



**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**  
Veterans Health Administration  
Washington DC 20420

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**Office of Research and Development**

**Solicitation of Applications for Clinical Science Research & Development  
Service**

**COOPERATIVE STUDIES PROGRAM COORDINATING CENTERS**

- 1. Introduction.** This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Clinical Science Research and Development (CSRD) Information Letter announces the opportunity for Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Centers to compete for Cooperative Studies Program (CSP) Coordinating Centers (CSPCCs). The CSPCCs provide leadership in CSP multi-site clinical trial and epidemiological study design, data management, statistical analysis, and administration.
- 2. Background.** The cooperative study has been a hallmark of VA research since the first investigation on a tuberculosis treatment in the 1940s. As the largest integrated health care system in the nation, the VA presents a unique opportunity for multi-site studies. The present day structure of the CSP is based on strong multidisciplinary collaborations, partnering clinical investigators with biostatistical/methodological expertise. Within CSRD, the CSP is currently comprised of biostatistical and data coordinating centers, epidemiological research centers, a clinical research pharmacy coordinating center, and a health economics resource center. Together, these components form a national infrastructure that enables the VA to conduct definitive clinical trials and observational studies on major diseases that impact the veteran population. Headquartered in VA Central Office and guided by uniform approaches and policies in conducting multi-site studies, the CSP is directly accountable to VHA leadership. The CSP's rich history of conducting many landmark trials has directly impacted clinical practice and policy and positively improved the healthcare of veterans.
- 3. Purpose.** CSPCCs are expected to be main contributors to all aspects of CSP research and programmatic activities. CSPCCs should advance the health and care of veterans by supporting multi-site collaborative clinical trials that produce novel and effective solutions to national healthcare problems. In

addition, CSPCCs should provide national direction for the VA clinical research program through scientific, methodological, operational, and technological innovations and by fostering teamwork within the CSP and VA. Currently funded CSPCCs are invited to recompute under this announcement. Applications for new CSPCCs will also be competed.

- 4. Goals.** In supporting VA sponsored multi-site clinical trials, CSPCCs are expected to be instrumental in the development, conduct, and management of important research across a range of diseases that provide definitive evidence for clinical practice within the VA and for the nation. A CSPCC has a primary duty of providing innovative solutions and sound planning for multi-site clinical trial design and management. A CSPCC is also expected to establish strong multidisciplinary teams capable of providing biostatistical, technical, and management expertise. This team is responsible for the life cycle of a study including planning, implementation, oversight, analysis, and publication. CSPCCs also provide leadership in the clinical research arena through innovations in trial methodology, clinical trial management, genomic medicine and developing the next generation of VA clinical trialists and biostatisticians.
- 5. Scope and Focus.** While the main scope of CSPCC activities has a specific emphasis on multi-site clinical trial coordination, there are a number of activities conducted at these centers. These activities include:
  - a. Clinical trial management. Providing expertise in clinical trial design and development, collecting, verifying, maintaining, and analyzing all data, fiscal management and reporting, and providing administrative support for all VA cooperative studies in accordance to clinical trial principles and CSP policies;
  - b. Leadership. Participating in CSP activities, providing innovative and responsive leadership, and contributing in the advancement of VA-sponsored clinical research;
  - c. Research collaboration. Serving as the primary collaborators with study investigators and providing oversight and guidance on the application of rigorous clinical trial protocols and principles;
  - d. Administration. Ensuring that CSP studies follow VA policies. CSPCCs are directly responsible for reporting all scientific, fiscal, and operational aspects of assigned studies to the Director, CSRD.
- 6. Funding.** CSPCCs are primarily funded in accordance to approved budgets for VA cooperative studies. While some core funding is provided for administrative and technical activities, CSPCCs must be able to demonstrate an ability to successfully compete for multi-site clinical trial awards. Upon

selection of CSPCCs, negotiation of budgetary needs and discussion with VA Central Office on parameters for funding and other operational aspects of the center will occur. Once this negotiation is concluded, the duration of a CSPCC designation will be seven years.

- 7. Application Process.** A notification of intent to submit is required prior to submitting an application. For information on program requirements, intent to submit instructions, submission deadlines, application submission, and center expectations, applicants should refer to the Guidance Document, which can be downloaded from the “Resources for Researchers” section of the following web page: <http://www.research.va.gov/programs/blrd-csrd/>. This same information is also available under the BLRD/CSR D section of Funding Solicitations at: <http://www.research.va.gov/funding/solicitations/#BLRD/CSR D>.
- 8. Reporting Requirements.** CSPCCs are directly responsible to the Director, CSR D, and provide reports as requested, including, but not limited to, study specific information, budget and expense reports, and CSP initiative updates. CSPCCs are also required to submit annual reports on center activities and accomplishments.
- 9. Inquiries.** Inquiries regarding CSPCCs may be directed to Grant Huang, MPH, Ph.D., CSP Deputy Director, at (202) 254-0252 or via email at [grant.huang@va.gov](mailto:grant.huang@va.gov).



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**Attachments**

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