

**VA**



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

# Health Services Scientific Merit Request for Applications Summer 2023

**March 30, 2023**



# WHAT IS NEW?



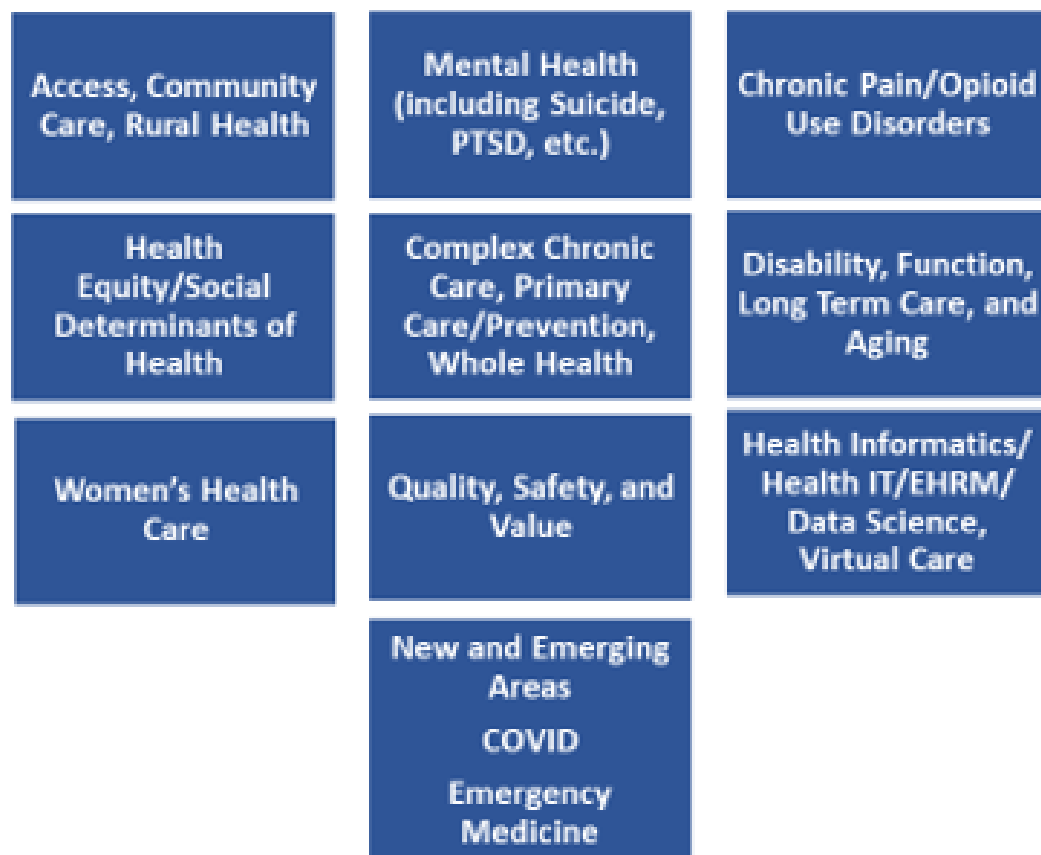
- **Updated HSRD Priorities Document (dated March 2023)**
  - **Burnout**
  - **Clinical Practice Guidelines**
  - **Emergency Care of Older Veterans**
- **Veteran Engagement Plan added to Additional Review Considerations**



# HSR&D RESEARCH PRIORITIES



## Health System Portfolio Research Priorities at a Glance



### Legislative Priorities

- MISSION Act
- Comprehensive Addiction & Recovery Act
- CARES Act (Long term COVID-19 impact; deferred care)
- Foundations for Evidence-based Policymaking Act
- Commander John Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act of 2019 (Hannon Act)
- PACT Act

**Cross-cutting Methods:**  
Translation, Implementation & Improvement Science  
Veteran Engagement



# ELIGIBILITY-PI



- **PI must have a MD, PhD, or equivalent doctoral degree in a medical, biological, or behavioral science field.**
- **PI must have a VA paid appointment of at least 25 hours/week (5/8<sup>th</sup> FTE) in place before funding can begin; the Directors letter must confirm a commitment for a 5/8 appointment if funded.**
  - **Investigators with less than a 5/8<sup>th</sup> VA paid appointment must obtain HSR&D approval of a waiver of the 5/8<sup>th</sup> FTE eligibility requirement for inclusion with their application for funding.**
- **All VA medical centers with an active research program are eligible.**
- **Each VA medical center must be registered as an applicant organization in Grants.gov and eRA Commons before any proposals can be submitted.**



# ELIGIBILITY-CO-I



- **A Site PI must meet the same qualifications as a PI and be registered in ePromise at their current site.**
- **Non-VA investigators who have an MD/PhD equivalent are eligible to serve in the role of Co-investigator, but they cannot be listed as such on the budget forms. The Co-investigator role may be described in the proposal narrative and in the written budget justification. On the budget forms they should be reflected as a consultant or as having an Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) assignment, if appropriate. If they are providing research services to the VA through a contract, the cost of the contract should be included on the budget forms under “All Other” expenses. Collaborators from outside of the U.S. may only serve as unpaid consultants.**



# WAIVERS



- **Non-Veteran Enrollment Waiver:** see VHA Directive 1200.01
- **Eligibility Waiver** see: Program Guide 1200.15
- **Off Site Waiver** see: Program Guide 1200.16

**Waivers are project specific.**

- **Waiver Categories:** Offsite Research, Exceeding Duration or Budget Cap, Inclusion of Videos, PI Eligibility, Resubmissions, and Exceeding IPA Percentage of Budget
- **Deadline: May 11, 2023**

**Copy of waiver approval letters from HSR&D must be included in the “Letters of Support” section of the application. Missing letters are considered fatal errors.**

**Non-Veterans: Approved Enrollment of non-Veterans in ORD funded research is required for all projects with non-Veterans (including employees) if awarded**



# REMINDERS



HSRD is no longer requiring quotes from CTSP for transcription. If you decide to use CTSP services for transcription, please follow the directions in the RFA so that funds can be transferred.

## **MANDATORY REQUIREMENT:**

- Completion of the Involved Personnel and Collaborators Spreadsheet information in ART. (This is a **fatal error**, if not completed.) A list of ALL named personnel and collaborators must be updated in your ITS between May 15, 2023 and June 14, 2023.



# LETTERS OF SUPPORT



## MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

1. Director's Letter must include language supporting protected time for clinician researchers
2. A TABLE OF CONTENTS for the letters of support must be included that lists each letter writer's
  - Name
  - Position
  - Office/institution

## STRONGLY SUGGESTED

Although not required this cycle, **electronic signatures** are strongly encouraged to verify that the letter writer wrote the letter of support. Please inform the letter writers when making your letter of support request.





# LETTERS OF SUPPORT



**A single letter of support is sufficient from all individuals at the same institution if all individuals at the institution sign the letter. Individual letters are still acceptable.**

- **PD/PI**
- **Co-investigators**
- **Collaborators and consultants (VA and non-VA)**
- **Program Offices**
- **Other Stakeholders**

**Resubmission: a previously submitted letter can only be reused if it is less than one year old.**



# CERNER TRANSITION



- If you have questions about potential impact of the Cerner implementation on your research plans, please email the **ORD EHRM workgroup** [ResearchEHRM@va.gov](mailto:ResearchEHRM@va.gov).
- Resource links, current updates, and FAQs can be found on the EHRM and Research page of the Research Resource Guide (RRG). Regarding **EHRM-related research methods**, please contact **VA Coordinating Hub to Promote Research Optimizing Veteran-Centric EHR Networks (PROVEN)** at [PROVENHub@va.gov](mailto:PROVENHub@va.gov).
- For administrative purposes, your proposal should discuss possible ways you could mitigate the effects of any data disruption.



# COVID-19



**ORD COVID-19 SharePoint site:**

**<https://dvagov.sharepoint.com/sites/vacovhacomm/admin/projects/covid19>**

**Please direct questions:**

**[ORDCOVID19@va.gov](mailto:ORDCOVID19@va.gov)**



# INTENT TO SUBMIT (ITS)



**HSR&D requires Intent to Submit (ITS) notification through HSR&D's ART website.**

<http://art.puget-sound.med.va.gov/IntentSubmitIntro.cfm>

**The ITS window:**

**April 21 – May 5, 2023**

ITS are used to determine panels, so an abstract that describes the project will assist in the assignment. Please include all the sites and personnel in the ITS. Please note that you will have an opportunity to update the list when you submit your application.

**Applications submitted to Grants.gov without a completed ITS will not be accepted or reviewed.**

**Mentored awards (CDA & CDA MSI)**

Must have an approved Letter of Intent (LOI) or an LOI that is under review to submit an ITS.

**LOIs are emailed to [robert.small@va.gov](mailto:robert.small@va.gov).**



## Involved Personnel and Collaborators information in ART.

A list of **ALL NAMED individuals** must be updated in your ITS between **May 15, 2023 and June 14, 2023**.

**ANYONE NAMED** in the application needs to be included. This includes **PIs and letter writers**.

If someone is only named in the bibliography or biosketch, they do not need to be included.

**Failure to include all named individuals is a fatal error.**

*NOTE:* A new ITS must be submitted each cycle. **Applications submitted to Grants.gov without a completed ITS will not be accepted or reviewed.**



# ART INVOLVED PERSONNEL ENTRY



## ART

May 15, 2023

ITS opens for Involved Personnel

June 14, 2023

ITS closes for Involved Personnel

**ALL NAMED individuals must be added to your ITS in ART.**

**This is a fatal error.**

**Completed for each Involved Personnel/Collaborator/Named person:**

- Name (Last, First)
- Degree
- Project Role
- VA Medical Center, City, State or VA CBOC, City, State (as applicable)  
(NOTE: listing just VHA is not sufficient)
- Academic Institution(s) or Non-VA Organization Name(s), City, State (as applicable)
- If individual has a joint VA and academic appointment, both must be listed



# ABSTRACT FORMAT



Project Summary/Abstract is **REQUIRED** to comply with the format prescribed by the RFA.

**Background:**

**Significance:**

**Innovation and Impact:**

**Specific Aims:**

**Methodology:**

**Next Steps/Implementation:**

*Abstracts are limited to 40 lines of text*



## Engagement of Veterans in the Design and Implementation of Research

- **Most research benefits from engaging Veterans at all stages of the research process – study design, development, study recruitment, research, dissemination, and implementation.**
- **Veterans and their caregivers can provide important insights into what outcomes matter most and the feasibility and acceptance of proposed interventions and study designs.**
- **Options for obtaining input include interaction with Veteran engagement panels or Veteran advisory groups as well as including Veterans on the research team.**
- **We encourage pilot studies or smaller/shorter IIRs to advance the science of Veteran Engagement in research, including studies to examine different strategies to promote successful Veteran and Community Engagement.**





## Recruitment

- A large proportion of HSRD studies fail to meet recruitment goals.
- Trials need to explicitly justify the data used to estimate recruitment -- e.g., pilot data, prior studies, etc. -- and comment on mitigation strategies if recruitment lags.
- We expect you to include a **PLAN B** as part of your proposed recruitment strategy.



## Implementation and Dissemination Plan

*Dissemination in manuscripts and to partners is insufficient.*

- **Proposals will need to explicitly discuss what the next steps are after project is completed. What is the path to making a difference in VA care?**
- **Need to consider who “owns” the problem the study is attempting to solve; what are the potential barriers to implementation, and how to overcome them. Who will be the partner to implement the project?**
- **Studies of interventions should consider how they can collect information relevant to implementation during the efficacy/effectiveness study (e.g., use of hybrid designs).**
- **Need to compress cycle of understanding problem, testing interventions, scaling solutions.**



# HSR&D REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS



<b>RFA Description</b>	<b>RFA #</b>
<b>HSR&amp;D Merit Review Award (Parent I01)</b>	<b>HX-23-001</b>
<b>HSR&amp;D Merit Review Award Pilot Project Program (I21)</b>	<b>HX-23-002</b>
<b>HSR&amp;D Targeted Solicitation for Service Directed Research on Veteran Suicide Prevention</b>	<b>HX-23-005</b>
<b>HSR&amp;D Research Career Development Award (CDA-2)</b>	<b>HX-23-009</b>
<b>VA HSR&amp;D Career Development Award for Scientists Associated with Minority Serving Institutions (MSI-CDA)</b>	<b>HX-23-010</b>
<b>Mentored Physician &amp; Clinical Psychologist Award in Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias (MPCPS-ADRD)</b>	<b>HX-23-030</b>
<b>HSR&amp;D Targeted Solicitation for Service Directed Research on Rural Health</b>	<b>HX-23-032</b>



**RFAs can be downloaded from the VA  
ORD intranet site:**

**[https://vaww.research.va.gov/funding/  
rfa.cfm#hsrd](https://vaww.research.va.gov/funding/rfa.cfm#hsrd)**

**(VA network access only).**



# PARENT MERIT REVIEW AWARD



**Parent: \$1,200,000 (max) for 4 years  
2 resubmissions allowed.**

**HSR&D has identified priority areas that should be considered in developing research proposals. For details on updated HSR&D research priorities, please visit <https://www.hsrd.research.va.gov/funding/PriorityDomains.pdf>**



# PILOT PROJECT AWARD



**PILOT: \$200,000 (max) and up to 18 months**

**Only one resubmission allowed.**



# PILOT PROJECT AWARD



## **Pilot Goals and Next Steps should be very clear.**

- Establish components of interventions, measurement characteristics of key outcome variables, and/or predictors for primary outcome measures.
- Seek non-statistical information about the optimal sources of subjects, recruitment techniques, estimates of yields and varying interpretation of questions by respondents, establishing the interest level of particular groups of potential subjects in proposed interventions, or the feasibility of completing the measurements that are proposed.
- Establish cross-disciplinary collaborations or test novel methods to support cross-disciplinary research
- Support a small innovative study that does not necessarily lead to an IIR.
- Conduct preliminary analysis of existing data to refine target populations, inform intervention development, and/or establish feasibility of a potential IIR project.

**Methods should align with goals, be appropriate for pilot work**



# TARGETED SUICIDE PREVENTION



**Merit: \$1,200,000 (max) for 4 years;  
Pilot \$200,000 (max) for 18 Months**

**Focus** on observational studies, effectiveness trials, implementation studies (including hybrid studies), or population-based and community-level studies that advance the prevention of suicide among Veterans.





## NEW THIS CYCLE:

- **\$1,200,000 (max) for up to 4 years**
- **RFA goals developed from the Rural Health State of the Art conference**
- **Meeting materials available on HSRD website: [State of the Art Conference: Rural Health \(va.gov\)](#)**



**Focus** on priority areas and incorporating the four cross-cutting themes:

- **Priorities:**
  - Implementation-effectiveness research to inform public health management of crises and promote health equity
  - Rural Veterans' decisions/preferences about where they receive care and the quality of that care
  - Innovations in infrastructure and human capital that can address disparities in rural workforce needs
- **Cross-cutting themes:**
  - Cultural context for rural populations
  - Diversity, equity, and inclusion
  - Innovations to improve access
  - Mental health



# CAREER DEVELOPMENT AWARD MENTORED RESEARCH



The narrative page limit is 14 pages.

**Letter of Intent – Deadline April 15, 2023:** reviewed for acceptance

ITS required (ART) Window: **April 21 – May 5, 2023**

<https://www.hsrd.research.va.gov/cdp/default.cfm>

- 5 years of Salary Support
- Supplement support funds \$40,000/year for Years 1-3 at COINs and \$50,000/year (Yrs 1-3) at facilities not affiliated with COINs
- Candidate's training, experience and research accomplishments
- Career Plan
- Mentoring Plan



# MINORITY SERVING INSTITUTIONS (MSI) RESEARCH SCIENTIST TRAINING PROGRAM AWARD



**Letter of Intent – Deadline April 15, 2023** : reviewed for acceptance

ITS required (ART) Window: **April 21 – May 5, 2023**

<https://www.hsrd.research.va.gov/cdp/default.cfm>

- VA primary mentor and a partner MSI co-mentor required
- Nominee must have earned degree at an MSI and must be affiliated with a MSI (employed as a postdoctoral fellow, lecturer, or assistant professor)
- 3-5 years of Salary Support
- Supplement project support funds up to \$75,000/year for yrs 1-3
- Follows CDA-2 application format
- Candidate's training, experience and research accomplishments
- Career Plan and Mentoring Plan



**VA-ORD cross-service award mechanism in collaboration  
with National Institute on Aging (NIA)**

**Letter of Intent – Deadline April 15, 2023**

- **Mentored award career development award (CDA2)**
- **Cross service award (BL/CS/RR/HS) investigating  
Alzheimer's disease or related dementias (ADRD) across  
the scientific spectrum**
- **3-5 years duration**
- **\$75K per year – Year 1 may include up to \$30K in start-up  
costs**
- **NIA administrative supplement up to \$175K per year for  
research expenses)**



# CALENDAR



<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>
April 15, 2023	CDA/MPCPS-ADRD Letter of Intent due
April 21, 2023	ITS Opens and CDA ITS opens
May 5, 2023	ITS Closes and CDA ITS close
May 11, 2023	Waiver deadline
May 15, 2023	Grants.gov opens
May 15, 2023	ITS opens for Involved Personnel
June 8, 2023	Down to the Wire Submission
June 12, 2023	Last Submission Date Grants.gov
June 14, 2023	ITS closes for Involved Personnel
June 15, 2023	Verification Deadline
August 2023	Scientific Merit Review



# QUESTIONS



[vhacoscirev@va.gov](mailto:vhacoscirev@va.gov)

**HSR&D RFAs:**

<http://vaww.research.va.gov/funding/rfa.cfm>

**QUERI RFA seminar:**

**April 10, 2 pm ET**

**[REGISTER to attend this session](#)**

**VA**



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

**Thank you for your  
attendance.**

**Please stay safe.**

**We hope to review your  
application soon!**