 REQUEST FOR FUNDING FOR FIELD BASED MEETINGS TO FOSTER COLLABORATIVE MULTI-SITE STUDIES IN PRIORITY AREAS FOR VETERANS

BLRD is accepting requests for supplemental funding for field based meetings with the following requirements:

- The request must come from a VA investigator who is currently funded as PI by BLRD or has had BLRD funding that ended after November 15, 2018.
- The request must be submitted through the local research office. Stations are discouraged from submitting multiple requests.
- The meeting must be focused on planning a collaborative study involving more than one VA investigator which will further develop a discovery derived from BLRD-funded research.
- The proposed meeting should be at least 50% VA investigators with non-VA investigators included with specific relevant expertise.
  - No more than 30% of the proposed attendees may come from one station.
- The planned meeting must address an area of high importance for the health of Veterans including but not limited to: Preclinical models of posttraumatic stress disorder, substance abuse, non-opioid pain treatment, suicidality, traumatic brain injury, respiratory diseases in veterans of OEF and OIF, women Veteran health issues, intergenerational effects of toxic exposures, colorectal cancer, neurodegenerative (Alzheimer’s Disease, Parkinson’s Disease, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, etc.) and inflammatory brain disease (Multiple Sclerosis, etc.) and neuropsychiatric side effects of military exposures.
- Planning meetings that address new approaches such as the use of artificial intelligence, precision medicine, genomic medicine, organoids, tissue-on-a-chip, and regenerative medicine or utilize existing VA biorepositories will be given priority.
- Meetings including investigators with VA biorepositories and directed at developing plans to work with samples from the biorepositories are encouraged.
- The planned meeting must lead to the publication of a translational roadmap laying out the path forward. Publication costs (up to $3K) may be requested separately at the time of publication.
- The planning meeting must lead to at least one application for funding (VA, NIH, DOD, etc.). Groups of investigators planning multi-site applications may apply for planning awards of up to $5K within the 12 months following the meeting.
- The application for funding resulting from the meeting should not be for a training grant or conference award.
- Meeting costs must be under $20,000.
- Funds must be expended in FY20.
- Requestors are responsible for all planning and logistics including:
  - finding meeting space,
  - managing all attendee travel locally,
  - completing local facility/VISN approval processes as applicable, and
- completing any required formal VA Sponsored Internal Conference Package Approvals and after reporting.
- A final report of meeting conclusions and accomplishments must be submitted to BLRD within 45 days of the meeting.

Each funded proposal will be assigned to a BLRD Program Manager who will attend the meeting with costs being borne by BLRD, not the meeting funding.

Interested parties must submit:
- a 1-2 page proposal including
  - Principal Investigator (must be a VA funded PI)
  - Point of contact (if other than the PI)
  - Designated meeting planner (who is specifically assigned to work on meeting planning and execution)
  - Meeting Title
  - Goals of meeting (must be focused on the development of a study protocol and/or an application for further support)
  - Identify the gap in current knowledge, the VA research portfolio or in VA care that the meeting product will address.
  - Participant list
  - Location and estimated timing
  - Output of meeting (Study protocol, Letter of intent or grant/award proposal)
- an itemized budget for the funds requested using the attached spreadsheet
  - No more than 10% of the award should be for support personnel
- a justification for each item requested

Proposals must be submitted to the mailbox vhablrd-csrdrd@va.gov with the subject line “BLRD Meeting proposal” by December 31, 2019.

When considering the request, keep in mind that all funds received:
- must be obligated in FY 2020 and
- cannot be carried over into FY 2021.

Field based meeting funds may be used for:
- Salaries, consultant services, and IPAs of personnel supporting meeting activities
- Meeting space and associated AV expenses
- Travel costs for meeting attendees

Do not include:
- Requests that require hiring of personnel not yet identified.
- Requests that require use of funds in FY21.
- Travel expenses for any Central Office Staff who will attend the meeting. CO staff will make their own travel arrangements and CO staff travel is paid for directly by ORD.
- Funds for refreshments or for meals.
Up to 5 meeting proposals will be funded.

Proposals will be reviewed administratively for responsiveness and feasibility.

Funding notifications will be sent out before February 15, 2020

Funds will not be transferred to the station until BLRD Central Office receives notification of the meeting’s Conference Package approval.

Program Point of Contact: Christopher Bever, MD, MBA, Director, BLRD at Christopher.Bever@va.gov,

Thank you, BLRD