

Office of Research and Development

Career Development Program (CDP) – Harmonization Overview

<i>Purpose</i>	The ORD research career development program is designed to attract, develop, and retain talented VA researchers in areas of particular importance to VA by providing a well-constructed, mentored research development experience. A single ORD program is proposed to clarify, simplify, and enhance VA research career development opportunities for clinicians and non-clinicians.
<i>Target Success Measures</i>	70 percent of clinicians who complete the career development transition award (CDTA) remain in VA paid employment three years following the completion of the award. (reference: OMB overall targets are 64% in FY 06; 65% in 07; 66% in 08, 67% in 09, and 68% in 10) 70 percent of clinicians who complete the CDA-2 advance to CDTA or remain in VA paid employment three years following the completion of the award. Similar percentages of non-clinicians who complete CDA-2 awards continue to have VA merit review approved funding three years post award. 70% of all who complete CDA-1 awards apply successfully for CDA-2 award and/or remain in VA for two years post-award. 90% of all those who receive CDEAs remain in VA three years post-award. [Targets sought by 2012]
<i>Approach</i>	The proposed ORD program is designed to meet the goals of the current varied individual service programs within one research career development program for both clinicians and non-clinicians. To address the needs of applicants at different stages in their research careers, three primary levels of career development are envisioned, depending upon an individual's previous training and experience. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This program would <u>not</u> replace the Research Career Scientist awards for VA's most accomplished non-clinicians who have achieved independence and national/international stature. • This program would <u>not</u> replace CDEA (educational leave opportunity for clinicians); but would add a limited similar opportunity for non-clinicians, with ORD support limited to maximum of 6 months salary (and contingent on VA regulations regarding educational leave). • The proposed ORD program incorporates facets of all the ORD Services' previous career development programs (including Associate Investigator, Merit Review Entry Program and Career Development program). • Reviews will continue to be conducted by a specific R&D Service. Funding decisions will be made by the individual Service Director following merit review.
<i>LOIs</i>	All award applications require approved letters of intent prior to submission.

Career Development Award Levels				
	CDA-1	CDA-2	CDTA	CDEA
Primary Purpose	To provide a mentored research development experience to a very select number of highly qualified clinicians and non-clinicians who have demonstrated abilities in key areas, who present a well-articulated and well-designed career development plan that articulates clear commitment to VA, under exceptional mentors who demonstrate commitment and capacity to mentor the individual.	To provide a mentored research experience to highly qualified clinicians and non-clinicians with appropriate research experience, who will benefit from the opportunity to develop as a exceptional, independently funded VA researchers in an area important to VA.	To complete (including through recruitment) research career development for clinicians and provide support as they transition to an independently funded VA research career.	To provide an opportunity to a very select number of committed, independent VA clinician researchers and non-clinician research career scientists to learn new research skills or to conduct special experiments at a unique facility.
Award Description	Salary support up to two years	Salary support for clinicians (if requested) and non-clinicians to allow for protected, dedicated research time. 3-5 year duration <i>*Budget should include estimated salary support (complete with calculations for fringe benefits and any special pay) as well as research support in the amount of \$10-50,000 for year one of award, provided applicant has no other research project funding as PI or Co-PI. Support for out-years at this level can be requested (with annual progress report) and is dependent on satisfactory progress and other funds obtained.</i>	Salary support for clinicians (same provisions as for CDA-2 apply). Up to 3 year duration.	Maximum of six months salary support, including benefits; non-renewable.
Eligibility	Open to clinician and non-clinician researchers.	Open to clinician and non-clinician researchers.	Open <i>only</i> to clinician researchers (conceived as a Career Development Transition Award (CDTA)).	Open to clinician and non-clinician researchers (Career Development Enhancement Award).

<p>Salary</p>	<p>Non-clinicians:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited to GS-11 level • Must have at time of award at least 5/8 VA appointment and minimum 75% effort on research <p>Clinicians:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited to GS-13 equivalent level (see Associate Investigator category, Handbook 5007); not eligible for market pay • Must have at time of award at least 5/8 VA appointment and minimum 75% effort on research • VAMC commits to providing clinical appointment at conclusion of award period 	<p>Non-clinicians:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited to GS-12 or 13 level • Must have at least 5/8 VA appointment and 100% VA effort on research at time of award <p>Clinicians requesting salary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VAMC hires approved awardee on temporary full time basis under appropriate authority, e.g. for physicians and dentists, Title 38 U.S.C. 7405 (a)(1) Appointed at grades with salaries determined appropriate by local compensation panel --must devote 25% effort to clinical activities (remainder to research) to receive market pay • VAMC commits to providing clinical appointment (at least 5/8 VA) at conclusion of award period and documents institutional plan for accomplishing this, including affiliate support <p>Clinicians not requesting salary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must have at least 5/8 VA appointment or an approved eligibility waiver upon receipt of award. • Must maintain at least 25% VA effort on research. 	<p>Clinicians:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salary/benefits support only • Appointment and salary requirements same as for CDA-2 • VAMC commits to providing clinical appointment (at least 5/8 VA) at conclusion of award period and documents institutional plan for accomplishing this, including affiliate support • Upon receipt of award, must have at least 5/8 VA appointment and maintain minimum 75% VA effort on research 	<p>Clinicians:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salary support only (requires full-time commitment to research for the award period) • <u>Contingent upon matching support from the local VA facility</u> <p><u>Non-clinicians: salary support only, maximum ORD contribution of six months</u></p> <p><u>All:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires documentation from local medical center indicating contingent approval of educational leave in time and amount • Requires a sponsor who will facilitate the research program and provide training and consultation to the applicant • <i>Awardees must devote 100% time to research and may not be involved in administrative roles during the award</i>
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Timing	<p>At time of submission, applicant should be no more than 2 years beyond completion of training:</p> <p>Clinicians - residency, internship, clinical fellowship, etc.</p> <p>Non-Clinicians – doctoral (PhD or equivalent).</p>	<p>At time of submission, applicant should be no more than 5 years beyond completion of training:</p> <p>Clinicians – residency, internship, clinical fellowship, etc.</p> <p>Non-Clinicians – doctoral (PhD or equivalent) or fellowship.</p>	<p>At time of submission, applicant should be no more than 10 years beyond completion of training (i.e., residency, internship, clinical fellowship, etc.)</p>	<p>Track-record as PI on non-mentored, VA merit reviewed projects over at least 6 years AND Current PI on an ongoing, non-mentored VA merit-reviewed and funded research project/program.</p> <p>No prior VA CDEA within 10 years prior to submission.</p>
Academic Rank Guidelines	Not to be above Instructor	Not to be above Assistant Professor (exception required for higher level to be considered)	Not to be above Associate Professor at time of submission	Should be equivalent to Professor at most institutions.
Research Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must not have been PI on a peer-reviewed independent research project supported by national level, public or private organization • Should demonstrate commitment to research in proposed research area (e.g., laboratory research, clinical research, health services research, rehabilitation research) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should have some research accomplishments, but not have been a PI on a peer-reviewed independent research project supported by national level, public or private organization in excess of \$50,000/year • Should have at least one first authored research publication pertinent to general proposed research area (e.g., laboratory research, clinical research, health services research, rehabilitation research) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should have approved VA merit review project as independent PI (include copy of approved merit review narrative). • Should have strong first authored research publication record in areas pertinent to proposed career development area, but need not have been career development awardee previously 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outstanding VA research track record as demonstrated by at least 6 years sustained funding, publications, and service to VA research (e.g., mentoring, committee service etc.) • Demonstration of exceptional productivity over at least six years as independent VA principal investigator

<p>Review Process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant accomplishments • Mentor qualifications (up to 4 mentors; at least one VA) • Career plan that will lead to independence (expected to require 5-7 pages) • Clear mentoring plan (with commitment from mentors) • Strong, appropriate research ideas/plan – <i>but no merit review proposal</i> – should have clear ideas for developing independent research pilot, related project; might be participant in ongoing, funded study (expected to require 5-7 pages) • Complete application package may not exceed 15 pages, including references 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant • Mentor/s demonstrated commitment to VA, research and mentoring history • Institutional commitment to and plan for continuing individual's VA employment (at least 5/8 VA) post-award • Career development plan that will lead to independence (expected to require 5-7 pages) • Description of research plan and funding source. Research plan should include specific aims, background and significance, preliminary studies/progress report, and research design and methods (expected to require 5-7 pages) • If VA funding is requested, complete project description and budget of \$10-50,000 for FIRST YEAR only; based on progress, support for out-years at this level can be requested (with annual progress report) and whether any funds are provided will be dependent on progress and other funds obtained • Narrative portion (sections 8 and 9) not to exceed 25 pages. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant productivity • Mentor/s demonstrated commitment to VA, research and mentoring history • Career development plan that incorporates clear enhancement of research skills and transition to VA independent research career • Scientific proposal peer reviewed for merit, prepared by applicant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value of proposed training to investigator and VA • Qualifications of the applicant (i.e., previous training, accomplishments, and commitment to VA) • Quality of the research planned and/or accomplished • Qualification of the sponsor • Suitability of the CDEA plan to the background and career goal of the applicant (i.e., research vision and growth potential) • Suitability of the location for the research and/or training proposed. • Anticipated effect of the proposed award on the VA research career of the applicant • Relevance of research interests and proposed activities to needs of VA • Long-term commitment of the local VA facility to the applicant • Benefits resulting from the career development award to both the applicant and the VAMC
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Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CDA-1 awardees should gather enough research and proposal development experience to submit an application for the CDA-2 award six months prior to the end of this award. • first author publication in area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At minimum, all awardees should have submitted a VA merit-review proposal by the end of award period • Evidence of productivity (e.g., publications—including in press or submitted, patents, abstract, poster and/or presentations at national meetings) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent, well-funded VA clinician researcher with strong program (at least 1 VA merit review) • Evidence of productivity (e.g., publications—including in press or submitted, patents, abstract, poster and/or presentations at national meetings) 	Continued productivity as VA researcher for at least three years post-award, reflecting knowledge gained in sabbatical.
Progress Reports	Annual progress report required. Prepared by applicant and signed by mentor(s) and ACOS/R. Due 30 days following the first year of award and following conclusion of award (if a 2 year award).	Annual progress reports required. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If applicant has not obtained alternative funds but made substantial progress toward that goal at the time of the annual progress report, support for \$10-50,000 for an additional year may be requested with the annual progress report; whether any funds are provided will be dependent on progress and other funds obtained 	Annual progress reports required.	Report detailing the research accomplishments during the award period, prepared by applicant and signed by sponsor and ACOS for Research (at local facility), due six months following completion of award.