**HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICE (HSR&D)
PROJECT FINAL REPORTS**

1. RESPONSIBILITY. The Principal Investigator (PI) for each research project funded by the Health Services Research and Development Service (HSR&D) is responsible for submitting a project Final Report:

a. Conforming to the instructions contained in this Appendix. ***NOTE:*** *A PI who has an overdue Final Report will not receive funding to initiate a new HSR&D project until the Final Report is received. In addition, HSR&D will not review a new proposal from a PI who has an overdue Final Report.*

b. To HSR&D through designated local officials whose signatures guarantee their awareness of the work and their approval of the Final Report.

2. PURPOSE. HSR&D project Final Reports serve the following purposes, they:

a. Provide documentation for HSR&D research investments,

b. Identify important research findings and appropriate audiences for dissemination,

c. Provide needed information that is not already available in another form, and

d. Give investigators a direct forum for communicating with HSR&D and Research and Development (R&D) about their work.

3. DATE OF SUBMISSION. Final Reports are due within 90 days of the project's official end date. Requests for additional time to prepare the Final Report must be submitted to the relevant portfolio or program manager through the Associate Chief of Staff (ACOS) for R&D. ***NOTE:*** *Timely reporting is very important; extension requests are discouraged.*

4. RESPONSIBILITIES OF HSR&D. HSR&D is responsible for approving or disapproving the Final Report. HSR&D:

a. Conducts administrative and content review of each Final Report. In addition, the Report may be sent to one or more external reviewer(s) to help assess the validity, significance, and implications of the findings, and to identify appropriate audiences for dissemination. If reviewers have any significant concerns about the Final Report, HSR&D communicates these to the PI, and may require revisions.

b. Notifies the PI and ACOS for R&D when review of the Final Report is complete and shares with the PI any written critiques or recommendations. ***NOTE:*** *Prior to notification of approval by HSR&D, the Report is not to be distributed except to individuals who served on the research team.*

NOTE: If, subsequent to approval of the Final Report by HSR&D, the PI materially changes any conclusions or recommendations, an amended report must be submitted promptly.

5. FORMAT. Use at least 1-inch margins on all sides and a standard font no smaller than 11-point. Use single-sided copying, with each section starting on a new page. Include a Table of Contents, and number every page.

6. COMPONENTS. All HSR&D project Final Reports are to include the following sections: Title Page, Abstract, Highlights, Discussion of Project Changes (if applicable), Publications and/or Product List, and Full Publications. Together, these six parts provide a comprehensive, but concise description of what was done and what was found, as well as what the investigator thinks it means and what (if anything) HSR&D might do to help disseminate and/or implement the findings.

   a. **Title Page**

   (1) Identify as "Final Report for HSR&D project <u>identification number</u>."   On subsequent lines, list: project title, PI (and co-PI) name(s), dates of project funding period, and Final Report date.

   (2) Include a disclaimer indicating that the Final Report presents the findings and conclusions of the author(s); and that it does not necessarily represent the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) or HSR&D.

   (3) At the bottom of the page, include a statement acknowledging HSR&D support in the following form: "This research was supported by the Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Health Administration, Health Services Research and Development Service." If applicable, also identify other sources of funding.

   b. **Abstract**

   (1) **Purpose.** The abstract submitted to HSR&D with the Final Report provides an at-a-glance summary of the project, in a very short, structured format.

   (2) **Format.** Use the same format as specified for HSR&D annual progress reports (refer to current instructions at website: http://www.hsrd.research.va.gov/for_researchers/funding/reporting_guidelines.cfm). The Final Report abstract needs to be identical, in both format and content, to the final abstract entered into other VA databases. Compared with the initial project abstract or annual updates, the final abstract needs to use relatively more space for findings and/or results and impact, and less space for background, objectives and methods. Use appropriate verb tense, and enter "complete" in the Status line to make clear that the project is, in fact, complete. *NOTE: Publications are not to be cited in the abstract.*

c. **Highlights**

(1) **Purpose.** "Highlights" is the primary document used by HSR&D for dissemination of information about the study. Therefore, this document must include enough information about the purpose of the study and how it was conducted so that it can serve as a stand-alone summary to inform non-researchers**.** It needs to emphasize what was found or produced and the implications for clinical care, management, future research, and/or policy (as pertinent). The writing must be very clear. Important caveats or qualifications need to be indicated, and the language needs to be non-technical. *NOTE: The Highlights document is not an "executive summary" in that it is not expected to cover all aspects of th*e *project.*

(2) **Format.** Highlights may not exceed three pages of text.

(3) **Content.** Include the following sub-sections:

(a) Background and Objectives. Indicate why the study was undertaken and list all objectives that were presented in the approved research proposal (up to 1/2 page).

(b) Design and/or Methods. Include information about the study design, intervention (if any), source(s) of data, site(s), sample, and generalizability of results (unless research methods were the focus of the study, this section should not exceed 1/2 page).

(c) Findings. Summarize findings related to each of the stated objectives. For each highlighted finding, identify the working paper or publication that contains details (approximately 1 page).

(d) Discussion and Implications. Did you find what you expected? Do results have important implications for clinical care, health care policy, or future research? Are they likely to be controversial? Who needs to know? What do you recommend as next steps? (Approximately 1 page.)

(e) Recommendations to HSR&D. Identify any unpublished finding that may warrant external review and/or early dissemination, and any published finding that may warrant special notice.

d. **Discussion of Project Changes** (if applicable)

(1) **Purpose.** To identify substantial ways in which the final work differs from the originally-approved project and discuss the implications. *NOTE: Changes may include planned activities that were not completed as planned, added activities, and revised activities.*

(2) **Format.** This section should not exceed three pages.

(3) **Content.** As pertinent, address the following:

(a) Objectives and/or Specific Aims. Significant changes in the scope of the project or specific aims, compared with the approved proposal.

(b) Methods. Significant changes in research design or methods, compared with the approved proposal.

(c) Resources and Personnel. Changes in the project budget, timeline, or key personnel compared with the approved proposal.

NOTE: In accordance with HSR&D policy, major changes in the specific aims, methods, or budget require prior approval.

e. **Publications and/or Product List.** This paragraph provides a comprehensive account of completed and planned publications, working papers, abstracts and other products resulting from this HSR&D-supported research project.

(1) **Format.** Using the headings in subparagraph 6e(2)(a) through 6e(2)(d), list all publications and products in chronological order. For publications, use New England Journal of Medicine bibliographic style.

(2) **Content.** List all items, completed and planned, resulting from this HSR&D-funded project, with actual or expected publication and/or completion dates. Do not include work that pre-dates the subject HSR&D project or that was solely supported by another source.

(a) Publications and Working Papers. Every HSR&D Final Report must include at least one publication or working paper addressing the main results of the project.

1. List all articles based on this project that are published or "in press." For each, include the authors, title, journal (if applicable), actual or expected publication date (if applicable), and one statement addressing the focus or impact. *NOTE: For full papers see subparagraph 6f.*

2. List completed, unpublished working papers based on this project. For each, indicate whether or not it has been, or will be, submitted for publication. If so, does the article address time-critical information important to veterans' health and health care? If submission for publication is not planned, what other type of dissemination is warranted, and who should be informed about it? *NOTE: For example, if the paper is thought to lack interest outside VA, or is too detailed for journal publication, is it of importance to VHA policymakers or does it contain methodological detail that may interest other researchers?*

(b) Abstracts and Presentations. List all published abstracts and all presentations based on work supported by this HSR&D project. For published abstracts, include full citation. For presentations, list authors, title, location and date of presentation, and a

single statement describing the focus or impact. If there is not yet a publication or working paper for this item, include the abstract in subparagraph 6f.

   (c) Planned Publications. List additional planned publications based on this HSR&D project (for which there is no completed working paper). For each, include authors, working title, focus and/or impact statement, and the anticipated date of manuscript completion.

NOTE: PIs are reminded to acknowledge HSR&D support in all publications (including the project number), to notify HSR&D regarding acceptance, and to provide a copy, according to standard HSR&D policy. Subsequent to submission of the project Final Report, investigators need to continue to notify HSR&D regarding any article(s) accepted for publication according to standard HSR&D policy.

   (d) Other Products. List any other products that resulted from the work supported by this HSR&D project. Examples include: educational or training aids, computerized reminder systems, treatment algorithms, programs for abstracting and organizing Veterans Health Information System and Technology Architecture (VistA) data, etc. For each, give a very brief (one paragraph) explanation of the nature and potential use of this product and provide contact information for requesting details.

   f. **Full Publications.** This paragraph provides full, journal-style publications, working papers, and submitted abstracts (when there is no corresponding manuscript) reporting results supported by this HSR&D project.

   (1) **Format for Working Papers.** Each working paper is to be in standard journal style. Working papers may run longer than typical journal articles, but investigators are encouraged to be concise. Emphasis needs to be placed on methodological detail; it is expected that working papers will contain much more methodological detail and/or more detailed presentation of the data and results than is usually presented in a final journal article. The background and discussion sections may be brief; however, they need to include some information as to why the study was undertaken, how the results fit into the current literature, and the implications and limitations of the study's findings. Each working paper must include key references, but the background and discussion sections need not be as fully-referenced as in a final publication.

   (2) **Content.** Provide, in full, all papers that are published or in press, all papers that have been submitted, and all other completed working papers reporting results supported by this project. Include at least one publication, or working paper, containing the study's main results.

   g. **Appendix (Optional).** The Appendix needs to be limited to critical information that is not available elsewhere.

7. SUBMISSION

   a. **Transmittal Letter.** The Final Report must be approved by the local R&D Committee and transmitted to HSR&D through the ACOS or Coordinator of R&D. The transmittal letter must be signed by the: PI, ACOS for R&D, facility Director, and Chairperson of any project steering committee. In addition, if the PI is located at an HSR&D Center, the letter must be signed by the Director of that unit. These signatures indicate that the Final Report accurately describes the research that was done and that it has undergone local review. This letter needs to include a description of the local review and summary of reviewers' conclusions.

   b. **Copies**

   (1) Submit the original and one complete, single-sided copy. *NOTE: If color printing is used, HSR&D may request additional copies for dissemination.* The original needs to be held together with a removable fastener. The copies must be bound or fastened securely and must have a protective cover. If not using a transparent cover, the cover must include all information contained on the title page. Place the transmittal letter immediately behind the title page.

   (2) Also submit a complete electronic copy of the Final Report, including (if possible) articles identified in the Publications List. Use a Windows compatible diskette or CD, in the latest available version of Microsoft Word or Word Perfect for Windows. Label the disk with PI name, project number, file name, format, and date. The electronic file is to be a single document that matches the paper Report in every possible respect.

    (3) Submit report to:

       Director, Health Services Research and Development Service (124)
       Department of Veterans Affairs
       810 Vermont Avenue, N.W.
       Washington, DC 20420

8. INQUIRIES

       The PI's local R&D Office is the appropriate initial contact for inquiries about Final Reports. Other questions about submission and review of HSR&D Final Reports may be directed to the relevant portfolio or program manager.