Supplemental Funding to Study the Pandemic’s Effects on Non-COVID Health Outcomes
Released: December 22, 2020

HSR&D is making supplemental funding available to VA researchers with currently active HSR&D-funded projects who wish to expand the scope of their work to study the pandemic’s effect on a particular non-COVID health outcome. Awarded funds will be supplemental to the existing research award.

**Purpose:** The purpose of this funding mechanism is to leverage existing projects for rapid data analysis on certain health outcomes. Proposals must be focused on examining the pandemic’s effect on one or more non-COVID priority health outcome through an existing cohort or dataset that was collected pre- and post-pandemic. Priority will be given to proposals that leverage existing large cohort or data analysis studies, especially those that collect longitudinal clinical health outcome data at the national or multi-VISN level, to examine the effects of the pandemic across sites, time periods, and factors that impact health outcomes (e.g., disruption to clinical care, social interactions, economic stresses).

Priority health outcomes include clinical outcomes (mortality, morbidity, hospitalization, ER visits) that are sensitive to disruptions in clinical care or that could be exacerbated by the conditions of the pandemic (isolation, economic strain, relationship conflict, caregiver burden). These include diabetes, cardiovascular disease, substance use disorder, suicide, serious mental illness, chronic pain, COPD, vaccine-preventable illnesses, other primary-care sensitive conditions, diagnostic errors, dental care including emergencies, preventable readmissions, cancer screenings, and other preventable care. Other areas may also be proposed with sufficient justification.

**Who can apply:** VA researchers with HSR&D-funded projects active in 2021 (IIRs, pilot projects, rapid-response and Medication Collaboratory COVID projects). Projects are only eligible for this opportunity assuming they are active through March 1. **Priority will be given to projects with appropriate scope, size, and representation that collect and/or analyze longitudinal data focused on health outcomes.**

Note: For this solicitation, we are not interested in funding single-site studies examining local health outcomes and operational contexts, studies that do not already have an existing dataset or cohort assembled, or studies that only examine utilization of care without health outcomes.

**Funding:** HSR&D will commit up to one year of funding and up to $100,000 per project. Budgets should be justified with respect to the scope of the proposed work, and requests under $100,000 are strongly encouraged.

**Timeline:** We anticipate an earliest possible start date of March 1, 2021.

**Application Requirements:** HSR&D is requesting that each team submit a five-page proposal describing how they plan to use funds to expand the scope of their project to examine the pandemic’s effects on non-COVID outcomes of interest.

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The applications are required to include the following information (5 pages maximum, cover page does not count):

1. **Cover Page:** Title of Existing Funded Project; Project Number; PI Name; Institution; operational and program partners (if applicable)

2. **Background and Significance:** Describe your current project, how you plan to expand it, and why this expansion is important in the context of the ongoing pandemic. If you have preliminary data or conclusions related to the pandemic’s effects on non-COVID health outcome based on your existing project or cohort, please describe. *(1 page)*

3. **Research Plan:** Describe and justify why and how you will use the supplemental funding. *(2-3 pages)*
   a. Rapid-start COVID projects may apply for cost extensions of their project and must provide justification for the use of additional funds based on the progress already made on answering proposed research questions.
   b. All other researchers with traditional I1Rs and pilot projects without aims focused on the pandemic must explain the purpose of expanding their work to specifically examine the pandemic’s effect on the health outcome of interest.

4. **Partner Collaboration Plan:** Describe existing involvement of partners, how you plan to involve these partners moving forward, and how you plan to communicate the results as they develop. Please include a tentative timeline and method for communicating these results. *(1 page)*

**Additional Required Information** (Does not count toward 5-page limit)

- **Research Team Description** should describe the general management structure of the activity with relevant Lead (i.e. PI), Co-Investigators involved, as well as a list of other relevant research and program collaborators.
  - Please note: No letters of support should be submitted with the application and established partnerships are not required at time of application
- **Summary budget table and budget justification**, must be included as an attachment to the proposal, detailing the planned use and justification of supplemental funding. Provide budget details for all relevant personnel, including lead teams, associate leads, coordinator, investigators, etc.
- **GANTT Chart** (i.e. 1-year Roadmap) should clearly outline milestones for the year of funding.

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Proposals are due to HSR&D by January 22, 2021.

Please submit proposals as follows:

Include Subject Heading: Supplemental Non-COVID Outcomes_PI last name_Project Number
Send to mailbox: Stephanie.Guerra@va.gov

Internal Review: Applications will go through an administrative HSR&D review to ensure that the proposals meet the goals of the solicitation. Criteria for consideration will include:

- Importance of the topic
- Progress on original project being supplemented
- Research plan and feasibility of proposed work
- Timing of anticipated findings and relevance to partners
- Appropriateness of budget request

Projects selected for funding will be required to submit a project modification form with a revised Quad chart, revised project budget by fiscal year that includes the supplemental funds and include any project changes: additional sites, key personnel, etc. and any additional documentation needed for the changes.

If you have questions about your project’s eligibility or your proposal’s relevance for this award, please contact Dr. Steph Guerra (Stephanie.Guerra@va.gov).