REQUEST FOR FUNDING FOR VIRTUAL FIELD-BASED MEETINGS TO SUPPORT THE VA RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

BLRD is accepting requests for funding for virtual 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 September 30, 2019.
- The field-based meeting must be conducted virtually. Ideally, the meeting should occur as soon as possible to maximize relevancy. However, approval may be requested for meeting to occur after March 31, 2021.
- Each meeting must result in the development of a translational roadmap laying out the research path forward. The planned translational roadmap should be published (publication costs up to $3,000 may be requested separately at the time of publication).
- The highest priority will be given to proposals submitted by VA investigators with COVID-19-related proposals that have already been selected for funding.
- The planned meeting must address an area of high importance for the health of Veterans including but not limited to: models of SARS-CoV-2 infection, the pathophysiology of SARS-CoV-2 infection including pulmonary involvement and involvement of organs other than the lungs, the immune response to SARS-CoV-2 (innate, humoral and cellular), the effects of diabetes, obesity, age and other comorbidities on susceptibility and severity, development of prevention strategies and treatments for the infection and its complications and the development of improved methods of virus surveillance and disinfection relevant to VA medical facilities.
- This funding opportunity solicits 2 types of meetings:
  1. Meetings that bring together researchers with a current COVID-related research award and
  2. Meetings to plan a future submission of a collaborative merit application.
- For meetings for currently funded COVID-related researchers: if an on-going collaboration of 3 or more COVID-related researchers is initiated, a $50,000 annual administrative supplement may be requested. To request the supplement, the investigators must submit the roadmap, a brief summary of the collaborative effort, and a use and justification for the additional funds.
- For meetings to plan a future submission of a collaborative merit application, an annual $50,000 administrative supplement be awarded after positive review and award of at least 3 collaborative merit applications. Please see BX-20-007, BLRD and CSRD Collaborative Merit Review Award (BCCMA) (I01), for more information.
- The request for a field-based meeting must be submitted through the local research office. Stations are discouraged from submitting multiple requests.
- 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.
- Meeting costs must be under $10,000.
- Requestors are responsible for all planning and logistics.
• 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
  1. Principal Investigator (must be a VA funded PI)
  2. Point of contact (if other than the PI)
  3. Designated meeting planner (who is specifically assigned to work on meeting planning and execution)
  4. Meeting Title
  5. Goals of meeting (must be focused on the development of translational roadmap)
  6. Participant list
  7. Virtual platform and estimated timing
• an itemized budget for the funds requested using the attached spreadsheet
  1. 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-csrd@va.gov with the subject line “BLRD Meeting proposal” by October 16, 2020.

When considering the request, keep in mind that all funds received:
• must be obligated March 31, 2021 unless approval for a later meeting has been received and
• cannot be carried over into FY 2022.

Field based meeting funds may be used for:
• Salaries, consultant services, and IPAs of personnel supporting meeting activities.
• Virtual meeting expenses.

Do not include:
• Requests that require hiring of personnel not yet identified.
• Requests that require use of funds after March 31, 2021.
• Funds for refreshments or for meals.

Proposals will be reviewed administratively for responsiveness and feasibility.

Funding notifications will be sent out before October 31, 2020.
Funds will not be transferred to the station until BLRD Central Office receives a final meeting budget and notification of any required meeting approvals.

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Thank you, BLRD