



**Department of Veterans Affairs
OFFICE OF RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT (ORD)**

RELEASE DATE: January 3, 2024

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY ANNOUNCEMENT: SUPPORT FOR DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION TRAINING FOR VETERANS AFFAIRS FIELD RESEARCH EMPLOYEES

Purpose. The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Office of Research and Development (ORD) announces an opportunity for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). This opportunity is open to all VA employees who are currently affiliated with an ORD program/service including Research Services, Programs, Centers and VA investigators with current ORD-funded projects to request funds for education that will promote and support diversity, equity, and inclusion in their workforce.

ORD is seeking to support training and education in diversity, equity and inclusion for VA investigators and research staff in order to foster cultural awareness and promote a more diverse, equitable and inclusive research workforce. This announcement is in compliance with 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, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other persons of color; members of religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual (LGBTQIA+) persons; persons with disabilities; persons who live in rural areas; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality.

The criteria above are intended to increase the applicant pool but will not be used as a determinative factor in selecting participants for this initiative.

Funding Available. Applicants can request up to \$5,000 to support training or education in topics related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. The education or training should be focused on raising awareness of perpetual, institutional, and other barriers that may influence workplace culture, recruitment, and retention. **Funds must be expended by September 30, 2024.** **Training must be completed within a year of the award. Availability of funds is dependent on Congressional appropriation.**

Funds may be used for the following but not limited to:

- Paid speakers/facilitators
- Consultant services and IPAs and salaries of personnel supporting meeting activities
- Meeting space rental and any associated audiovisual expenses

- Travel costs for meeting attendees

Funds **cannot** be used for:

- Hiring of personnel
- Travel expenses for any Central Office (CO) Staff who will attend the meeting. CO staff will make their own travel arrangements as CO staff travel is paid for directly by ORD.
- Refreshments or meals
- Office supplies or peripherals

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 2 pages, excluding cover page, budget documents, and letter of support from the VA research office.

Applications should include the following:

- Cover page (1 page)
 - VA Medical Center
 - Name of the person organizing the training/education
 - Role in ORD-funded center/project for person organizing training/education
 - Name of Principal Investigator or Director of the VA ORD funded project/center
 - eRA number or project ID and title of the currently VA funded project/center
 - Point of contact (if different than the person to receive the training)
- Proposal (2 pages)
 - Training Champion (must be VA Research Service employee associated with an active VA funded project/center).
 - Point of contact (if other than the Training Champion)
 - Rationale for specific training and why it is important for the VA team, department, or medical center, including the goals of the training (must be focused on addressing Diversity Equity and Inclusion for all employees) with clear translational goals and the gap in current knowledge that the meeting product will address.
 - Meeting title and link to meeting site for training (if available)
 - Plan to evaluate the impact of the training (e.g., participant survey)
 - Meeting details such as location, virtual platform, and estimated timing
- Itemized budget table and justification for the funds requested using the attached spreadsheet. **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 training 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 in the margins. Applications should not exceed 4 pages in total, excluding 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 else except in the Biosketch/CV will be withdrawn from review.

Applications must be submitted to the mailbox VHACoordDEIwg@va.gov with the subject line "DEI Training" by **April 3, 2024**. 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 educational program to raise cultural awareness and support a diverse, inclusive, and equitable workforce and workplace environment that supports employees and Veterans receiving healthcare. If selected for funding, participants will agree to complete an evaluation assessment.

Applications will be administratively reviewed by ORD. If selected for funding, awardees will be required to submit a report or present about the training and its impact to ORD staff.

Notifications will be sent out by email by May 30, 2024.