

**VA Educational Infrastructure Support for
Graduate Medical Education Enhancement under the Veterans Access, Choice,
and Accountability Act (VACAA) of 2014**

Request for Proposals

1. PURPOSE

This Office of Academic Affiliations (OAA) Request for Proposals (RFP) announces a funding opportunity to begin in the 3rd Quarter of fiscal year (FY) 2015 and to extend for two additional FYs. The award is intended to enhance the infrastructure capability/capacity of certain sites with approved VACAA Graduate Medical Education (GME) positions beginning July 1, 2015 for academic year (AY 2015-16). This RFP provides information, policies, and application procedures for approved sites and their affiliates to submit proposals to request funding to support the infrastructure needs related to placement of physician residents in new training sites or sites that have limited GME programs.

Eligible Sites (in alphabetical order) are:

- **VACAA new and expanding sites of VA GME:**
 - Atlanta, GA [for new affiliation involving CBOC rotations]
 - Beckley, WV
 - Canandaigua, NY
 - Chillicothe, OH
 - Columbus ACC
 - Detroit, MI [for new affiliation involving CBOC rotations]
 - Dublin, GA
 - Fayetteville, NC
 - Grand Junction, CO
 - Huntington, WV
 - Orlando, FL
 - Togus, ME
 - White River Jct., VT

2. BACKGROUND

The VACAA legislation of 2014 provides VHA with an opportunity to expand GME in non-traditional training sites and places a premium on new affiliations. Priority is also attached to expansion in areas that are medically underserved and VA facilities which had no GME at the time of passage of the legislation. These new sites of training include the VAMCs in Dublin and Grand Junction, plus the CBOCs in Atlanta and Detroit. Other VHA sites listed above have limited GME involvement (e.g., Beckley, Fayetteville, and Togus), are in the process of activating a new facility (i.e., Orlando), or are in relatively rural areas or serve a >50% rural population of Veterans

(e.g., Chillicothe and White River Jct.). Mounting new GME programs can result in significant infrastructure needs, especially during the “startup” phase of the implementation. Some of the challenges include ensuring that there are appropriately qualified clinicians to supervise the residents, adequate administrative staff to onboard trainees and monitor programs from policy, logistic, and financial perspectives, and sufficient space to accommodate trainees (including exam rooms, breakout/work rooms, conference rooms, and if appropriate, on-call rooms).

3. FOCUS AND SCOPE

The goal of this RFP is to provide infrastructure support for facilities that were awarded new VACAA positions for AY 2015-16. In order to fully realize the best educational experience possible for trainees at newly awarded VACAA sites, additional funding resources have been identified and made available through VACAA to enhance the educational and clinical environment and/or the administration of the programs.

Examples of appropriate funding requests:

- Facility support for faculty development (i.e., education of existing clinical staff – e.g., preceptor training);
- Hiring new clinical staff to allow protected academic, teaching time for existing or newly-hired supervising practitioners;
- Hiring qualified educational leadership such as the DEO or ACOS/Education;
- Education or training resources (supplies or non-IT equipment; simulation equipment);
- Administrative support to assist with trainee appointments and onboarding;
- Renovation of space to accommodate trainees, with additional exam rooms, conference space, or on-call rooms;
- Extra computer workstations for use in clinical settings*

***Note:** IT equipment, such as laptops, computers, and printers may not be purchased with OAA managed funding, however, facility IT needs may be specified in order to ensure that trainees who need to use CPRS and other VA IT resources, either on-site or remotely, may be accommodated. OAA will forward these requests to OI&T for priority consideration.

The facility must provide a description of the types of funds needed, the amounts requested in each funding category, and a detailed justification of how their proposed use of the funds will specifically support the VACAA expansion of GME at their facility. Refer to Appendix A for specific application instructions and to Appendix B for the summary table of funding requests.

VACAA Infrastructure support is available to selected VACAA GME Expansion sites in the following funding categories:

- Medical Services (0160) – these funds are intended to support the salary of VA staff who are instructors for or supervise residents and trainees. They may also be used to supplement staff salaries within an education office.
- Medical Support and Compliance (0152) – these funds are intended to be used to support

overhead costs associated with maintaining a GME program, including administrative support (clerical) costs.

- Facility Funds (0162) – these funds are intended to be used to fund minor construction projects, or augment major construction projects that will allow for necessary expansions of space to accommodate increased VACAA physician resident training capacity. E.g., such construction might include expansions or renovation of exam rooms, call rooms, team work space, team meeting and/or didactic educational space. Proposals should be coordinated with Facilities' Management and support clinical space that serves as the learning environment to:
 - assure patient privacy and confidentiality,
 - provide trainees full access to authentic learning activities, and
 - support efficient care delivery. Examples may include situations where:
 - Co-location of health professionals for patient care strains available clinical space
 - Coordinating clinical space and clinical staff support for trainees requires collaboration with primary care leadership
 - Learning in the workplace to care for patients as a team requires sufficient space for teamlet huddles that include multiple trainees and teamlet staff members
 - Learning in the workplace requires sufficient exam rooms to accommodate patient flow simultaneous with time for learning because:
 - ✓ Exam room turnover time is longer
 - ✓ Exam room size must accommodate multiple individuals: patient (and family members), trainee(s), teamlet member(s), and faculty supervisor
 - ✓ Learning in the workplace is enhanced when trainees are co-located for between visit care (e.g., a team work room) where team members and trainees learn from each other and about each other's patients in unplanned, spontaneous, and opportunistic ways
 - ✓ Co-location of health professionals for formal instruction requires conference room space with appropriate technical capabilities for simulation and instruction
 - ✓ Most sites use shared space or proximal space for meetings of the clinical leadership team. Shared space provides for more spontaneous reflection, problem solving, and shared leadership decision-making

Note: Obligations of funding awards are for support of VACAA and must be able to be justified for this purpose and tracked separately by Fiscal Control Point. Additional guidance on the tracking and reporting of these funds will be forthcoming from OAA (if your facility is selected for an award). Use for the purpose specified is required as these awards are subject to Congressional oversight and reporting requirements. VACAA funding is time-limited, but facilities are expected to sustain the programs once the funding period has expired. By the time the funding period ends, additional VERA funding (both from workload and educational supplements) should be available to the facilities in question to assist in sustainment of recurring infrastructure costs.

4. REVIEW PROCESS

The Office of Academic Affiliations 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.

- Facilities will be assigned an infrastructure needs score based upon:
 - 1 point for each of the following:
 - ✓ Low facility complexity rating (2 or 3)
 - ✓ Low GME position number (<20 positions)
 - ✓ Veteran users >50% rural
 - ✓ Planned CBOC rotations
 - ✓ New sites of GME training
- Justifications will be assessed for the degree to which the requested resource:
 - Supports a quality educational experience for trainees
 - Provides administrative support of planned program expansion
 - Allows space for trainees and their supervisors to see patients in an efficient manner and to interact in a way that is conducive to high quality patient care and education
- Whether a realistic plan to utilize proposed funding by the end of this fiscal year is presented.

Note: Based on the number and quality of applications submitted as well as the availability of funding, approved projects may not receive all of the funding requested in their proposals. While there is no firm limitation on the amount of funding that can be requested for this FY, we urge you to consider:

- Only request what you can realistically spend in FY2015 under this fiscal year section.
- Funding for FY2016 & 2017 should be included as part of your projected budget requests.

5. SCHEDULE

- **February 2, 2015**
 - OAA sends request for applications to eligible VA facilities and appropriate Central Office officials.
- **February 24, 2015**
 - **Applications are due in OAA (see instructions below)**
- **February 25- March 9**
 - OAA reviews applications and makes recommendations for approval of allocations to the Chief Academic Affiliations Officer
- **March 17 or sooner**
 - OAA notification to facilities regarding approval or disapproval
- **March 18, 2015**
 - Funds are distributed to approved facilities
- **October 1, 2015**
 - FY 2016 funds distributed for 1st quarter
- **October 30, 2015**
 - Interim facility report on use of funds [in addition to quarterly reports]

- Annual reports due by the end of October in 2016 and 2017

6. OAA CONTACT PERSONS

VACAA: Christy H. Clary, MSW at (804) 675-5000 ext7182, email christyann.clary@va.gov
Joanne Pelekakis, MLS at (202) 461-9593, email Joanne.Pelekakis@va.gov

ATTACHMENT A

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

A. GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

1. **Font and margin sizes:** Font size must be 10-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/rfp_general/default.aspx?PID=31 . Select “register”, once you have set up an account, you will be able to upload your application.

Deadline for submission is **February 24, 2015**. **Incomplete applications** (i.e., those lacking in one or more elements) **will not be considered** by the review panel. The database will be **open from February 10, 2015**, to accept applications, which 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.

B. FACILITY APPLICATION PACKAGE INSTRUCTIONS

The following elements and information must be submitted in the appropriate manner to OAA:

1. CORE NARRATIVE – Educational Infrastructure Application:

- a. The core institutional proposal narrative or “core narrative” **must not exceed 5 pages** in a pdf or Word file.
- b. Please use the outline provided below.
 - (1) Describe the existing educational environment at your facility or the planned new teaching venue, e.g., a CBOC that is new to GME – including:
 - (a) The current number of physician residents on site at any one time (or planned to be on-site) and the accredited program in which they are (or will be) training;
 - (b) What is your 3-year plan to increase the number of residents in a given specialty or specialties (even if you did not apply for residents in that

- specialty in the current round of VACAA GME positions applications, list all specialties in which you plan to apply for residents at this site)?
- (c) The availability of appropriately qualified staff on-site to supervise the residents and their experience in teaching and supervising residents as well as any scholarly activities in which they participate;
 - (d) Is there sufficient space to accommodate additional trainees in the clinic or inpatient areas? If not, what types of space needs have been identified?

- (2) Describe the administrative staff available to support and provide oversight of the educational programs at your facility. Describe existing educational leadership and their qualifications.
- (3) Describe your relationship with the affiliate that sponsors or will sponsor the physician residents, including
 - (a) A description of your plans for regular communication with the affiliate and program leadership
 - (b) How clinic or hospital staff will participate as faculty with respect to the sponsoring institution.
 - (c) If new staff will be recruited, is there a plan for joint recruitment with the sponsor of the GME program?
- (4) Summarize any identified infrastructure deficits and how you plan to address them, including a brief rationale for your application of these VACAA infrastructure funds.
- (5) Describe your educational and clinical objectives or purpose in applying for these funds.

2. OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED EXPENDITURES:

- a. Refer to **Attachment A** for format. Additional rows may be added to the table as needed.
- b. By category, provide a description of how funding will be utilized and a justification. The definition of each category is identified on Appendix B. Additional rows may be added as indicated.
- c. Save in the same file as the Core Narrative. This table does not count against the page limitations.

3. SUBMISSION CHECKLIST (optional): Refer to **Attachment B**. This checklist is provided for your convenience and should not be included in the submission.

4. SUPPORT LETTERS:

Support letters in the following categories may be entered **as electronically-signed or scanned pdf or image files**. *Outlines for each support letter provide specific information that reviewers would like to see in these letters in order to evaluate the proposals more objectively.* **Limit each letter to 2 pages.** The letter should be addressed to “Robert L. Jesse, MD, PhD, Chief Academic Affiliations Officer (10A2D).”

(1) Medical Center Director’s Letter

- Indicate support for the use of requested VACAA funding. Describe the expected benefits of this funding to the facility in general and to the educational and clinical educational infrastructure in particular.
- Describe how the infrastructure will also enhance access of Veterans to health care at your facility.
- Describe any resource support from local facility funds that would be provided to enhance the educational infrastructure in general
- Provide an assessment of the relationship with affiliate(s).
- Indicate a commitment to sustainment of infrastructure support for expanded GME training at your facility
- Identify the contact person for this RFP (i.e., DEO or ACOS/Education).

(2) Network Director’s Letter of Support

- Indicate support for the requested VACAA infrastructure funding.
- Describe your commitment to developing the educational programs at the applicant facility and, if applicable, its CBOC(s).
- Provide an estimate of any matching funds or additional funding that will be supplied by the VISN to support the development of the VACAA-supported educational programs at the applicant facility.

(3) VA Site Director or Program Director’s Letter of Support

- Describe how the requested infrastructure support would enhance your program and the implementation of your project.
- Describe how you will evaluate the success of the funding on a programmatic basis.
- Describe your current accreditation status, any citations, and their resolution.

(4) Designated Education Officer (DEO) Letter or Facility Education Representative (e.g., ACOS/E)

- Letter supporting the utilization of funding to the medical center to facilitate GME position expansion under the VACAA initiative, including improvement in education processes, systems improvement, and improved care for Veterans.
- Provide your contact information: title, business address, telephone and fax numbers, and e-mail address.

Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
Washington, DC

Office of Academic Affiliations
February 2015

ATTACHMENT A

Overview of Proposed Expenditures

Category ¹	Projected Dollars	Specific Requests ²	Brief Justification of how specific will be utilized category ³
Total funding requested for FY 2015:			

Add additional rows as necessary. Duplicate this sheet for FY 2016 and FY 2017, if you wish to request funding for those FYs.

¹Allowable categories include:

- Medical Services (0160) - these funds are intended to support the salary of VA staff who are instructors for or supervise residents and trainees. They may also be used to supplement staff salaries within an education office.
- Medical Support and Compliance (0152) - these funds are intended to be used to support overhead costs associated with maintaining a GME program.
- Facility (0162) - these funds are intended to be used to fund minor construction projects, or augment major construction projects that will allow for necessary expansions of space to accommodate increase VACAA Physician Residents training capacity

Note: IT equipment (e.g. laptops, computers, printers) may be listed for VACAA funding. However, IT equipment requests would be forwarded by OAA (if appropriately justified) to OI&T for review and possible funding.

² Describe items that you are specifically requesting (e.g., clinical simulator, faculty support, hiring educational leadership or clinical staff) with brief description. Indicate whether the item is “recurring” or “non-recurring”.

³ Include a justification of the funds for specific items requested. What purpose are they intended to serve? What barriers or deficiencies will they alleviate? How will they further the aims of the VACAA initiative – e.g., improving access of Veterans to health care? [Note: if you are proposing to hire additional clinical staff as supervising physicians or to allow greater protected academic/teaching time for existing staff, you should include a description of current staff in the specialty and why present staffing is insufficient to support the supervision and teaching of the number of trainees you plan to have over the next few years.]

ATTACHMENT B (OPTIONAL – *not for submission*)

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 CORE NARRATIVE for detailed instructions and outlines.

- CORE NARRATIVE: Infrastructure Proposal (not to exceed 5 pages) – use outline provided

- OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED EXPENDITURES (Attachment A)
 - Save in the same file as the core narrative (does not count in the page limitation)
 - Add extra lines as necessary in the table
 - Include a separate page for each FY in which you are requesting funding

- LETTERS OF SUPPORT: Letters of Support (facility/VISN letters: need to submit only once regardless of how many GME programs are involved; use outlines provided):
 - Medical Center Director (limit 2 pages)
 - Network Director (1-2 pages)
 - VA Site Program Director letter (one for each specialty program which has been awarded VACAA positions; 1 to 2 pages)
 - VA Designated Education Officer (DEO) (limit 2 pages)