VA Career Development Awards

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Your hosts

- Mike Steinman
- Mary Whooley
- Anne Schafer
- Carl Grunfeld
- Rebecca Yu
- David Pennington
- Erica Kornblith
- Tiffany Kim
- Carolyn Gibson

Agenda

- Overview of awards and process
- Panel discussion

VA

- Great place to build a research career
  - Full spectrum of care & data
  - Translational opportunities
  - Priorities of an integrated health system caring for a largely underserved population
    - Examples: aging, mental health, homeless
  - VA-specific funding opportunities PLUS the usual others (i.e., NIH)

- Many faculty have hybrid VA & university appointments and funding

VA CDA Program

- VA research organized into 4 services
  - Health Services Research (HSR&D)
  - Clinical Research (CSR&D)
  - Rehabilitation Research (RR&D)
  - Biomedical and Lab Research (BLR&D)

- Details differ

CDA-1 vs CDA-2

CDA-1	CDA-2
"Pre-K" – often appropriate for people exiting fellowship	"K" – typically need more publications and experience - 2-3 yrs on faculty, internal K
2 years - 75% of salary	3-5 years - 75% of salary (100% for non-clinicians)
$20K/yr research funds	~$50-75K/yr research funds

Availability varies by service:
- RR&D – yes
- HSR&D – no
- CSR&D, BLR&D – specific targeted groups & topics
  - Veteran, psychiatrist, and HBCU-affiliated scientists
  - Suicide prevention
	Available for all services.
	Additional RFAs for targeted groups and topics:
	- HBCU-affiliated scientists
	- Dementia

Application process and deadlines

- 2 cycles per year (timing varies between services)
- LOI must be submitted and approved
  - 2 to 6 months from LOI to final application (depending on service)
  - Also "intent to submit"

- Some CDAs require eligibility based on years since terminal degree (PhD) or terminal clinical training (clinicians)
  - Varies

How are applications judged?

- Many similarities to NIH K awards
  - Candidate
  - Project significant, innovative, scientifically robust
  - Career training plan and mentorship

- Some differences
  - Promise of VA appointment with protected time
  - VA-ness
  - Applications often culled at LOI stage

VA appointment

- Don't need to apply – but need one to receive (and promise from local VA leaders to hire you)
  - Must be approved by service chief
- Talk to your mentors and VA service chiefs early

VA-ness

- Need "VA-ness"
    - Commitment to VA – build a career
    - Mentorship from VA investigators
    - Connection to clinical operations (HSR&D)
    - Thematic focus

Thematic focus

HSR&D Research Priorities At a Glance

ORD Clinical Priorities*

Suicide Prevention*	Substance Use Disorders including opioid misuse and stimulant use disorders, and pain management
Access to Care	Long-term Care and Aging
Mental Health (including PTSD*)	Health Care Informatics and EHR Modernization (Cerner Migration) including measurement/information science
Women's Health	Health Equity and Social Determinants of Health
Health Care Value	Quality and Safety of Health Care
Primary Care Practice and Complex Chronic Disease Management	Population Health and Whole Health
Disabilities related to Military Exposure) including spinal cord injury (SCI) and traumatic brain injury (TBI)-focus on health systems factors	Virtual Care/Telehealth

Cross-cutting HSR Methods

- Implementation Science
- Complexity Science/Health System Engineering
- Data & Measurement Science

Legislative Priorities

- MISSION Act
- Comprehensive Addiction & Recovery Act (CARA)
- Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act
- Foundations for Evidence-based Policymaking Act

Professional backgrounds

- VA historically open to investigators with wide variety of backgrounds
  - PhDs, clinical psychologists, nurses, pharmacists
- Rules can differ
  - Non-clinical PhDs can get 100% salary support off CDA-2s, for *some* services need to be <=5 years from receiving PhD
- Be mindful of local pathways for advancement; speak with mentors

Lots of success at SFVA

- 17 current or soon-to-be CDA awardees
    - 3 HSR&D
    - 10 CSR&D
    - 1 RR&D
    - 1 BLR&D

Resources

- Mentors
- VA Research Office
- Local centers – CHIME
- Program officers
- Elizabeth Yano series of talks
    - https://www.hsrd.research.va.gov/cyberseminars/
    - Search for "Yano" – series of talks from 2016
- www.research.va.gov
- ***vaww***.research.va.gov/funding/rfa.cfm

Additional Resources on VA Career Development Awards

Overview and funding opportunities
https://www.research.va.gov/funding/cdp.cfm (internet)
https://vaww.research.va.gov/funding/rfa.cfm (intranet)

VA Dimensions Program and VA Strategic Plan
https://va.dimensions.ai
https://vaww.hsrd.research.va.gov/dimensions/
https://www.va.gov/oei/docs/VA2018-2024strategicPlan.pdf

Funded projects and scientific review success rates
https://www.research.va.gov/about/funded-projects.cfm
https://www.research.va.gov/services/shared_docs/resources.cfm#5
HSR&D-funded CDAs: https://www.hsrd.research.va.gov/cdp/current.cfm