

WILLIAM S. MIDDLETON AWARD PROCEDURAL HANDBOOK

- 1. REASON FOR ISSUE.** This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Handbook provides information and procedures relating to the nomination, application, review, and selection process for the annual William S. Middleton Award.
- 2. SUMMARY OF MAJOR CHANGES.** None. This is a recertification.
- 3. RELATED DIRECTIVE.** None. VHA Directive 1202 to be published.
- 4. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE.** The VHA Office of Research and Development, Biomedical Laboratory Research & Development Service (121) is responsible for the contents of this VHA Handbook. Questions may be referred to 202-254-0482.
- 5. RESCISSION.** VHA Handbook 1202.5 dated May 22, 2005, is rescinded.
- 6. RECERTIFICATION.** This VHA Handbook is scheduled for recertification on or before May 31, 2013.

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WILLIAM S. MIDDLETON AWARD PROCEDURAL HANDBOOK

1. PURPOSE

This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Handbook provides information and procedures relating to the nomination, application, review, and selection process for the annual William S. Middleton Award.

2. BACKGROUND

a. The William S. Middleton Award (Middleton Award) for outstanding achievement in biomedical or behavioral research is Biomedical Laboratory Research and Development Service's (BLR&D) highest honor for scientific achievement. The Middleton Award was established in 1960, to honor William S. Middleton, M.D., distinguished educator, physician-scientist, and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Chief Medical Director from 1955 to 1963. Dr. Middleton's service to medicine, veterans and the country spanned over 60 years, beginning in 1911, when he earned his medical degree from the University of Pennsylvania. He began teaching at the University of Wisconsin the following year, becoming a full professor in 1933, followed by his appointment as Dean of the medical school, a seat he held for the next 20 years.

b. His contributions to VA are unparalleled. He was appointed as the Chief Medical Director at VA in 1955. One of his most significant contributions is the development of the VA research program. Dr. Middleton was instrumental in initiating and stimulating VA medical research. He established and appointed the first Advisory Committee on Research. By the time he retired in 1963, over 7,500 research projects, including VA cooperative studies, had been undertaken by VA as a result of his interest and initiative.

c. As a teacher, clinician and investigator, Dr. Middleton set the highest standards. He won numerous awards and was elected as an Honorary Fellow or member of more than a dozen national and international societies. He contributed more than 300 scholarly papers related to internal medicine, medical education and medical history.

3. SCOPE

Middleton Award recipients are senior VA investigators who have achieved international acclaim for research accomplishments in areas of prime importance to VA's research mission.

a. Applicants for the award may be nominated in two ways:

(1) VA medical centers may submit applications to the Director, BLR&D annually by the specified application submission deadline.

(2) Qualified applicants may be identified by BLR&D and invited to submit applications by

the specified application submission deadline.

b. Once the application submission period has concluded, the Director, BLR&D convenes a committee to review the applications. Based on the committee's evaluations, the Director, BLR&D sends the recommendation through the Chief Research and Development Officer (CRADO) to the Under Secretary for Health for approval. This recommendation is based on:

(1) The applicant's contributions to a defined field of biomedical basic science research that is pertinent to the advancement of knowledge within VA.

(2) Evidence of sustained high-quality service and leadership within the VA Research community.

NOTE: If in the judgment of the committee or the Director, BLR&D, no applicant meets the Middleton Award criteria, then no award will be conferred in that given year.

4. ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for the Middleton Award, nominees must:

- a. Currently have, at minimum, a 5/8 salaried VA appointment (or an approved waiver);
- b. Currently be the principal investigator (PI) of a funded BLR&D Merit Review, National Institutes of Health (NIH), or National Science Foundation (NSF) award;
- c. Have performed research at a VA facility for at least the previous 5 years;
- d. Have held national peer-reviewed research support (e.g., VA, NIH, NSF) as a PI for a minimum of 10 years, cumulatively; and
- e. Not have received the Middleton Award previously.

5. AWARD CRITERIA

The Middleton Award Review Committee bases its recommendation on the following criteria:

- a. The significance of the research to a field of biomedical or behavioral science aligned with VA's research portfolio;
- b. The originality of the research;
- c. Evidence that the research has had or will have a broad impact on scientific or clinical disciplines and evidence that the nominee has acknowledged VA employment and support in the majority of the nominee's publications and presentations; and
- d. Evidence of outstanding scientific achievement including, but not limited to, sustained

history of peer-reviewed funding, including current BLR&D Merit Review funding, publications in outstanding scientific journals, invited lectures at national and international scientific meetings, service to VA, membership in and service to national and international professional organizations, editorial service to professional journals, membership on grant review committees, other national and international research prizes.

6. DESCRIPTION OF AWARD

a. The recipient receives a cash award in the amount of \$5,000 and an inscribed plaque commemorating the recipient's scientific achievements. The VA medical center at which the recipient is employed receives an inscribed plaque honoring the recipient.

b. The recipient receives \$50,000 per year for 3 years in additional research support.

c. Whenever possible, the Middleton Award is presented to the recipient at a national meeting held in Washington, DC.

d. To honor the recipient, BLR&D publishes the award announcement in a scientific journal related to the recipient's field of research.

7. APPLICATION

To be considered, applications must be prepared and submitted according to the instructions in Appendices A and B. At the discretion of the Middleton Award Review Committee, an application may be retained by BLR&D and reconsidered during the subsequent round of review.

8. MIDDLETON AWARD REVIEW COMMITTEE

The Director, BLR&D appoints a review committee from among VA field representatives, former Middleton Award recipients, representatives from other Federal agencies that fund biomedical research and appropriate ad hoc representation, as needed. Members are chosen for knowledge of an appropriate scientific content area and knowledge of the scientific review process.

9. RESPONSIBILITIES AT THE FACILITY

a. **Research and Development (R&D) Committee.** The R&D committee evaluates the merits of all candidates for the Middleton Award, nominates the most outstanding candidate, and recommends the nominee to the VA medical center Director for approval.

b. **Facility Director.** The facility Director, with advice from the facility's R&D Committee, submits one outstanding nomination for the Middleton Award.

c. **Associate Chief of Staff (ACOS) for R&D.** The ACOS for R&D ensures that all required application materials are prepared correctly and submitted to VA Central Office by the specified deadlines.

10. RESPONSIBILITIES AT VHA CENTRAL OFFICE

a. **Biomedical Laboratory Research and Development.** BLR&D convenes a review committee to evaluate all applications. Program staff identifies highly qualified award candidates and where applicable, solicits applications for award from ACOS for R&D of the appropriate medical center.

b. **Middleton Award Review Committee.** The committee evaluates all applications for the Middleton Award and selects the most qualified candidate for the award. If no candidate meets Middleton Award criteria, the committee makes no recommendation.

c. **Middleton Award Program Manager.** Following the recommendation of the Middleton Award Review Committee, the Middleton Award Program Manager submits a request for approval of the applicant, a request for a monetary award of \$5,000, and a VA Form 4659, Recognition of High Level Performance, to the Under Secretary for Health through the Director, BLR&D, the Chief Research and Development Officer (CRADO), and the Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management (10N). Following approval, program manager instructs the sponsoring VA medical center to provide the monetary award and to request reimbursement from the Office of Research and Development (ORD), VA Central Office. The program manager is responsible for ordering commemorative plaques for the recipient and sponsoring VA medical center, and coordinating the presentation of the award and the placement of the announcement.

d. **Director, Biomedical Laboratory Research and Development Service.** The Director, BLR&D, reviews the selection, and recommends to the CRADO either approval or disapproval of the Middleton Award Review Committee recommendation. If approved, the Director forwards the recommendation to the CRADO.

e. **Chief Research and Development Officer (CRADO).** The CRADO reviews the selection of the candidate. Upon approval, the CRADO signs VA Form 4659, Recognition of High Level Performance and submits it for approval to the Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management (10N), the Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Health (10A), and the Under Secretary for Health (10). The CRADO notifies the applicant's medical center Director in writing following approval by the Under Secretary for Health.

f. **Under Secretary for Health.** The Under Secretary for Health, or designee, approves the candidate and presents a plaque to the recipient and to the Director of the recipient's VA medical center at an appropriate ceremony.

g. **Biomedical Science R&D Administrative Officer (AO).** The BLR&D AO authorizes the reimbursement of funds for the Middleton Award to the VA medical center.

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS
FOR THE WILLIAM S. MIDDLETON AWARD**

Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical centers submit applications for their selected nominees to Biomedical Laboratory Research & Development (BLR&D) annually. In addition, BLR&D identifies highly-qualified investigators directly and solicits applications from the appropriate medical centers.

1. FORMAT. Applications are to consist of single-spaced typed pages with 1-inch margins at each edge. Use only letter-quality, black print. The font size must be at least 11 point.

2. CONTENT. Each application is to consist of the following materials:

a. A cover sheet listing the following information in the order specified:

(1) William S. Middleton Award Application.

(2) Name and degree(s) of applicant.

***NOTE:** Social security number (SSN) of the applicant will be requested for final awardees only to allow for required security and background reviews.*

(3) Name of Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical center.

(4) Nominee's current VA employment status (in 8ths).

(5) Number of years employed by VA.

(6) Nominee's academic title (indicate tenure status).

(7) Location of nominee's laboratory and office.

(8) Name, title, and signature of the Associate Chief of Staff for Research and Development and facility Director.

b. A complete and current curriculum vitae (with funding history) and bibliography of the applicant (not to include abstracts, submitted papers, or papers in preparation).

c. A summary (two-page maximum) of the applicant's research achievements.

d. Three to five letters of support (no more than five) generated within the previous 6 months from scientists who are not employees of the applicant's VA medical center or members of the faculty at the affiliated medical school.

e. Three reprints representative of the applicant's major original research publications.

3. SUBMISSION

a. The application shall be submitted via VA-approved encrypted CD only (no paper copies) using FEDEX to the address below. The Facility ISO should be contacted for information on encryption requirements for data contained on the CD.

Biomedical Laboratory R&D Service (121)
Middleton Award
Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20420

b. The statement **“DO NOT X-RAY”** must be clearly written on the outside of all mailers.

4. **DUE DATE.** The deadline for receipt of applications is February 1.

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS
FOR THE WILLIAM S. MIDDLETON AWARD**

Middleton Award shall be submitted via VA-approved encrypted CD only (no paper copies) using FedEx to the address in Paragraph 3 below. The Facility ISO should be contacted for information on encryption requirements for data contained on the CD. The local Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) research office is responsible for submitting the CD to BLR&D. **NOTE:** *The submission deadline is February 1.*

1. The entire nomination package must be saved as one PDF file, including:
 - a. Cover sheet,
 - b. Complete current Curriculum Vitae (CV),
 - c. Letters of support with signatures,
 - d. Summary of applicants research achievement, and
 - e. Publication reprints.
2. Save this file using the convention: Lastname.firstinitial-Middleton_Nomination_fiscal year XX.pdf (e.g, Smith.J-Middleton_Nomination_F07.pdf). **NOTE:** *Free or low cost PDF conversion programs are listed (at the end) on the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) intranet at: <http://vaww.research.va.gov/funding/electronic-submission.cfm>*
3. The facility Research Office submits the proposal on CD using FedEx to:

Biomedical Laboratory R&D Service (121)
Middleton Award
Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20420
4. The FedEx package must be clearly be marked **“DO NOT X-RAY.”**
5. To confirm receipt of the CD or address any questions regarding submission of a nomination, the facility Research Office may contact the Biomedical Laboratory Research and Development Service (BLR&D) Administrative Officer at 202-254-0292.

TIMETABLE

1. TIMETABLE FOR SUBMISSION AND REVIEW

a. Applications are due at Department of Veterans Affairs, VA Central Office by February 1 annually.

b. The Biomedical Laboratory Research and Development (BLR&D) administrative review of applications takes place in February and March.

c. The Middleton Award Review Committee reviews the applications in June and July.

2. CONTACT INFORMATION ON TIMETABLE ISSUES

Biomedical Laboratory Research & Development (121E)
Middleton Award Program Manager
Department of Veterans Affairs
1722 Eye Street NW, Suite 900
Washington, DC 20006