

VISN 5 MIRECC Small Grants Program for Recovery-Fostering Clinical and Educational Innovations

Proposal Submission Guidelines

The Capital Health Care Network (VISN 5) Mental Illness Research, Education, and Clinical Center (MIRECC) was formed in 1999, and is one of ten MIRECCs in the Veterans Health Administration, mandated by Congress to improve the provision of mental health care to veterans through research, education, and clinical activities. The VISN 5 MIRECC focuses on research, training, and services for veterans with serious mental illnesses, especially schizophrenia, and their families.

In early 2005, in response to the VA's Action Agenda to transform VA mental health services to a recovery model, the VISN 5 MIRECC initiated various activities to support and encourage recovery-oriented efforts across the VISN, including this Small Grants program.

Purpose & Focus of the Small Grants Program

The purpose of this Small Grants program is to catalyze, through seed money grants, VA clinical innovation and educational efforts that foster the development of recovery-oriented mental health services and other programs in VISN 5.

Recovery-oriented mental health services have as a core value that people living with mental illnesses are not defined by their illness and can live rich satisfying lives. More specifically, such services...

- View the veteran as the center of the process, and foster empowerment
- Include the veteran and involved family members as partners in setting goals
- Recognize that recovery is a dynamic process that the veteran pursues over time
- Seek to restore hope and return of function
- Work to maximize quality of life
- In contrast with a focus on only maintenance or stabilization, involve helping the veteran move forward to achieve his/her goals.
- Employ staff who treat the veteran with respect, believe in the veteran as a person with potential, and express hope and optimism for the recovery process.
- Actively work to eliminate stigma related to mental illnesses in their own operations and the larger organization and community.

Therefore, the Small Grants program especially encourages (but is not limited to) proposals for:

- Creating, adopting, launching new recovery-oriented clinical, self-help, or related projects – or expanding existing ones to reach more veterans.
- New programs to educate staff, veterans, and/or family members of veterans with SMI about mental health recovery models, or specific recovery-oriented services/programs.
- One-time purchase of new curricula, training materials, equipment, etc needed to initiate a recovery-oriented clinical or educational innovation.

Application Eligibility

Proposals may come from any individual or group (eg unit or program) within VISN 5 mental health services, including veteran/consumer groups. Group proposals must name a specific individual as the designated contact-person responsible for that proposal. We encourage applications from all VISN 5 mental health sites.

Applicants must submit a complete proposal by one of four annual deadlines (details below)

(Note: this small grant program will not accept proposals for research. For information on the MIRECC's separate research pilot mechanism, contact Dr. Lisa Dixon, Associate Director Research Core, at 410/605-7567 or see <http://www1.va.gov/visn5mirecc>)

Application Process

Award Amount: Small Grant awards will be made 4 time per year, for between \$300 and \$5,000.

Deadlines: March 1st, June 1st, September 1st, December 1st.

To apply: please prepare and submit the following:

1. Completed cover sheet (see attached format)
2. In no more than two additional pages (single or double spaced, one inch margins, 12 point type) explain your proposed project, using the following sections:
 - a. **Summary of Proposed Project** : What do you propose to do? Why? How? With whom? Where? When? Etc.
 - b. **Timeline:** Projected timeline for each step of the proposed project, including completion date(s). Monies will be available for up to 1 year after award is made.
 - c. **Relevance to Recovery:** How would your project further the recovery model in VA mental health services?
 - d. **Specific itemized budget:** Projected costs of all materials and expenses for which you are applying for funding, and how they are necessary to the project. Please feel free to also include statements about any other support that is relevant to the project and/or helps to illustrate its feasibility.
 - e. **Outcomes:** What will be the lasting effects of your project, beyond this funding? That is, how it will be sustained and/or how will its effects last into the future? How will you evaluate or document its outcomes?
3. A letter approving implementation of the proposed project (if it is funded), from the facility Mental Health Director and other relevant VA mental health services administrator(s)

Tip: Within the page limits be complete while being brief. Reviewers can not know what you are proposing unless you are specific. Vague or incomplete proposals cannot be reviewed adequately and will be returned to you un-reviewed for further development and resubmission at the next deadline.

Submission: Please submit all materials (1-3 above) together by email, to Dr. Alicia Lucksted at Alicia.Lucksted@med.va.gov

Please NOTE: Recovery, clinical, and education staff at the MIRECC are glad to help you formulate ideas and craft your proposal. Please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Lucksted, VISN 5 MIRECC Recovery Coordinator, *prior* to your finalizing and submitting your proposal if you wish to talk over ideas, have questions, or want assistance developing your ideas into a proposal. She will gladly provide support and technical assistance:

Alicia Lucksted PhD, MIRECC Recovery Coordinator
Alicia.Lucksted@med.va.gov
410 / 605-7451 or 410 / 706-3244

Review Process

A panel composed of the MIRECC Associate Director Education Core (Dr. Paul Ruskin), the MIRECC Associate Director Clinical Core (Dr. Richard Goldberg) and a third MIRECC faculty member will review all applications, making funding decisions in consultation with the MIRECC steering committee and, when needed, the facility's Director of Mental Health.

Each application will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

1. Clarity and completeness of proposal
2. Embodiment / promotion of a recovery model in mental health
3. Appropriateness of the project to the needs, characteristics, and knowledge level of the target population(s), whether veterans, family members, staff, or other.
4. Project feasibility
5. Likelihood of and evaluation of lasting impact / effect
6. All awards are subject to the availability of funds

Applicants will be informed of the funding decision regarding their proposal no later than two months after the deadline under which they submitted it.

Requirements AFTER Receiving a Small Grant

Applicants receiving a Small Grant will receive ongoing support and assistance from Dr. Lucksted across the duration of their project. Awardees will also be required to submit a brief progress report via email every 3 months during the period of their funding, to Dr. Lucksted.

Awardees must submit a Final Report within three months of their project's completion date, or one year after the date of award, whichever comes first. Reports Final reports must include a copy of any educational or resource materials created during the project, and should be sent to Dr. Lucksted, who will share it with MIRECC management and facility Director of Mental Health.

All resource materials created as part of a project funded by this mechanism (eg manual, resource booklet, handouts, publications, etc) and all presentations of such projects must acknowledge support from the "VISN 5 MIRECC Small Grants Program for Recovery-Fostering Educational and Clinical Innovations"

**VISN 5 MIRECC Small Grants Program
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APPLICATION COVER SHEET

1. Descriptive Project Title

2. Principle grant applicant / contact person
a. Name:
b. Unit, Program or Group Affiliation:
c. Preferred email address:
d. Preferred telephone number & extension:

3. Itemized Budget Summary with Total
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**For questions or assistance, please contact:
Dr. Alicia Lucksted, VISN-5 MIRECC Recovery Coordinator
Alicia.Lucksted@med.va.gov 410/605-7451 or 410/706-3244**