Purpose. In compliance with, and in support of Executive Order 13985 of January 20, 2021, “Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government. ORD is dedicated to increasing representation of “underserved communities” in the VA Research workforce. These communities include Black, Latino, Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other persons of color; members of religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and LGBTQ+ persons; persons with disabilities; persons who live in rural areas; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality. Inclusion of these categories of underserved communities is intended to increase the pool of diverse applicants interested in conducting VA research in order to reflect the diversity of the Veteran population served by the VA. Additionally, federal research funding requires the inclusion of women and racial/ethnic minorities in research studies. Though the VA has previously examined the women’s health research portfolio, there has not been a systematic assessment of VA-funded research related to racial and ethnic minorities, nor of characteristics of the investigators conducting this research. To address the ORD’s DEI objectives, an assessment of the current activities related to VA-funded research involving racial and ethnic minorities is warranted. A comprehensive examination of these DEI research activities will provide valuable information in developing ORD strategies that will improve and expand: 1) a diverse scientific workforce through training and funding opportunities, 2) research focused on minority health and reducing health disparities, and 3) a culture of inclusion within ORD.

Findings will inform ORD’s assessment of alignment of the research portfolio with ORD’s strategic vision. Future year assessments (e.g., FY2023), informed by the proposed work, would focus on evaluating barriers or opportunities for realignment as needed of the scientific portfolio or support of investigators with backgrounds under-represented in the scientific workforce to support ORD’s strategic vision.

Deliverables: Data and inputs for this analysis will be collected from multiple sources: (a) ORD portfolio reports; (b) Clinical Trials.gov data; (c) a survey of VA-funded investigators; and (d) a focused review of DEI-focused publications from VA-funded studies reported in PubMed.
**Funding Available.** Applicants can request up to $350,000 to support a project coordinator, health science specialist, and personnel or contracts to facilitate data collection and analysis. **Funds must be expended by September 30, 2023. Availability of funds is dependent on Congressional appropriation.**

**Eligibility.** This opportunity is open to all VA employees who are currently affiliated with an ORD program/service. **Each VA Medical Center may submit up to one application.**

**Application Process.** All applications should be submitted by the PI’s local VA research office as a single PDF document that includes the following sections. Applications should not exceed 3 pages, excluding a cover page, budget documents, and letter of support from the VA research office.

Applications should include the following:

- **Cover page (1 page)**
  - Name of VA Medical Center
  - Name of Principal Investigator for proposal
  - Point of contact (if different from PI)

- **Proposal (2 pages)**
  - Specific Aims
  - Methodology/Research Plan
  - Analysis
  - Project management and timeline for deliverables

- **Itemized budget table and justification for the funds requested using the summary budget worksheet located at:** [http://vaww.research.va.gov/funding/electronic-submission.cfm](http://vaww.research.va.gov/funding/electronic-submission.cfm)
  **Budget table and justification are not included within the page limit.**

- **Signed letter of support from the applicant’s local VA research office (i.e., ACOS or their designee) to confirm that the application is supported by the research office.**

Applications should use black 11-point (or larger) Arial font with at least 0.5-inch margins (top, bottom, left and right) for all pages. No information should appear outside the margins. Applications should not exceed 4 pages in total, excluding the cover page, budget documents, CV/Biosketch (5-page limit), and letter of support. **Submit only the materials listed above; additional items/appendices will not be accepted.** All applications must be self-contained (i.e., without the use of URLs/hyperlinks), within specified page limits. The use of URLs/hyperlinks
is prohibited except in the Biosketch/CV. Any submission with URLs placed anywhere except in the Biosketch/CV will be withdrawn from review.

Applications must be submitted to the mailbox VHACoordDEIWG@va.gov with the subject line “Diversity Equity and Inclusion Portfolio Analysis” by August 30, 2022. Please include applicant and station name in the subject line.

**Review and Funding Notification.** Applications will be reviewed for responsiveness, feasibility, and potential impact of the proposed portfolio analysis.

Applications will be administratively reviewed by ORD. **Notification of funding will be sent out via email by October 30, 2022.**