Overview of VA Research and Grant Opportunities

VA Saint Louis Health Care System (VASTLHCS)
Research and Development Service

Dr. Ziyad Al-Aly, M.D. Chief of Research
Todd Kliche', MS, RPh Grants Manger
Research Overview

“To discover knowledge and create innovations that advance the health and care of Veterans and the nation”

- VA Research for 94 years
- VA Research focuses on issues that affect Veterans
- Substantial research output: about 7,500 articles based on VA-sponsored research are published yearly nationwide
- Three Nobel prizes, seven Lasker awards, and numerous other distinctions
Research Overview
Notable Contributions of VA Research to American Medicine and the Health and Well being of All

• 1958: Implantable cardiac pacemaker
• 1960: CAT scan
• 1968: First successful liver transplants
• 2003: First clinical trial to treat posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
• 2005: New vaccine for shingles
• 2007: First ankle-foot prosthesis
• 2009: Breakthrough in treatment of burn injuries
• 2014: Precision Medicine: Million Veteran Program and integration of “OMICS”
Advantages of VA Research

- Pay-line is as good or better than NIH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Award Type</th>
<th>Success Rate</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Merit Award</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Development Awards</td>
<td>41%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pilot Studies</td>
<td>25%</td>
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- VA funds areas understudied (or not studied) by NIH or the medical/pharmaceutical industry
  - Comparative Effectiveness Research
  - PTSD, Traumatic Brain Injury Research
  - Prosthetics and Rehab Research
  - Environmental Exposure and Population Health
  - Precision Medicine long before the term has become widely used
Eligibility
Who may apply?

- Must be a current U.S. citizen or submit documentation from the Immigration and Naturalization Service to show a firm date for citizenship interview or swearing in as a U.S. citizen
- MDs are eligible to apply for VA grants
- PhDs may apply to HSRD, CSRD, and RRD but will need admission to the program to be eligible to apply to BLRD
- Process is competitive: candidacy is evaluated based on productivity (papers and impact), concurrent federal funding, and alignment with VA funding priorities
- Applicants do not need to be current VA employees.
- Should the project receive funding, the PI will have a minimum 5/8ths VA Paid Appointment
VA Funding Mechanisms
What Are You Applying For?

VA Research is an *intramural* program

**Types of awards**

- **Merit**
  - Established investigators
  - 5/8ths VA Paid Appointment minimum award
  - 25 hours per week committed to VA of which part (3/8ths) is spent performing research, part (2/8ths) clinical duties

- **Career Development Award (CDA-2)**
  - Intended for early investigators
  - Provides salary for PI through award mechanism for 3 to 5 years
  - 6/8ths paid appointment minimum award
  - 30 hours per week committed to VA of which part is spent performing research, part clinical duties

- **Research Career Scientist (RCS)**
  - Intended for PhD
  - Provides up to 5 years of salary support through the VA
  - Must be eligible for 5/8ths VA Paid Appointment, of which 25 hours per week committed to performing VA research activities
VA Funding Mechanisms
What Are You Applying For?

• Merit Review Awards (equivalent to R01)
  – BLR&D & CSR&D: $165K/yr, yr1 - yr4
  – HSR&D: $1.2M / maximum 4 yrs
  – RR&D: $1.2M / maximum 4 yrs

• Career Development Awards (equivalent to K08)
  – BLR&D & CSR&D: PI salary support & $105K/yr1 - $75K/yr, yr2 – yr5.
  – HSR&D: PI salary support & $40K/yr, yr1 – yr3
  – RR&D PI salary support & $75K/yr, yr1 - yr5

• Pilot proposals, new proof of concept clinical trial RFA
• Cooperative Studies Program (CSP) for clinical trials
• Specific RFAs around areas of interest to VA Research
Who are you applying to?

VA ORD is part of the VA Central Office (VACO) and operates 4 Service Lines:

- Biomedical Laboratory Research & Development (BLR&D)
- Clinical Science Research & Development (CSR&D)
- Health Services Research & Development (HSR&D)
- Rehabilitation Research & Development (RR&D)
Research at the
VA St. Louis Health Care System (VASTLHCS)

- Over 75 active principal investigators

- Over 150 active research studies: Basic research, translational research, rehabilitation, clinical epidemiology, and clinical trials

- Thematic areas: cancer, obesity, diabetes, heart disease, metabolic diseases, dementia, Alzheimer's Disease, spinal cord injury, blood pressure, chronic pain, Traumatic Brain Injuries, Gulf War Exposures, male reproductive health, mental Illness, substance abuse, aging and more
46 Principal Investigators
27 Active Clinical Trials 5 Education Projects or Grants
6 Education projects or grants
3 Prime Award from DOD
8 Subawards
17 VREF Employees
Active in the Saint Louis area and the region
Outreach activities and fundraising – Social Media, events including Research Week, Annual Gala, Trivia Night, 5K runs, etc.
Thank you for your time.

Todd Kliche, MS, RPh
Grants Manager
todd.kliche@va.gov