then later presented to a panel for discussion and critique. The SHPs are different in that there are five criteria enumerated on the draft evaluation sheet below, each delineating a particular characteristic of an “ideal” proposal. However, there is also one major innovation in evaluating these proposals. Instead of scoring a proposal, reviewers are asked to give an overall cumulative impression of the quality of a submission using a letter grade, much in the same way professors mark papers.