

## **Coordinating Center: Advanced Fellowship in Health Professions Education Evaluation and Research**

### **I. COORDINATING CENTER ANNOUNCEMENT**

This program announcement provides information, policies, and application procedures to Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) facilities/systems regarding the creation and implementation of a Coordinating Center (CC) for the Advanced Fellowship in Health Professions Education Evaluation and Research (HPEER) that will be supported by the Office of Academic Affiliations (OAA). The purpose of the HPEER Advanced Fellowship is to develop experts who will advance healthcare education through practice, inquiry, and improvement, leading to enhanced training and education of healthcare providers for VA and the Nation. The purpose of the CC is multifaceted and includes, under the direction of OAA, the following: a) the development and implementation of a curriculum for the HPEER program and assessment of fellow achievement of curricular learning objectives; b) administration and leadership of the program, including routine program operations, site coordination and oversight, and stakeholder communication; c) development and implementation of overall program evaluation to monitor the extent to which the program is accomplishing its mission; and d) continuous program improvement including immediate re-competition of the HPEER fellowship sites. In addition, there is potential for the CC to serve as a VA educational resource in collaboration with the Advanced Fellowship program office, or other OAA and VA offices, by providing added focused services to document the impact of VA educational programs.

The purpose of this announcement is to identify a VA facility to undertake the responsibilities for coordinating this program. VA facilities, in partnership with their academic affiliates, that have a commitment to advancing health professions education are encouraged to **submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) by Wednesday, March 18** to apply for the establishment of this program at their site. Facilities eligible to submit an LOI are restricted to the following: a) those that currently host an OAA HPEER Advanced

Fellowship, or b) those that currently host an OAA Advanced Fellowship or Advanced Fellowship CC.

Successful applications shall demonstrate the facility's commitment and ability to support the proposed CC. Funding for the successful application will occur shortly after approval, with the expectation that CC startup activities will begin July 1, 2020.

The facility awarded the HPEER CC may request a standing allocation of up to two dedicated HPEER Advanced Fellows for the national HPEER CC. If requested, please note that these HPEER CC Advanced Fellows will be considered HPEER Advanced Fellows and be subject to the rules and regulations of the HPEER Advanced Fellowship program.

## **II. BACKGROUND**

The education of health care providers – be they physicians, nurses, or other healthcare professionals – has been challenged to meet the demands of the rapidly changing healthcare delivery system. With rare exceptions, the education of most health professionals has failed to prepare them adequately for interprofessional team practice and for systems improvement. In addition, most educational programs do not have access to experts trained in educational evaluation and research to assess the process, outcomes, and impact of the educational enterprise. There are insufficient numbers of educators who have expertise in the knowledge and skills needed to assess the interaction between health education programs and clinical settings, or to develop, implement, assess, and improve curricula in order to transform health professions education.

The VA oversees the largest health professions education enterprise in the country, and arguably in the world. Each year, over 120,000 trainees acquire some or all of their clinical education in VA medical centers, either in programs sponsored by VA or, more commonly, through partnerships with some 1800 academic affiliates (e.g., schools of medicine, nursing, pharmacy, psychology). Given this ongoing investment aimed at developing the next generation of health care providers for VA and the Nation, there is surprisingly little rigorous evaluation of education program process, outcomes, and impact. Known for its

robust health systems research capability, VA has considerably less expertise in the formal assessment of education program development, implementation, and outcomes, as well as educational research.

Given the radical changes now underway in health care delivery, there is a parallel pressing need to reshape the education of health professionals. The development of education evaluation and research expertise is critically needed now. The purpose of HPEER is to develop experts to advance healthcare education through practice, inquiry, and improvement.

### **III. FELLOWSHIP DESCRIPTION**

The HPEER Advanced Fellowship program provides two years of post-residency, post-doctoral research, education, and clinical learning opportunities to eligible clinicians and doctorally prepared non-clinicians. Clinician fellows spend approximately 75% of their time in training, development, and implementation of projects related to the practice and advancement of healthcare education and approximately 25% in clinical care. Clinical care activities may include direct provision of care to Veterans for clinical professions but may also include educational projects in VA clinical care settings. Graduates are expected to assume post-fellowship opportunities within VA and other health care institutions that seek to advance healthcare education through practice, inquiry, and improvement.

The HPEER Advanced Fellowship program currently consists of four sites (Houston, TX; Orlando, FL; San Francisco, CA; and White River Junction, VT) that are linked together as a national fellowship program administered by OAA. Each site has a fellowship director(s) responsible for program development and oversight. These directors have demonstrated expertise in several areas relevant to education evaluation and research (e.g., program management; application of evaluation and research techniques to health professions education programs and settings; teaching; and mentoring) and a relationship to a VA affiliated academic program in health professions education including evaluation and research. Each site currently provides local mentored instruction in rich learning environments, developed to train fellows in the following HPEER competencies: a) Health Professions Educational Leadership; b) Healthcare Improvement through Educational

Practice; c) Interprofessional Practice in Health Professions Education; d) Educational Assessment and Program Evaluation; and e) Educational Research. Each site is authorized to accept two fellows per year, and at full capacity, sites have four allocated positions – two 1st year fellows and two 2nd year fellows.

Details and program contacts for each site can be found on the OAA website at [https://www.va.gov/oaa/specialfellows/programs/SF\\_HPE\\_Fellowship.asp?p=23](https://www.va.gov/oaa/specialfellows/programs/SF_HPE_Fellowship.asp?p=23).

Program implementation policies and procedures are fully described in VHA Handbook 1400.07 - Education of Advanced Fellows, which can be found on OAA's Advanced Fellowship webpage [https://www.va.gov/OAA/Advanced\\_Fellowships/Home.asp](https://www.va.gov/OAA/Advanced_Fellowships/Home.asp).

The current HPEER program is a pilot with a planned re-competition and expansion to a full/standing Advanced Fellowship to begin in Academic Year 2021-22. At full capacity, the HPEER program is expected to have six sites and enroll up to 24 Advanced Fellows from a variety of health professions.

Upon establishment, the CC is expected to work collaboratively with local HPEER sites to establish national goals, instruction, and evaluation strategies for the HPEER program, including development of a curriculum that identifies the national learning objectives for all fellows, coordinates national and local instruction to accomplish the learning objectives, and assesses fellow learning outcomes. Sites will be required to submit to the CC annual reports that document fellow recruitment efforts and outcomes, local training experiences, fellow progress and outcomes, and most importantly – the overall impact of the HPEER program on VA educational programming at the local, regional, and national levels.

#### **IV. COORDINATING CENTER STRUCTURE AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The CC described in this program announcement will be supported by infrastructure and resources from OAA, and all activities of the CC should be designed to align the training and operations of the HPEER fellowship with the needs and initiatives of OAA, ensuring that such initiatives remain at the forefront of HPEER activities. The primary responsibilities of the CC are multifaceted and include the following: a) the development and implementation of a national curriculum for the Advanced Fellowship HPEER

program (including the refinement of HPEER training competencies, development of national instruction and the relationship to local instruction, and development of fellow assessment strategies); b) program administration and leadership (responsibility for routine program operations, coordination and oversight of site program leadership, liaison between OAA, sites, and stakeholders); c) development and implementation of overall program evaluation to document and monitor the extent to which the program is accomplishing its mission, including the impact, successes, and areas for improvement; and d) continuous program improvement, beginning with immediate focus on national re-competition of the HPEER program, with the CC taking a primary role in this process, in collaboration with OAA and existing local HPEER sites, including drafting a program announcement, participating in selection of sites, and supporting new sites to begin program activity by July 1, 2021.

There is potential future opportunity for the CC to serve as an expert educational resource for OAA, providing services such as focused consultation and/or projects conducted in collaboration with the national Advanced Fellowship program office, other OAA offices (e.g. Medical & Dental Education, Nursing Education, and Associated Health Education), or VA program offices seeking to document the impact of educational programs.

#### **A. Full Application Elements**

1. Coordinating Center Infrastructure. The site application should describe the host facility characteristics, documenting the availability of resources at the facility for CC activities (e.g., space, equipment, and technical/computer support), as well as evidence of the track record and commitment of the facility and partners in the areas of education evaluation and research, focused on health professions education. The CC host facility should specifically outline commitments to support the proposed activities (e.g., protected time, travel support). CC applicants should describe the proposed interprofessional leadership and staffing of the CC, providing the position, title, and description for each proposed role, and the name and professional degree, along with a biosketch (VA or NIH) for each proposed director and key staff member. It is understood that not all roles will have proposed individuals at the time of

application and these may be listed as ‘To Be Named’. CC applications should include a budget of no more than \$150,000/ fiscal year, starting with Q4 FY20, specifying all expenses (e.g. personnel, non-personnel, travel). See Section V, Part B, Financial Support, for additional details on the CC budget.

If the applicant facility is requesting a standing allocation of HPEER Advanced Fellowship slots (up to two per year) the application should describe how the local facility will support those fellows (e.g. designation of local directors/mentors, description of scholarly opportunities and local fellow instruction, identification of specific resources committed to support local fellow training), in accordance with the HPEER site program announcement found on the Advanced Fellowship website.

[https://www.va.gov/oaa/specialfellows/programs/SF\\_HPE\\_Fellowship.asp?p=23](https://www.va.gov/oaa/specialfellows/programs/SF_HPE_Fellowship.asp?p=23)

2. Curriculum. The CC shall be responsible for the development, delivery, and evaluation of a national, program-wide HPEER Advanced Fellowship curriculum, under the guidance of OAA, to be in place by July 1, 2021. HPEER sites will participate in the development and implementation of this curriculum, which should coordinate with the customized, local instruction provided by each of the HPEER sites. National instruction should be provided in such fashion as to foster high degrees of interaction across professions, geography, and between trainees and faculty. The overall curriculum will support the HPEER competencies and include the following elements: a) establishment of fellow learning objectives, b) development and delivery of national instruction, c) coordination of national instruction with local instruction, and d) development and conduct of trainee assessment to determine whether the learning objectives have been achieved for the trainees. The curriculum development will begin with refinement of previously described HPEER competencies (see Section III, Fellowship Description).

The application shall include a proposed interprofessional curriculum prototype that outlines the strategy, processes, likely structure, and deliverables of the curriculum. OAA recognizes that the proposed prototype will be a starting place for the approved

CC, which will be further developed during the transition stage of the CC activities.

The proposed curriculum shall be provided in the following outline:

- i. Learning objectives for the trainees- describe the expected outcomes for the program participants, and the strategy proposed for the CC to refine these objectives. Previously proposed HPEER learning goals for program participants include: a) Developing expertise in educational program evaluation, learner assessment, and educational research; b) Demonstrating the ability to apply curriculum development, instructional design principles, change management, and system improvement strategies to enhance educational programs; c) Examining VA policies, procedures, data sources, and systems as resources for program evaluation to evaluate and improve the VA system; and d) Developing leadership skills in advancing educational projects, evaluation and research.
- ii. Instructional strategies- describe the proposed array of national instruction, including both formal instruction (e.g., distance learning, didactics) and other strategies (e.g., reflection, journaling, self-evaluation).
- iii. Coordination of national instruction with local instruction- specifically delineate how national instruction will coordinate with, enhance, and support local mentored training and other local fellow instruction.
- iv. Trainee Assessment- describe the proposed strategies for assessing the program participants' achievement of the learning objectives.

3. Program Administration. Applications should demonstrate the proposed CC's director, staff, and facility experience and expertise in educational program administration and leadership. Applications should also include experiences showing connectivity to national VA initiatives and educational resources. Applications should describe the planned administrative logistics to support routine national program operations (e.g., fellow recruitment, national curriculum calls, trainee registry management), coordination and oversight of sites (e.g. director meetings, program-wide initiatives, resource guides), and facilitation of communication among OAA, faculty, fellows, program leadership and national VA education communities

(e.g., website use and management, newsletters, liaison among program and stakeholders).

4. Program Evaluation. The CC will conduct program evaluation to monitor progress, successes, and challenges; to identify overall program improvement needs; and to inform modification and improvement of the overall fellowship program. The overall program evaluation strategy should include evaluation of learning outcomes; effectiveness of program content, processes, and operations; fellow and faculty satisfaction and outcomes; tracking of program graduates; overall impact of the program; and alignment of the program with OAA priorities and initiatives.

Evaluation plans should take into account and build upon the responsibility of all approved sites to monitor processes and outcomes of their local program, including recruitment efforts, fellow and faculty satisfaction with specific and overall fellowship experiences, and tracking of fellows during the training program (e.g. educational experiences as well as scholarly projects and products).

The CC will be responsible for developing processes to collect and synthesize tracked data from HPEER Advanced Fellowship sites and maintain a data repository. The CC will also track fellow post-training outcomes (e.g., employment, research funding, peer-reviewed publications, and continued work in the field of healthcare education evaluation and research) with specific emphasis on VA retention rates. The CC will provide OAA with an annual report detailing the impact of the HPEER program on VA educational programming at the local, regional, and national levels.

5. Program Improvement. The CC will support HPEER program improvement through both the immediate re-competition of the HPEER program in collaboration with OAA and existing local HPEER sites (e.g., drafting a program announcement, participating in selection of sites, and supporting new sites to be onboarded), as well as an overall plan and specific strategies to systematically improve the HPEER program over time while maintaining alignment with the priorities of OAA and VA national education initiatives.



6. Capacity to Serve as a VA Educational Resource. Describe the potential of your CC to participate in potential future opportunities to serve as a national VA educational resource that brings expertise in health professions education, evaluation, and research. Describe the CC capacity and expertise to support the Advanced Fellowship program office or other OAA and VA offices through additional focused services, consultations, evaluations and/or projects that document the impact of VA educational programs. Include how fellows from across the various HPEER program sites might participate in these opportunities.

## **V. COORDINATING CENTER POLICIES AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

### **A. Governance**

The Office of Academic Affiliations maintains overall responsibility for the administration of the HPEER Fellowship and the corresponding CC.

### **B. Financial Support**

Financial support will be in the form of appropriated Medical Services funds that will be sent via TDA from VA Central Office to the receiving VAMC fiscal office. Applications must include a budget summary in the provided format, a pro-rated amount for the fourth quarter of FY20 (only propose funding that can reasonably be expended in this timeframe) and all of FY21 and FY22. Financial support for FY23 will be negotiated in FY22. The initial award for the CC will be through FY22. The CC will be reassessed at that time.

The base grant allocation will not exceed \$150,000 per fiscal year. The budget proposal should reflect the extent to which the CC functions described can be accomplished within this ceiling amount. OAA requires budget reconciliation at the end of each fiscal year, with site attestation that funds were either used for the approved purposes or returned to OAA.

Should the CC have opportunities to serve as a resource for OAA providing additional services and evaluations, these potential secondary tasks would be developed and negotiated with OAA and have separate MOUs. Such activities should not be included in the proposed budget.

**VI. REVIEW PROCESS**

**A. Letter of Intent (LOI)**

Facilities eligible to submit an LOI are restricted to the following: a) those that currently host an OAA HPEER Advanced Fellowship or b) those that currently host an OAA Advanced Fellowship or Advanced Fellowship CC. LOIs will undergo administrative review by the OAA Advanced Fellowship program office to ensure the facility meets the eligibility criteria to submit an application package.

**B. Application Review**

Coordinating Center applications will be reviewed by an interprofessional ad hoc review committee designated by the Chief Academic Affiliations Officer. This committee will assess the merits of the CC applications and offer recommendations to the Chief Academic Affiliations Officer. The decision to appoint the CC rests with the Chief Academic Affiliations Officer.

**C. Scoring**

Coordinating Center applications will be scored according to the following criteria and weights (See Section IV, Part A for full application elements):

<p><b><u>Coordinating Center Infrastructure</u></b></p> <p>Facility commitment to health professions education and educational leadership; description of facility characteristics and resources that will support a robust CC, including specific facility commitments. Interprofessional faculty and key staff with expertise in educational leadership, program development, and evaluation.</p>	<p>20</p>
<p><b><u>Curriculum</u></b></p> <p>A proposal for the HPEER curriculum outlining the strategy, likely structure, implementation plan, and deliverables, informed by fellow core competencies. A curricular prototype outlining proposed learning objectives, instructional strategies, a description of coordination</p>	<p>30</p>

between national and local instruction, and a plan for assessment of trainee achievement of learning competencies.	
<p><b><u>Program Administration</u></b></p> <p>Demonstration of experience and expertise in educational program administration and leadership. Proposed plans to support national program administrative functions, coordinate sites, and facilitate communication among OAA, faculty, fellows, program leadership and national VA education communities.</p>	20
<p><b><u>Program Evaluation</u></b></p> <p>A proposed evaluation plan of the broader fellowship program to assess the program’s impact and extent to which the program is in alignment with OAA priorities and initiatives and accomplishing its mission, including specific fellowship outcomes to be assessed, plans and processes for tracking program participants and graduates, and strategies for data synthesis and dissemination.</p>	15
<p><b><u>Program Improvement</u></b></p> <p>A proposed strategy to improve the HPEER program through immediate re-competition of sites, and a description of the CC approach and strategies for continuous program improvement in alignment with the priorities and initiatives of OAA.</p>	10
<p><b><u>Capacity to Serve as an Educational Resource</u></b></p> <p>CC potential to provide additional expert health professions education, evaluation, and research services to VA, including how HPEER Advanced Fellows might participate in these opportunities.</p>	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100 POINTS</b>

**VII. SCHEDULE**

Date	Task
Wednesday, March 4, 2020	OAA circulates program announcement
Wednesday, March 18, 2020	Letter of Intent deadline
Friday, March 20, 2020	OAA confirms site eligibility and acknowledges LOIs. Sites that have not received a confirmation by this date should contact Karin Daniels at <a href="mailto:Karin.daniels@va.gov">Karin.daniels@va.gov</a> or 412-360-2252
Wednesday, April 1, 2020, 1:00-2:00pm EST	Informational session. A calendar invite with Skype call details will be sent directly to the DEO and proposed CC Directors of eligible sites that submitted an LOI
Wednesday, May 6, 2020	Full applications due to OAA
Thursday, May 21, 2020	Panel review of applications
Wednesday, June 10, 2020	OAA notifies applicants of selection/non-selection as the CC
Wednesday, July 1, 2020	CC begins program operations
Thursday, October 1, 2020	CC completes development of HPEER site re-competition program announcement with OAA
Thursday, July 1, 2021	New sites begin program activity. National curriculum implemented

**VIII. OAA CONTACT PERSONS**

For information or questions related to this announcement please contact Dr. Karin Daniels by email at [Karin.daniels@va.gov](mailto:Karin.daniels@va.gov) or by phone at 412-360-2252 or Ms. Deborah Ludke by email at [deborah.ludke@va.gov](mailto:deborah.ludke@va.gov) or by phone at 562-826-5492.

## IX. APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

### A. Letter of Intent (LOI) Instructions

1. General Instructions. VA facilities interested in applying must have their Designated Education Officer (DEO) submit an LOI stating their non-binding intent to submit a proposal, including contact information for the application's CC Director(s). Only one LOI per site will be accepted.

2. Upload Instructions. Web-based upload of the LOI through the OAA Support Center must be completed by **Wednesday, March 18, 2020 at 11:59:59 PM PST** by accessing <http://vaww.oaa.med.va.gov/rfp/default.aspx?PID=76>. Please use the following naming conventions when saving/uploading your LOI: Sitename\_HPEER\_LOI. Only one LOI may be uploaded per site. It is strongly recommended that education coordinators at facilities who already have access should be the focal point for submission. If necessary-please register in the system at the required prompt. It should not be necessary to have multiple individuals applying for access to the Support Center. Contact the OAA Support Center at 314-894-5760 Option 2 for technical difficulties.

### B. Application Package Content

Only facilities that are determined eligible through the LOI eligibility review may submit an application. Font size must be 11-point or larger. All margins must be one inch. There are six (6) documents required for a complete application.

1. Facility Director Transmittal Letter. From the facility/system Director to document support for the CC including:

- i. Authorization of staff to engage in the proposed activities.
- ii. Description of the unique contributions the facility can make to the CC.
- iii. Description of the specific commitments made by facility leadership to support successful engagement in the proposed activities (e.g. protected time, administrative support, travel)
- iv. The name, title, telephone, and e-mail addresses of the proposed CC Director(s).

- v. The name, title, telephone, and e-mail address of the facility contact person, if different from the proposed CC Director(s).

2. Core Narrative. The core document should include:

- i. Coordinating Center Infrastructure
  - a. site characteristics, resources, and ability to support health professions education
  - b. a table listing CC Directors and key staff
  - c. any request for approval to recruit local fellows
- ii. Proposed HPEER Curriculum and Prototype
- iii. Program Administration Experience, Plan and Strategies
- iv. Program Evaluation Plan
- v. Program Improvement Approach and Strategies
- vi. Potential to Serve as a National Educational Resource

3. Biosketches. VA Form 10-1313-5/6 or similar for each proposed director and other key staff. CVs are not to be submitted.

4. Educational Leadership Templates. For each proposed director and other key staff for which a biosketch was submitted. Template attached below.

5. Proposed Budget Template. Spreadsheet attached below.

6. Appendices. Must not exceed 10 pages and can include letters of support from stakeholders such as VISNs, academic affiliates, or others.



Biosketch Sample 1



Biosketch Sample 2



Budget  
Spreadsheet



Educational  
Leadership

### **C. Application Upload Instructions**

There are six (6) documents required to be uploaded for a complete application. Please use the following naming conventions when saving/uploading files:

Attachment A Facility Director Transmittal Letter

Attachment B Core Narrative

Attachment C Biosketches

Attachment D Educational Leadership Templates

Attachment E Proposed Budget Template

Attachment F Appendices

You can upload one document at a time through the web-based OAA Support Center by accessing <http://vaww.oaa.med.va.gov/rfp/default.aspx?PID=76>. Application uploads must be completed **between Thursday, April 2 and Wednesday, May 6, 2020 at 11:59:59 PM PST**. It is strongly recommended that education coordinators at facilities who already have access should be the focal point for submission. If necessary-please register in the system at the required prompt. It should not be necessary to have multiple individuals applying for access to the Support Center. Contact the OAA Support Center at 314-894-5760 Option 2 for technical difficulties.

\*On April 10, 2020 this document was updated with the following:

1. Schedule Updates:
  - a. Full applications due date to OAA updated to Wednesday, May 6, 2020
  - b. Panel review of applications date updated to Thursday, May 21, 2020
  - c. Notification of applicants of selection/non-selection date updated to Wednesday, June 10, 2020
2. Reattachment of the following:
  - a. Budget Spreadsheet
  - b. Educational Leadership Appendix
3. Attachment of Additional Documents:
  - a. Biosketch Sample 1
  - b. Biosketch Sample 2