

**VA Physician Resident Positions Grant for
Graduate Medical Education (GME) Enhancement
under the Veterans Access, Choice,
and Accountability Act (VACAA) of 2014 [PL 113-146]**

Request for Proposals

1. PURPOSE

The Office of Academic Affiliations (OAA) announces a Request for Proposals for VACAA physician resident funding. This is a Request for Proposals (RFP) intended to supplement base physician resident GME positions. This RFP provides information, policies, and application procedures for sites to submit proposals to request funding to increase resident physician positions.

Eligible Sites:

All VA facilities that currently participate in Graduate Medical Education (GME) that wish to expand their current GME programs or affiliations, and VA facilities that do not currently have a GME program are eligible to apply for the Physician Resident Position Grant.

Resident positions applied for under this initiative must be in specialty areas or locations as outlined in the VACAA legislation. These initiatives include positions in primary care (family medicine, internal medicine, geriatrics), and mental health (psychiatry and subspecialties) and in other specialties the Secretary determines appropriate, such as critically needed specialties. There is also a priority for health professional shortage areas such rural locations, areas having a documented shortage of physicians, or with high concentrations of Veterans. The legislation hopes to promote new sites for GME whether those sites are medical centers or community based outpatient clinics.

Facilities applying for the grant are required to have an affiliation with an accredited physician resident training programs as VHA policy does not permit new GME programs to be sponsored by a VA facility. There may be circumstances when a GME position is being requested for an affiliated program yet to be accredited. Facilities must provide evidence in this situation that the affiliate will receive accreditation by the accreditation sponsor before the AY that the resident position is to begin. This evidence can be in the form of a letter from the accreditation sponsor. Accreditation by the American Osteopathic Association (AOA) or Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) and program-specific Residency Review Committee (RRC) standards must be addressed in the proposals. Programs must be in good standing with the appropriate accrediting body.

2. BACKGROUND

The Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act of 2014 and subsequent revision in 2016 authorized the Department of Veterans Affairs to expand with new and established medical residency programs. This is to be accomplished by increasing the number of GME positions at VA medical facilities by 1,500 over a 10-year period (through 2024). The legislation targets needed specialties in specific programs and/or geographic areas for the new medical resident positions, which are: mental health, primary care, geriatrics, new sites for GME, and critical positions located within health professional shortage areas (as defined by HRSA), having a shortage of physicians, rural locations, or in a program/area where there are delays in Veteran access to care.

3. FOCUS AND SCOPE

Facilities approved for GME Enhancement VACAA positions shall have an active affiliation with an accredited sponsoring institution(s) in good standing, a suitable curriculum, and an appropriate educational infrastructure. The required educational infrastructure must include well-qualified residency program and VA GME leaders, including a VA facility Designated Education Officer (DEO), Associate Chief of Staff for Education (ACOS/E), or equivalent.

Facilities may apply for positions to expand training opportunities in primary care, mental health, geriatrics, or critical needs. They may also offer training in new sites of care per the requirements listed in this RFP. Sites approved for GME Enhancement positions should begin their training programs beginning AY 2019 – 2020 (July 2019). Facilities with temporary positions or preapproval may begin in AY 2018-2019 (July 2018).

4. REVIEW PROCESS

OAA will assess the merits of each application. Reviewers will have expertise and leadership in GME as well as experience in educational program development and oversight.

Applications will be scored per the selection criteria for sites and the justification(s) provided for each specialty requested.

Facility-specific staffing, access and timeliness of care data that applicants provide will be analyzed by OAA, and used to support expansion of positions throughout the VA system in a manner that reflects the workload and resources available to support training activities.

The VA facility must be affiliated with an accredited medical school, sponsoring institution or training program in the specialties requested in this proposal. If new affiliation relationships are begun, a formal affiliation agreement must be executed. [Contact Office of Academic Affiliations (10A2D) for assistance.] For both new and existing programs, there must be a Program Letter of Agreement (PLA) in place in addition to the affiliation agreement.

The facility must provide evidence of committed leadership, appropriate clinical and educational activities, and sufficient workload to support a culture of excellence in graduate medical education. The site must demonstrate the following, either in place, or with a plan for implementation:

- VISN, facility, and clinical leadership commitment to build and sustain an outstanding learning environment.
- Strong leadership by the VA facility's Designated Education Officer (DEO) – i.e., ACOS/E or equivalent with appropriate qualifications and experience – or a commitment to recruit such an individual.
- Appropriate clinical activities, workload, and space to support new or expanded training programs.
- A strong partnership between the VA facility and its academic affiliate(s), with committed leadership by the academic program director.
- Administrative infrastructure to support an expanded GME program.
- Evidence of sound strategies for programmatic and learner evaluation as appropriate and required by accrediting body standards.
- Acknowledgement that the facility understands that positions awarded under VACAA must be filled as awarded (cannot be reassigned to other programs, either temporarily or permanently), and that tracking and reporting to OAA on utilization of VACAA positions will be required.
- Interprofessional educational activities (between nursing and physician trainees for example) are encouraged but not required.

5. SCHEDULE:

- **March 1, 2018**
 - OAA sends request for applications to eligible VA facilities and appropriate Central Office officials.
- **March 9, 2018**
 - VACAA Position RFP Informational Teleconference
 - Announcements to be sent
- **March 14, 2018**
 - VACAA Position RFP Informational Teleconference
 - Announcements to be sent
- **March 30, 2018**
 - VACAA Position RFP Informational Teleconference
 - Announcements to be sent
- **April 6, 2018**
 - VACAA Position RFP Informational Teleconference
 - Announcements to be sent
- **May 1, 2018**
 - **Applications are due in OAA (see instructions below)**
- **May 2–31, 2018**
 - OAA reviews applications and makes recommendations for approval of allocations to the Chief Academic Affiliations Officer
- **June 1, 2018**

- OAA notification to facilities regarding approval or disapproval

Post award follow-up and tracking.

Positions allocated under this RFP will be monitored and local assessments of impact reported. Information about program implementation, recruitment of residents, and impact on VA patient care will be reported per the instructions that will be issued by OAA. These reports will be considered in evaluation of participating sites at the time of future allocation cycle decisions.

NOTE: All VACAA authorized positions (whether occupied or unoccupied) will be reported on the annual Congressionally Mandated Report on VACAA GME, along with facility and affiliate/program name.

6. OAA CONTACT PERSONS

VACAA:

Pete Flauto, Health Systems Specialist, at Peter.Flauto@va.gov , Dr. Edward Bope, MD, OAA Physician Liaison at Edward.Bope@va.gov , Dr. Anthony Albanese, MD, OAA Academic Affiliations Officer, at Anthony.Albanese@va.gov.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

A. GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

1. **Font and margin sizes:**

Font size must be 11-point or larger, with 12 point preferred for narrative portions. Margins must be at least one inch all around (excluding headers and footers).

2. **Online submission:**

Submit **each required element** of the application **in an electronic version** by clicking on <http://vaww.oaa.med.va.gov/> and going to the "AY 2019-2020 VACAA RFP" data entry section. The "AY 2019-2020 VACAA RFP" database will be open for applications beginning **March 1, 2018**. Applications may be changed or modified up to the closing date for applications. Only authorized individuals from the DEO's office may upload files into the application database. Deadline for submission is **May 1, 2018**. **Incomplete applications** (i.e., those lacking in one or more elements) will not be considered by the review panel

3. **General:**

Please see Application Submission Check List found on page 9 of this RFP for submission items. Word or pdf files formats may be used. Letters must include a signature (i.e., they must be a scanned copy of an original, signed document).

B. FACILITY APPLICATION PACKAGE INSTRUCTIONS

Each facility may apply for positions under any of the VACAA initiatives (Primary Care; Mental Health; New Sites for GME [facilities or CBOCs]; and Critical Access Needs). Regardless of the number of initiatives under which a facility is applying, only one "core narrative" and only one set of institution-level support letters needs to be submitted. The following information must be submitted in the appropriate location within the GME Enhancement Application database online submission site:

SPECIALTY REQUEST SECTION: Specialty Program Request

For each specialty program in which positions are requested, complete a Specialty Program Request per the following outline.

NOTE: each item must be entered separately into the online request. Entries designated with "[list]" indicate that there will be a pull-down list or menu of options from which to choose. You should have the requested information available at the time each specialty request is entered. However, if you are missing some information, the system will save your answers and you can edit or enter additional information up to the closing date for the application.

- Facility priority [whole number, NTE 2 digits]
- Initiative under which the position is requested: [dropdown list]
- GME Specialty/Subspecialty requested [list] *Note: VACAA requests cannot be used for Chief Resident in Quality and Patient Safety positions.*

- Accrediting body [ACGME or AOA] *Note: only ACGME or AOA-accredited programs may apply for physician resident positions under this RFP.*
- Number of Positions Requested [Spin Up/Spin Down]
- Name of Affiliate [list]
- Is This a New Affiliate [Select Yes or No Below]
- Is this Affiliate a Teaching Health Center or AHEC? [Select Below]
- Where position(s) will be located: [Select a Location Below]
- If CBOC, specify location: [text]
- Is the clinical site in a Health Profession Shortage Area? [Select Yes or No Below]
- Supervision available on-site? [Select Yes or No Below]
- Appropriate space available? [Select Yes or No Below]
- Clinical experience available to support training? [Select Yes or No Below]
- Impact on existing physician or other healthcare trainees [text] (6,000 characters max)
- Request Justification, if position other than primary care, mental health, or geriatrics. Include data on Veteran access to care [text] (6,000 characters max) -- *use the following outline:*
 - a. Your rationale for requesting positions in this specialty
 - b. The AY requested positions will begin (AY 2019 or 2020)
 - c. Provide specific data on access issues in the specialty in which you are requesting positions – e.g., waiting times for appointments or procedures, use of contracted or locum tenens staff, use of fee basis or Choice card options to meet access goals. Be as specific as possible (e.g., statements such as “long waiting times” or “high use of fee basis” will be insufficient to justify your claims)
 - d. Describe how the positions will improve access of Veterans to healthcare services
 - e. Explain any “no” answers to the questions above and how you will address those challenges (e.g., if you have insufficient space or onsite supervision)
 - f. Describe the potential educational benefits to the residents of the clinical experience provided

SPECIALTY UPLOADS SECTION– upload the following documents: i.e., 1 Program Director and 1 VA Site Director Letter of Support for each specialty program request. All Letters must be signed and in Adobe pdf, image (tiff or jpeg), or Word document file formats. (Please title your files for reviewer clarity. Your files will be automatically prefixed with your facility name.)

1. **Program Director’s Letter of Support** file upload – 1 for each program in which positions are requested.
 - State your current ACGME (or AOA) accreditation status, citations, and their resolution
 - Attest to your current accreditation cycle length
 - Provide evidence of Departmental support for the additional VA positions
 - Comment on the quality and availability of VA-based faculty to supervise additional residents at the VA
2. **VA Site Director’s Letter of Support** file upload – 1 for each program in which positions are requested
 - Describe the Service or Section support available for the requested positions

- Provide a list of VA-based attending physicians who can supervise residents in the specific training program; indicate whether they have faculty appointments with the affiliated sponsoring institution
- Describe any unique aspects of your program (e.g., inter-disciplinary or inter-professional venues) incorporated into your VA-based training for the specialty requested

SUPPORT UPLOADS SECTION: Support letters – upload only once per site regardless of the number of programs or the number of RFP applications.

Support letters in the following categories may be entered (**uploaded**) as **pdf, image files (tiff or jpeg), or Word files**. At a minimum, the support letters should contain the specific information outlined below for each support letter. Please limit each letter to two pages. The letter should be addressed to “Kathleen Klink, M.D., FAAFP, Acting Chief Academic Affiliations Officer (10A2D).” (Please title your files for reviewer clarity. Your files will be automatically prefixed with your facility name)

1. Medical Center Director’s Letter (through the Chief of Staff)

- Indicate support for requested additional positions
- Describe any resource support that would be provided to enhance the educational infrastructure in general (e.g., use of VERA educational funds)
- Provide an assessment of the relationship with affiliate(s)
- Indicate whether the GME Enhancement proposal for requested positions was approved by the Affiliation Partnership Council (formerly, Deans’ Committee)
- Comment on the clinical & educational environment
- Comment on the relationship with the affiliate(s)
- Assess the ‘value’ of additional residents to the facility

2. Designated Education Officer (DEO) Letter

- Provide a personal statement of commitment to the proposal and to graduate medical education programs in general
- Detail your vision for educational enhancement at the VA
- Briefly describe your individual achievements and initiatives at the facility and/or VISN levels in the field of education
- Describe your specific roles and responsibilities at the affiliate (e.g., faculty status, member of the GME Committee, member of the Affiliations Partnership Council)
- Provide your contact information: title, business address, telephone and fax numbers, and e-mail address
- Acknowledge that VACAA positions must be filled as awarded and cannot be redistributed to other programs
- Acknowledge that at least annual reporting to OAA on fill rates and any reasons not filled for VACAA positions will be required

3. Network Support Letter (from the Network Director, through the VISN Chief Medical Officer and the Network Academic Affiliations Officer – only 1 letter from the VISN for each applicant facility is required)

- Describe the relevance of the facility proposal to the VISN's educational and clinical missions.

- Specify your rationale for wanting additional positions (VISN perspective)
- Assess the specific facility's ability to train additional residents
- Indicate the VISN-level resource support for additional positions
- Describe the unique contributions the facility and VISN can make to the GME Enhancement Program
- Elucidate the perceived merits of the facility proposal from the VISN and national perspective, if applicable
- Identify the Network POC, the Network Academic Affiliations Officer

4. Designated Institutional Official (DIO), Letter: sponsoring affiliated institution

- Indicate your institutional affiliation support for the VA application
- Discuss any accreditation issues involving the institution or the programs in which positions are requested
- Provide assurance of institutional approval of requested additional positions, including GME Committee approval if applicable
- Describe any matching of institutional support (e.g., additional positions in the same specialty program to ensure appropriately balanced training opportunities)



Instructions.docx

Attachment A: VACAA RFP Data Entry and File Upload Instructions

APPLICATION SUBMISSION CHECK LIST

INSTRUCTIONS: Incomplete applications will not be considered by the review committee. The following list is to assist your planning and represents the required sections for this application. See ATTACHMENT A for detailed instructions and outlines.

- Online Specialty Program Request, including:
 - Facility priority
 - Program application type (Primary Care/Mental Health/New Sites of GME/Critical Access Needs)
 - Other basic program information
 - Request Justification, including Data on veteran access to care

- Specialty Program Request: SPECIALTY UPLOADS (must submit one for each specialty program requested) – includes:
 - Program Director's letter (one for each specialty program requested; limit 2 pages)
 - VA Site Program Director letter (one for each specialty program requested; limit 2 pages)

Letters of Support: SUPPORT UPLOADS (facility/VISN/DIO letters: need to submit only once; limit 2 pages; addressed to "Kathleen Klink, M.D., FAAFP, Acting Chief Academic Affiliations Officer (10A2D)."

 - Medical Center Director
 - VA Designated Education Officer (DEO)
 - Network Director (through VISN Chief Medical Officer and Network Academic Affiliations Officer)
 - Academic Affiliate (sponsoring institution) Designated Institutional Official (DIO)

- VISN letters: need to submit only once regardless of how many GME programs are involved; use outlines provided):
 - Joint facility Leadership (combined letter, 2 pages)
 - Network Director (1-2 pages)
 - VA Program Site Director (1-2 pages)
 - Affiliate Designated Institutional Official (DIO) (2 pages)