



Veterans Health Foundation

Improving Veterans Lives Through Research and Education

Gerald Goldstein Early Career Mental Health Research Award

Application Overview

Dear Applicant:

The Veterans Health Foundation (VHF) invites applications to the 7th Annual Gerald Goldstein Early Career Mental Health Research Award. The purpose of the Award is to promote research that contributes to the early career development of Psychologists and Psychiatrists and aims to contribute to the advancement of the mental health and care of patients with mental illness. Research proposals may be directed to any of a broad range of mental health-related topics spanning basic and clinical neuroscience, clinical and laboratory research, and health services research. Emphasis is placed on the scientific merit of the research, the overall value of the project and relevance to understanding mental illness (including the etiology and course of alcohol and substance use disorders), and/or enhancing Veteran mental health care and outcomes mission. An important criterion used to evaluate proposals is their potential to yield data for use in obtaining future research support through VA and other sources (e.g. Department of Defense or the National Institutes of Health). To that end, early career investigators are expected to work with a mentor who has successfully obtained extramural grant funding [e.g., VA Merit Award applications, VA career development applications, NIH career development (K) awards, individual NIH research project (e.g., R01) applications]. Only one application per individual will be accepted.

Eligibility Criteria

- VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System, Wilkes-Barre VA Medical Center, and Wilmington VA Medical Center psychologists and psychiatrists who are within 5 years of completion of the terminal PhD or MD degree and formal residency, internship or fellowship
- Applicants must have a 3/8ths or greater appointment at the VA at the project start date
- Applicants are expected to remain at their VAMC during at least the first year of the project

Award Ceiling

Awards totaling \$20,000 are available. The project award is for a term of one year with a no-cost extension for an additional year available by request.

Review Criteria

Awards will be based on scientific merit and innovation, applicability to Veteran mental health, and relevance to the VA mission. As indicated above, the type of research and the methods used are not limited and can range from basic science to clinical trials and health services research, provided that the project focuses on topics relevant to the mental health of Veterans.

Sincerely,

Alanna Caffas
Chief Executive Officer
Veterans Health Foundation



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Guidelines for the Submission and Review of Applications

Budget

Budgets of up to \$20,000 will be considered. Funds are not available for physical plant infrastructure or for salary support for the investigator nor for their mentor. Funding for personnel support is a legitimate request. The service line of other full time VA employees may be reimbursed for the time the employee works on the grant. No indirect costs should be included in the proposed budget. A justification is required for all equipment items that exceed \$500 in cost. Budget requests for travel must not exceed \$2,000. Amounts may be rounded to the nearest \$100.

Guidelines for Letter of Intent (LOI)

Letters of Intent (LOI) are due no later than 5/16/25. Full proposals are due no later than 6/16/25. *An LOI must be submitted and approved by the Review Committee prior to the submission of a full proposal.*

The LOI should be one page and include the following information:

1. Principal Investigator
 - a. Full name, degree(s), title(s), VA/University Affiliations
 - b. Office address, phone, fax, email address
2. Names of other key personnel
3. Title and brief description of proposed research including:
 - a. Specific aims
 - b. Scientific rationale
 - c. Brief description of methods
 - d. Significance to VA
 - e. Likelihood the completed project will lead to subsequent independent funding
4. (*Optional*) Include names (up to 3) of potential reviewers and indicate their pertinent area of expertise. In addition, please refer to the [NIH COI policy](#) for reviewer eligibility guidance.

The LOI will be reviewed by 5/26/25. Approval of the LOI will be based on the following criteria:

- a. Proposed project being within the scope of mental health-related research
- b. Significance of the project to the VA
- c. Plans for conducting future research at the VA

Review Committee

Grant reviewers will be selected by the VAPHS ACOS for Research and Development, the VHF Executive Director and the Award Fund Selection Committee. Reviewers will be comprised of scientific investigators with expertise in areas of mental health-related research and methods, including basic and clinical neuroscience, clinical psychology and neuropsychology, psychopathology, psychophysiology, psychopharmacology and other content domains relevant to Veteran mental health. A panel of reviewers with expertise in the relevant areas and without personal connection to the applicant(s) will be constituted to review and score applications utilizing a standardized scoring assessment methodology. The Review Committee will determine the cut-off score for awards and make the final funding decision.

Submission and Approval Dates

All applications must be submitted electronically to: **Shannon.Hula@va.gov**. The deadline for the submission of the **LOI** is 5/16/25. The deadline for the submission of the **application** is 6/16/25. The target date for the notification of approval/disapproval is 7/14/25.

Funds will be administered by the Veterans Health Foundation.

Attachments:

- a. Application Cover Page
- b. Budget Form

Instructions for Proposal Preparation

Applications for the Gerald Goldstein Early Career Mental Health Research Award are limited to 5 single-spaced pages, excluding references. The application package should include:

- The Grants Application Fillable Electronic Cover Page
- A complete one-year budget using the included Budget Form template. Include a budget justification for personnel and all equipment items. Examples of budget line items: Biostatistician or research assistant support (e.g., \$80/hour through the VAPHS Research StatCore; please provide StatCore letter of support), equipment purchase, travel and/or registration to conference to present research findings.
- The [NIH biographical sketch](#) for the Principal Investigator and any other key personnel, including all past research grant(s) and fellowship support.
- Research Plan

The Research Plan should include sufficient information needed for evaluation of the project, independent of any other document. Be specific and informative, and avoid redundancies. Organize items a-c (below), to answer these questions:

1. What do you intend to do?
2. What has already been done?
3. Why is the work important?
4. How are you going to do the work?

Do not exceed 5 pages for the Research Plan, with margins set at 1 inch and the font at 11 points or larger. All tables, graphs, figures, diagrams and charts must be included within the 5-page limit.

References should not exceed two pages and do not count against the 5-page limit.

- a. **Specific Aims.** List the project objectives and what the specific research proposed in this application is intended to accomplish. State the research question to be tested.
- b. **Background and Significance.** Briefly sketch the background leading to the present application, critically evaluate existing knowledge, and specifically identify the gaps that the project is intended to

fill. State concisely the importance and relevance of the research described in this application by relating the specific aims to the broad, long-term objectives.

- c. **Research Design and Methods.** Describe the research design and the procedures to be used to accomplish the specific aims of the project. Include how the data will be collected, analyzed, and interpreted. Describe any new methodology and its advantage over existing methodologies. Discuss the potential difficulties and limitations of the proposed procedures and alternative approaches to achieving the aims. As part of this section, provide a tentative sequence or timetable for the project. Point out any procedures, situations, or materials that may be hazardous to personnel and the precautions to be exercised.

The 5-page limit will be strictly enforced. Applications that exceed this limit or do not conform to the type size limitations will be returned without review. The full application must be combined into one PDF document.

Applications must be submitted electronically to Shannon.Hula@va.gov

Any questions relating to application submission should also be directed to Shannon Hula.

Contact Information:

Shannon Hula, PhD
Grants and Contracts Manager
Veterans Health Foundation
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Shannon.Hula@va.gov