

2008 REAP Solicitation FAQs

Q1. Edits have been made to the 10.4.07 Final Draft. Please note important changes in ***REAP Solicitation DRAFT 10.9.07 Final Draft for REAP Call 10.9.07*** distributed for 10.11.07 REAP/TREP Conference Call.

Answer. See primary substantive *edits to date* in the following sections:

- Page 2, Section 3, d includes **DOD**
- Page 2, Section 3, e includes **relevant to the needs of veterans**
- Page 2, Section 4, includes a new definition for the primary leader of an HSR&D Center. Previously known as Director, this leadership role will be titled **Principal Investigator or PI** (**seen throughout the solicitation**) and will be changed for all Centers in the near future.
- Page 3, Section 5, a includes **relevance to the needs of veterans....and There is particular emphasis on health systems approaches to addressing the needs of the 21st century veteran population, including those veterans who have served or are serving in Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom (OIF/OEF).**
- Page 3, Section 5, b, ii includes **Report to the Associate Chief of Staff for Research and Development (ACOS/R&D).**
- Page 4, Section 5, d, iv includes **Commitment to support the information processing, storage, and security needs of the REAP.**
- Page 5, Section 7 includes **Because information technology (IT) needs cannot be directly funded by the Medical and Prosthetics Research Appropriation, proposed IT infrastructure needs must be separately documented and included within each facility's proposed IT spend plan.**
- Page A-5, d, iv, f includes **Describe the REAP Principal Investigator's reporting relationship to the ACOS/R&D.**
- Page A-8, Section 3, g, vii (under Appendices) includes **This should include a statement of commitment to support the information**

processing, storage, and security needs of the REAP from the Director.

- Page A-8, Section 3, g, vii states**including a statement of commitment from the VISN CIO to support the information processing, storage, and security needs of the REAP.**

Q2. Does the REAP solicitation allow applicants to propose affiliate or satellite campuses for their intended REAP?

Answer. As a general rule over the past few years, HSR&D has not encouraged dual or affiliate campus arrangements in Center applications. The FY08 REAP solicitation includes the following in Appendix A, section 3, d, vi, (f), (v) related to this subject:

(v) Describe and document the commitment of the medical facility (or consortium of facilities) to the REAP, and indicate how the involvement of other collaborating scientific groups (or facilities) will be managed routinely. (One-two pages)

If an applicant were to request an affiliate or satellite REAP arrangement, approval for funding would remain subject to the same merit review criteria, and reviewer/administrative evaluations of the “potential for success” as a single campus application. Solicitation requirements for letters of support, narrative descriptions, and organizational structure/management justifications should be included from the proposed stakeholders and should articulate the benefits of any suggested affiliation(s). Geographic proximity for close collaboration, common experience in the proposed research theme and health services programmatic development at the proposed sites will be evaluated by reviewers during the merit review process.

Q3. The solicitation states that applications should ensure no more than two applications from any VISN are endorsed by the VISN Director. If a region has junior Centers such as TREPs, and possibly an established REAP, would only two sites be allowed in that VISN even if they were all endorsed by the VISN Director?

Answer. Section 5, d, v of the solicitation states the following:

- d. **Local and VISN Support.** The VA medical center and VISN are expected to endorse the REAP application and provide the following:
 - v. Ensure no more than two applications from any VISN are endorsed by the VISN Director.

Applicants should begin discussions with their VISN Director to determine whether they would receive endorsement. Reviewers will be advised if more than two applications are submitted with VA medical center and VISN endorsements during the review process. If each application receives a successful review, HSR&D will consider funding for each site. However, the facility and VISN Director must provide appropriate commitment and support for each approved location.

Q4. In section 5, b, ii of the solicitation it states that the Center PI must report to the ACOS/R&D. When does this have to be in effect, prior to application or after approval? Are there any specific guidelines for this reporting mechanism?

Answer. This reporting process will be a required item for review of the proposal. If it is not clearly articulated, the proposal may be conditionally approved until this arrangement is formalized (depending on an otherwise successful review of all other items). This reporting mechanism relates to functional reporting for the Center PI. A Center PI may report to a COS for clinical purposes, but must report to or through the ACOS regarding all Center activities such as ensuring protected time, roles and responsibilities at the VAMC, negotiation of Center support, research projects, etc.

Q5. The term core staff is used in the REAP solicitation and Attachment A. What is the definition of core staff? Does it mean core investigators?

Answer. References on page 5 (Section 6, a, iii) and in Attachment A pages A-4 and A-5 (Section 3, d, vi, (c); (d); and (f), (iv)) to core staff are meant to refer to the following:

The definition of core staff would include anyone mentioned in your Center budget and justification pages, as well as TBN positions. The FTE should reflect what is stated on the 10-1313-3 Center budget for each core staff member. A brief paragraph or one-two sentences about each should be sufficient to describe their position (proposed or actual) and expertise (if applicable to research areas). The content should fit in the recommended one-two page limit. The sample table as described in the solicitation should be used (see below).

TABLE 1: HSR&D REAP CORE STAFF ORGANIZATION (example)

<u>Name/Position</u>	<u>Personnel Qualifications</u>	<u>Priority Area</u>	<u>FTEE</u>
SUSAN S. SMITH, PhD, MD GS level Principal Investigator	Biostatistics/Preventive Medicine 32 years, teaching 17 years, clinical 16 years, research Major research interests: Practice Patterns, Cardiovascular Diseases, Diabetes	*Enter the Center defined priority area this investigator is identified with such as “comorbid chronic disease”	0.5 (contributed)
JOHN D. DOE, PhD, MPH, GS level Biostatistician	Academic Field Biostatistics/Health Services Administration 5 years, teaching 7 years, research Major research interests: Dynamic Modeling, Quality of Care Measures, Benchmarking, Databases, Medical Informatics	“	0.6

Q6. Since the VA 10-13135/6 form contains most of this information in Section C: Research Support – does HSR&D still want the VA 10-1313-7 form? Or can each individual list their funding amounts (not currently included in the 10-1313-5/6 section) on the 1313-5/6 and eliminate the 1313-7 form? If HSR&D does require the 1313-7 forms, would we only include the 10-1313-8 forms if further elaboration is needed?

Answer. The solicitation instructions for Appendix 1 specifically state that 10-1313-7 is required for proposed staff and 10-1313-8 should be used if needed. Please refer to the last sentence in the following section of Appendix 1, Page A-7, 3, g, i that states:

- i. Appendix 1. Current and Pending VA and Non-VA Research Support. For proposed staff, list each person’s current and pending total VA and non-VA research support (if applicable), including funding period dates for all items listed, using **VA Form 10-1313-7** (emphasizing relevance to the selected priority area(s)). Pending requests should be included, even if there is no current support. Add **VA Form 10-1313-8** only when needed to elaborate information as requested in Form 10-1313-7. **These forms are not required for proposal submission; however, are required for the REAP application.**

Q7. Under **5. Application Requirements, d. Local and VISN Support** it states:

- iv. Commitment to support the information processing, storage, and security needs of the REAP, including a letter or memorandum of support signed by the facility Information Security Officer and Privacy Officer.

Where in the application should this memo be placed?

Answer: The letter or memorandum from the Facility ISO and PO should be included in Appendix 7 with the Medical Facility Endorsement.

Q8. I would like to include references (to the medical literature) in the text of our narrative, particularly as our focus area is quite conceptually-based and builds on published work by others, in addition to our group. I believe the 'Literature Cited' portions of a grant are not usually included in the maximum number of pages for the narrative itself. In past solicitations the instructions said to include "Literature Cited" as an additional appendix. Is that still the correct guidance?

Answer: Add the literature references to the very end of the narrative section - not as an appendix. Clearly mark this part of proposal as "Literature Cited" so those pages will be considered references and not included as part of the 28 page limit. Also in the Table of Contents section for the Proposal Narrative, **add a subcategory notation** at the end that indicates "Literature Cited" and the number of pages for this entry.

Q9. Do we need a letter of support from non-VA academic affiliate IPA/WOC collaborators for our REAP application? If yes, would they go in Appendix 4?

Answer: Letters are needed from non-VA investigators, (IPAs, WOC, and other collaborators) if they meet the definition in the solicitation. The following is the reference for letters of commitment for Appendix 4:

iv. Appendix 4. **Letters of Commitment.** Append a formal letter of commitment for all non-VA investigators who will become active collaborators with the Center's research program. Include their academic title. List consultants and indicate for each: nature of the service to be performed; fee and amount of travel and per diem for each consultant; and the number of consultations to be provided. Append a letter from each consultant who has agreed to perform this service (excluding steering committee members).

Q10. An investigator has 90% funding from HSR grants and REAP budget (1313-3) will reflect 10% funding for the investigator. In Table 1, is the FTEE for this person listed as .1 or 10%? The FAQ states that the FTEE should reflect

what is stated on the 1313-3 budget for each staff, but the person will be 100% HSR funded with the 10% support from REAP.

Answer: Only the amount of effort and funding support from core REAP budget funds should be included on the 10-1313-3 VA form and in Table 1. An investigator receiving 10% or 0.1 FTEE of funding from core funds would be listed in both places as 0.1 FTEE. Any other HSR&D funding they receive would be evident in their biosketch.

Q11. What is the maximum amount of money I can request? Are IT and travel funds included in the Core budget?

Answer: Please refer to the solicitation, Section 6, a, and 6, a, i for details. However; since posting of the REAP solicitation in October 2007 HSR&D made the decision to exclude IT expenses from Core budget totals. The following describes the allowed budget submission items for the three approved funding categories:

Application budgets should be submitted at the maximum funding level (\$300,000). The review process will determine what final level of funding will be awarded if approved. Travel funding is in addition to the Core budget, and ***IT funding is in addition to both the Core and Travel budgets.*** Applicants may request a maximum of \$306,000 plus IT funds. Use VA Forms 10-1313-3 and 10-1313-4, to summarize and justify the requested budget. One set of forms can be used with IT requests listed under “All Other Expenses” on 10-1313-3 and Table 4 for IT budget requests on 10-1313-4. These budget forms should be completed in accordance with guidance for proposal budgets on the HSR&D Website ([Detailed Instructions for Preparing Scientific Merit Review Applications](#)) to reflect the following categories:

- **Core Budget:** \$300,000
- **Travel Budget:** \$6000
- **IT Budget:** The IT Budget should NOT be included in the Core Budget. IT costs must be reasonable and should be reviewed by the ACOS/R&D and CIO to ensure only IT appropriate items are included according to IT definitions. If the application is approved for REAP funding, the final IT budget would be included with the facility spend plan through the ACOS/R&D.

Q12. How many years of funding should REAPs request (4 or 5 years)

Answer. The application budget should be for one year, FY09 for the maximum REAP funding amount (\$300,000). Please also refer to Q11 regarding IT requests.

Q13. Are REAPs expected to fund pilot projects? If so, what is a reasonable budget for pilot projects?

Answer. REAPs can fund pilot projects out of core dollars. No budget parameters are mandated, however; restrictions on the types of pilots allowed to be funded with core funds and center administrative budget expenditures may provide natural restrictions. See notation in the FAQs regarding pilots.

Q14. Are REAPs expected to provide funding to cover salaries for trainees or should they be encouraged to apply for CDA-1 or CDA-2 applications?

Answer. It depends on the terms of their traineeship, but usually not. If they receive trainee salary awards from a source such as OAA or RWJ, they would not be VA employees and may not be eligible for additional salary because of the income restrictions of their award. However, if your facility or VISN supports a local trainee program for VA employees with no restrictions for salaries, it may be possible to supplement their salary if they have a designated role in the Center. In this case, they would be entered on the personnel section of your budget including title, role, GS level, percent effort and only the portion of the salary supported by core funds. All junior investigators should be encouraged to submit for Career Development Awards (CDAs) when they become eligible for this type of award (<http://www.hsr.d.research.va.gov/funding/cdp/>).

If a trainee is identified with no restrictions from their funding source for receiving other income supplements who has significant expertise needed in your center (for example a biostatistician in a special training program for additional education/certification), they may be eligible for small amounts of core funds as an IPA (see notation in the solicitation regarding IPAs), contracted service provider or as a WOC.

Q15. Should committed FTEs from the facility be included in the REAP budget?

Answer. If a core Center staff member involved in regular Center activities (such as mentoring, workshops, contributing expertise to proposal development, etc.) whose salary/FTEE is contributed by the facility, they should be entered into the

personnel section of your budget with “contributed” or \$0 in the salary column on 10-1313-3. An explanation of the contributed salary should be included in the justification narrative on 10-1313-4. The entry for this type of staff member would be similar to how an MD is entered on budget forms with a contributed salary.

Q16. Are there any other helpful hints for developing Center budgets available?

Answer. Below is a “Budget Bullets” document that was distributed to Centers in FY07 to help with FY08 budget development. Please refer to this document for guidance on various budget categories. Note the IT Table 4 format required for IT expense requests.

Budget Bullets

The following items are to consider for addition to the HSR&D Budget Document:

All Other

Contracts for Service

10-1313-3: Contracts for Service should be listed in "All Other". Names of organizations may be listed but not individual names.

10-1313-4: In the justification documentation, a description of the service and people should explain why a contract is necessary and the costs. If clinicians are contracted, the justification should explain that they will not be working as clinicians for the purpose of the project.

Example 1- Dr. John Smith may be an expert in HIV and will be providing input to develop a survey tool for HIV patients. He will not be providing care to patients but will be providing expert content to the survey to make it more valuable.

On 10-1313-3, Dr. Smith would be listed as "Expert Service Agreement"

On 10-1313-4, the justification can name Dr. Smith and what non-clinical service he will provide.

Example 2- National Data Management, Inc. has biostatisticians with the expertise to perform data analysis at the end of the project. The project location or affiliated center does not have access to any other biostatisticians for this purpose.

On 10-1313-3, "National Data Management, Inc. Contract" or "Data Analysis Contract" should be listed.

On 10-1313-4, the organization name ("National Data Management, Inc.") should be included in the justification narrative describing the rationale for the service this group will provide.

Shipping/FedEx

If these services are used through a contract, the line item should be entered in this section. Otherwise, these services should be listed in the **Supplies** section.

Supplies

On 10-1313-3, state "Office Supplies" and the total cost in this section. A breakout by item is not needed.

On 10-1313-4, briefly justify what supplies will be purchased, why needed and the total cost.

Supplies such as toner for Non-IT equipment should be included in the **Supplies** section.

Equipment

On 10-1313-3, Non-IT photocopiers should be listed. Supplies for this equipment should be included in the **Supplies** section.

On 10-1313-3, service/maintenance agreements for Non-IT equipment should be listed as a single line item in **All Other**.

IT equipment such as fax machines, network printers, etc., service/maintenance agreements for this equipment, and related supplies should be grouped in **All Other** as "IT Expenses-see Table 4".

IT Table 4

IT Table 4 should be **PASTED INTO 10-1313-4** either preceding or following the justification narrative for IT items.

On 10-1313-3, personnel paid with IT funds **should not be listed** under **Personnel**.

On 10-1313-4, designated IT staff **should be listed** in IT Table 4 under **IT Personnel** with justification narrative including employee category (i.e., 2210, etc.)

On 10-1313-4, the IT Table 4 should include **all** of the following categories with pertinent items/costs included. The justification narrative should further describe the rationale and detail for each item. IT Personnel names should be included to ensure funding for salaries is allocated appropriately.

Table 4: IT Expenses			
Category	Type	Description	Cost
Hardware	Purchased	4-Dell Inspiron 146a Laptop	\$5,200
	Leased		
	Services		
Software	Purchased	SAS Server Licenses (base and statistical) with up to 10 users; Cold Fusion; XtraReports Suite	\$58,000
	Leased		
	Services		
Telecommunications	Purchased	Combination Fax, Copy, Scan machine	\$900
	Leased		
	Services		
IT Supplies, Materials, Contracts	Purchased	Toner cartridges, CDs	\$86
	Leased		
	Services	National Data Management, Inc.(Programmer Service)	\$42,000
IT Personnel	2210	Data Programmer (.8FTEE)	\$86,000
	2210	Data Analyst (.4FTEE)	\$32,000
Total:			\$224,186