

**Department of Veterans Affairs
Office of Research and Development**

Instructions for Submitting a Career Development Letter of Intent

For the Career Development policy Handbook, refer to the Resources section of the following web page: <http://www.research.va.gov/funding/CDP.cfm> For access to the electronic versions of VA Forms required for this LOI, please refer to: <http://www.research.va.gov/funding/process/forms.cfm>

A Letter of Intent (LOI) is required prior to submitting an application to the VA Career Development Award (CDA) program. The purpose of the LOI is to determine whether a nominee meets eligibility criteria, the appropriate level of award for the nominee, and to plan for the expertise needed to review the application. The LOI should provide a summary of how a nominee's background and interests will be integrated into a VA research career.

1. Preparation. A CDA LOI consists of the VHA Research & Development Letter Of Intent Cover Page (VA Form 10-1313-13) plus information described below. Please use single-spaced text, Arial 11-point font, and 1-inch margins at each edge of the page.

VA Form 10-1313-13 may be completed as follows:

- a) **Box 1.** Select the appropriate VA research service (Biomedical Laboratory (BLR&D), Clinical Science (CSR&D), Health Services (HSR&D), or Rehabilitation (RR&D)) based on the nature of the proposed research. *Note: Service assignment will be determined based upon the research proposed.*
- b) **Box 2.** Select "New," if the LOI is being submitted for the first time; "Revised," if the LOI was disapproved in a previous round and changes have been made; or "Resubmission," if the previous LOI approval has expired.
- c) **Box 3.** Check the box for "CDA Level" and specify the level of award (CDA-1, CDA-2, CDTA, or CDEA). (Refer to Handbook for description of levels.)
- d) **Box 4.** Enter the project title (limit to a total of 72 characters, including spaces).
- e) **Box 5.** Enter the nominee's personal and complete VA direct contact information in the fields presented. For nominees who are not current VA employees, enter the contact information for the local VA research office. Be sure to indicate whether the nominee is a clinician or non-clinician and whether they are a U.S. citizen in the appropriate check box.
- f) **Box 6.** Complete all of the fields for the Associate Chief of Staff or Coordinator for R&D.

2. Following Form 10-1313-13, attach the items described below. (Limit to one page.)

- a) **Budget and Study Duration.** In a statement, answer the following questions pertaining to requested funds and duration.

- (1) Will salary support be requested?
- (2) Is research support requested? If yes, include an estimate of the number of years and amount per year.
- (3) Indicate the percent effort planned on this award.

b) In a statement, answer the following questions pertaining to the nominee's training and research experience:

- (1) Number of years since completion of clinical training
- (2) Number of years of research experience

c) Description of the nominee's and mentor/s' qualifications. Include the name of a primary mentor and up to three additional formal mentors and a description of each mentor's prior/current working relationship with the nominee and qualifications relevant to the proposed work. *Note: CDEA nominees should briefly describe the facilities and resources to be provided.*

3. Brief description of the proposed study or research plan that succinctly addresses each of the following. (Limit to two pages.)

- a) Scientific basis (rationale)** for the proposed research and its relationship to other major research findings.
- b) Significance of the research**, emphasizing its particular importance to veterans or how it represents a unique opportunity within the VA health care system.
- c) Program Objectives.** Describe research and training goals appropriate for the requested level, including:

1

CDA-1: The nominee's role in specific research projects, and how the proposed training and experience would prepare the nominee to develop an independent research agenda advancing career goals.

2

CDA-2: The nominee's research and training goals, and how this experience will lead to independence in the career development area.

3

CDTA: The goals of the proposed project/s, and how this experience will lead to independence in the career development area of interest. Clearly describe the rationale for requesting mentoring at this level.

4

CDEA: The specific skills to be acquired or research activities to be pursued, and how they will enhance the nominee's career and contribute to local VA research.

- d) Project Design and Methods.** Briefly define and describe the research question/s, rationale and approach appropriate to the requested level, including:

- 1) CDA-1: The research ideas and questions the nominee might generate from the proposed research and training activities, and how the nominee would develop these into an independent project or pilot study.
- 2) CDA-2: The subject population to be used in the proposed research and estimated sample size, the model(s) of choice for the study (i.e., human, animal, cell culture, etc.) or conceptual framework, and the study design and methods.
- 3) CDTA: An overview of the VA Merit Review proposal that is the basis for the CDTA. Specify the date the Merit Review proposal was submitted for review.
- 4) CDEA: The nature of the work to be performed, and the facilities and resources to be used during the CDEA period.

e) Description of Intervention(s)/Treatment(s)

f) Statement of Disclosure. A 1-2 sentence statement from the nominee indicating that no financial or contractual relationship exists between any individual and/or organization involved in the proposed award that could constitute a real or apparent conflict of interest (including the nominee, all mentors, investigators, and collaborators who plan to devote 5 percent or more effort to the nominee's research and mentoring). If such a relationship or contract does exist, full disclosure must be provided.

g) Acknowledgment of the VA policy to include women and minorities in research (if applicable).

h) References. Up to five reference citations relevant to the proposed study may be attached.

4. Appointment Eligibility Documentation. A separate letter from the local VA Human Resource Management (HRM) office indicating that the nominee is eligible for the respective appointment and can be hired by the VA medical center. Indicate if the nominee is currently employed by the VAMC. *Note: CDEA nominees must include documentation of specific educational leave, up to one year, to be provided by the medical center. The CDEA provides half of total salary and benefits during this period.*

5. VA Form, 10-1313-5/6 Combined Biography, for nominee and each mentor. Nominee and mentor/s should highlight only their most recent publications, presentations, and activities relevant to the proposal.

6. Waiver Request. Should a facility see justification for nominating any candidate who does not meet one or more of the criteria for an award or whose proposed research may require an exception to the conditions stipulated in the Career Development Handbook, a separate letter from the ACOS/R&D requesting exception to a specific handbook stipulation/s must be included. Exceptions must be well justified and approved at the LOI stage.

The deadlines for LOI submission are April 15 and October 15 (or next business day if the 15th falls on a weekend or holiday). Early submission of LOIs is encouraged.

Submit the original and 3 double-sided copies to the appropriate service at the address listed below.

a) Biomedical Laboratory Research & Development Service
Department of Veterans Affairs

Career Development Program (121E)
810 Vermont Ave., NW
Washington DC 20420
(202) 461-1674

b) Clinical Science Research & Development Service
Department of Veterans Affairs

Career Development Program (121E)
810 Vermont Ave., NW
Washington DC 20420
(202) 461-1674

c) Rehabilitation Research & Development Service
Career Development Program (122P)

810 Vermont Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20420
(202) 254-0265

d) Health Services Research and Development Service
HSR&D Career Development Program Manager

Robert Small (124D)
810 Vermont Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20420
(202) 254-0219