

Date: April 6, 2022

From: Assistant Under Secretary for Health for Operations (15)

Sub: Women's Health Innovation and Staff Enhancement 2.1 (WHISE 2.1) Request for Proposals (VIEWS #)

To: Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) Directors (10N1-23)

1. The purpose of this memorandum is to announce the dissemination of a second round of fiscal year (FY) 2022 funds.
2. WHISE 2.1 provides an opportunity for sites to apply for funding for Women's Health equipment, training, or supplies. Examples include:
 - Equipment for Women Veterans Healthcare
 - Training/ education must meet requirement that does not lead to a higher level of licensure, that is not available through Veterans Health Administration
 - Public forums and focus groups outreach supplies for unenrolled veterans
 - Supplies for initiatives and innovations
 - Breastfeeding /lactation pods or small space upgrades or supplies
3. Please see the attached files:
 - WHISE 2.1 Request for proposals
 - WHISE 2.1 Application spreadsheet
 - WHISE 2.1 Leadership approval letter template
 - WHISE 2.1 Funding guidance
4. Individual facilities should submit applications to the VISN Lead Women Veteran Program Manager (WVPM) for VISN approval. The Lead WVPM will upload completed applications on the [WHISE SharePoint](#).
5. Application timeline is listed below:
 - Application materials and instructions are available: March 31, 2022
 - Applications should be submitted to Lead WVPM: April 14, 2022.
 - VISN approved requests submitted to WHISE SharePoint by Lead WVPM by April 22, 2022, midnight EST daylight time.
 - Award notifications: May 6, 2022

Page 2

Subject: Women's Health Innovation and Staff Enhancement 2.1 (WHISE) 2.1
Request for Proposals (VIEWS #)

6. Should you have any questions regarding this memorandum, please contact Chelsea Cosby, MD, Deputy Director of Comprehensive Women's Health, Office of Women's Health at Chelsea.Cosby@va.gov or Melissa Lanzendorfer, Associate Chief Consultant for Administration, Office of Women's Health at Melissa.Lanzendorfer@va.gov.



for
RimaAnn O. Nelson

Attachments

Women's Health Innovation and Staffing Enhancement (WHISE) Women's Health Gender Specific **Updated Funding Guidance** **March 24, 2022**

Women's Health Innovative and Staffing Enhancement efforts are funded by specific purpose budget. Funds will be distributed to selected sites through a Transfer of Disbursement Authority (TDA) from mnemonic SPEZ-WHGS. **All funds will be medical services dollars (0160).** Positions requested with WHISE funds must be able to be coded to the medical services appropriation (0160). This initiative does not include positions or staff that would be classified as administrative, medical support and compliance (0152). The Office of Women's Health was not appropriated any medical support and compliance dollars for this initiative and is not able to swap between appropriations.

Purpose: To educate, guide and assist each Program Manager on the budgetary aspects of WHISE and to provide standardized funding guidance to Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISN) and medical centers for FY22.

This guide is organized into two sections:

The first section will discuss the hierarchy and definitions of VHA Finance's budget structure. The second section will focus on the roles and responsibilities of each entity associated with WHISE funds.

Section 1: VHA Finance

Definitions

Budget Object Class (BOC) Code – The lowest level of object class. BOC codes are required on all spending transactions to classify obligations and expenditures according to the nature of the services or items purchased.

BOC Extension – An agency-defined add-on to the object class that can be used for agency-specific reporting.

Cost Center – A mechanism used in VA's legacy accounting system to accumulate costs incurred by area of responsibility or geographic region. Cost centers are represented by a four-to-six-digit code used to identify organizational elements throughout VA.

Division Code – A mechanism used in VA's accounting system to define the organization hierarchy within VA. The Division element represents the top level of the hierarchical structure.

Financial Management System (FMS) – VA's legacy core accounting system.

Object Class – Categorization of financial obligations and expenditures according to the nature of the services or items purchased as defined in OMB Circular No. A-11, Section 83.

Obligation – A legally binding agreement that will result in outlays, either immediately or in the future.

Organization Codes – A mechanism used in VA's accounting system to define the organization hierarchy within VA. The organization element represents the lower levels of the hierarchical structure.

Mnemonics and Account Classification Codes

VHA Office of Finance allocates funding by mnemonics. The mnemonic for the WHISE funding is SPEZ-WHGS. The funding is then available to be distributed to the field/stations.

Women's Health Services will then use ACCs to track obligations.

Account Classification Codes (ACC)

Finance utilizes this code for classifying specific types of funding & obligations within a budget. The ACC categorizes financial information by strategic goal, program, project and line of business.

The list of ACCs for WHISE are noted below:

| ACC (SP0E) | Description |
|-------------------|--|
| SPE0ZP3*A1 | Contracts, printing, equipment purchases |
| SPE0ZP3*T1 | Travel |
| SPE0ZP3*P1 | Salary/Payroll |

***P3 – Presidents Budget Line Item**

Obligations

When you place an order, sign a contract, award a grant, purchase a service or take other actions that require the Government to make payments to the public or from one Government account to another, an obligation is incurred.

There are 3 mechanisms for making purchases

- 2237 used to obligate a contract for repetitive and non-repetitive orders for goods and services that are greater than \$3,000, equipment purchases, and when a vendor does not accept a purchase card.
- 1358 or miscellaneous obligation - this is for specific purposes for a defined period of performance (date range) for one or more vendors. The obligation must include a description of service/product being received or ordered.
- Purchase Card - this is for any purchases less than \$3,000 (Purchase card limits vary, now some are \$10K).

Obligations are posted against the ACC utilizing object classes and budget object codes. This is a process Finance uses to commit funding to cover the cost of goods and services.

Object Class

Object classes are categories or accounting identifiers that code financial obligations according to the nature of the services or items purchased by VA.

VA uses the following major object classes:

Object Class 10 – Personnel Compensation and Benefits

- 10 Personnel Type
- 11 Personnel Compensation
- 12 Personnel Benefits
- 13 Benefits for Former Personnel

Object Class 20 – Contractual Services and Supplies

- 21 Travel and Transportation of Persons
- 22 Transportation of Things
- 23 Rent, Communications and Utilities
- 24 Printing and Reproduction
- 25 Other Contractual Services
- 26 Supplies and Materials

Object Class 30 – Acquisition of Assets

- 31 Equipment
- 32 Land and Structures
- 33 Investments and Loans

Object Class 40 – Grants and Fixed Charges

- 41 Grants, Subsidies and Contributions
- 42 Insurance Claims and Indemnities
- 43 Interest and Dividends

Budget Object Codes

VA uses BOC Codes, sub classifications of the major object classes, to provide additional detail for internal VA analysis and reporting.

Obligations are classified under BOC by the initial purpose for which they are incurred rather than for the end product or service.

Summary of Finance:

The funds are allocated into mnemonics by VHA Office of Finance

Finance then distributes funding via Transfer of Disbursing Authority (TDA) as directed by the program.

Using object class and budget object codes, obligations are then debited against the ACC for purchases and expenses for WHISE.

Women's Health Innovative and Staffing Enhancement efforts are funded by specific purpose budget. Funds will be distributed to selected sites through via TDA from mnemonic SPEZ-WHGS. All funds will be medical services dollars (0160). The TDA ledger notation will indicate the purpose and point of contact for the initiative. Once on station, funds will be placed and appropriate ACC. All costs associated with the initiative will be captured and tracked for reporting purposes. Refer to each section below for further guidance:

Staffing Request

Sites that applied for funding for salaries need to use the budget object classification code (BOC) to accurately record the funds. Administrative Personnel – 10 BOCs will be used- all 10XX BOCs for personnel will be used.

Innovative Program Request

Sites that applied for funding to develop an initiative to address the needs of women Veterans within the VISN or medical center need to accurately record the initiative using the proper budget object code. If staffing is required within the initiative, staffing will be recorded as outlined in paragraph just above, Staffing Request. If equipment is required budget object code 31XX will be used to identify the type of equipment purchased.

Section 2: Roles and Responsibilities

VISN/Facility project lead for each WHISE project

Oversee the project at the VISN/facility level while ensuring the project is meeting the required milestones and objectives as outlined in the proposal. The VISN/Facility Project Manager must also ensure that the budget obligations & expenditures are accurate.

Meet quarterly with local budget analyst to review budget for excess funding to be returned (to VACO) or redistributed.

VISN/Facility Budget Analyst

Provide financial assistance to the WHISE Project Manager.

Monitor funding received and place in appropriate FCP/ACC.

Once funding is received by the field, each facility will then be required to set up the corresponding control points or ACCs depending on the need, the type and the purpose of the funding. (See section 1 for corresponding list of ACCs). Obligations will then be created and charged against the funding.

Ensure proper Fund Control Point, BOC & Cost Center is utilized for accurate tracking.

Women's Health National Program Office

Provide funding via TDA to each facility/VISN for selected projects and/or staffing enhancements.

Monitor and review the monthly specific purpose obligation report to ensure funds are obligated timely. Incorrect allocations or obligations will be resolved with the responsible program point of contact either at the VISN or medical center.

Women's Health budget analysts will work with the national Project Manager and local project lead to ensure funds are being obligated appropriately.

Women's Health will provide guidance for issues relative to budgetary items and its process.

Women's Health will maintain records of how WHISE funds are utilized and prepare reports as required.

[Date here]

Dr. Haskell,

This letter of support attests that I fully support the [your center here] application for Women's Health Innovation and Staffing Enhancements (WHISE) 2.1 funding. It is understood that reporting such as budget allocations is required, and funding may only be used for equipment or innovative programs as requested in the application. Funding will conclude at the conclusion Fiscal Year 2022.

It is understood that purchasing will require a coordinated approach between facility fiscal and women's health teams. On behalf of the [your center here] VA Medical Center executive leadership team, thank you for your consideration of this application.

Medical Center Director

Chief Financial Officer

Office of Women's Health

Application for "Second Bite" Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 Women's Health Innovation and Staffing Enhancements (WHISE-2.1)

Purpose: Veteran's Health Administration (VHA) Office of Women's Health is able to provide additional support for Women's Health programming for FY 2022

Overview

The number of women Veterans enrolling in Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care is increasing, placing new demands on VA's health care system. More women are choosing VA health care than ever before with women accounting for over 30% of the increase in Veterans served over the past five years. The number of women Veterans using VHA services has tripled since 2001, growing to over 600,000 today. VA is committed to providing high quality equitable care to women Veterans at all sites of care. To address the growing number of women Veterans who are eligible for health care VA is strategically improving services and access for women Veterans. However, despite ongoing efforts, significant staffing gaps still exist in high quality women's healthcare, care coordination. Equipment, and lactation support.

WHISE 2.1 funding provides an opportunity for sites to apply for funding for Women's Health equipment or supplies.

With the support of VISN leadership, we hope to use this special initiative to work towards equity in health care capacity and delivery in all VA medical centers.

Eligibility:

All VA Health Care Systems or applications at the VISN level are eligible.

These funds are 0160 funds and CAN be used for:

- Equipment for Women Veterans Healthcare
- Training/ education must meet requirement that does not lead to a higher level of licensure, that is not available through VHA
- Public forums and focus groups outreach supplies for unenrolled veterans
- Supplies for initiatives and innovations
- Breastfeeding /lactation pods or small space upgrades or supplies

Please refer to the accompanying attachment "WHISE 2.1 Funding Guidance"

These funds CANNOT be used for:

- Information technology hardware, software, or services (telehealth equipment or services are considered clinical equipment, **not IT**)
- Research purposes
- Food
- Other requests not eligible for 0160 fund control point funds

Timelines and Due Dates

| Deadline Date | Event |
|---|--|
| April 7, 2022 | Application materials and instructions are available |
| April 21, 2022 | Application deadline to submit to the Lead WVPM at midnight EST |
| April 28, 2022 midnight ET daylight time | VISN approved requests submitted to WHISE Sharepoint by Lead WVPM by midnight EST. Due to the timeline, late submissions will not be considered. |
| May 13, 2022 | Award notification |

This application has 2 parts.

Part 1: Excel Spreadsheet with itemized requests

Part 2: Uploaded Letter of Facility Attestation

.....
Complete each part and please submit to Lead Women Veterans Program Manager (WVPM) by April 14, 2022, deadline. The Lead WVPM and the Network Director will review the submission and forward all approved requests to the WHISE Sharepoint by April 22, 2022, midnight ET daylight time deadline. You may contact Dr. Chelsea Cosby, Deputy Director, Comprehensive Health, OWH at Chelsea.Cosby@va.gov with questions. Should you have difficulty with the Sharepoint website please contact Mr. Frank Martin at Frank.Martin5@va.gov.

Application Details:

A. Women's Health Equipment and Supplies

Sites may request funding for furnishings or equipment, or supplies.

- a. Equipment may include but is not limited to surgical equipment, simulation equipment, imaging equipment and accessories, exam room and accessibility equipment such as exam tables, lactation modules or equipment for a lactation room or Pod. Equipment and Supplies must be eligible to be purchased using 0160 funds. If you would like to state the justification for a unique need for equipment, please place in the comments column of the spreadsheet. The items, number of items, cost per item/ package, and shipping costs must be included on the request spreadsheet. The equipment requests must include the details of the equipment and accurate pricing.
- b. Before finalizing requests for equipment, determine how equipment must be approved and/or ordered through local acquisition business processes.
 - i. Please contact the equipment committee or acquisition and logistics team to determine how your request will be processed in order to execute the funds locally.

- ii. A quote for the equipment is sufficient for the current WHISE application and you may fill out the column on the application to indicate pending approval status.
 - iii. Please allow additional time for this process with the understanding that this funding must be obligated this fiscal year and will not be available after the close of the fiscal year.
- c. If requesting Mammogram imaging equipment, the site must be currently approved to operate a mammography program through the Office of Radiology.
- B. Training/ education for Women's Health
 - a. Training/ education that does not lead to a higher level of licensure that is not available through VHA is eligible
 - b. The training must be purchased before the close of the fiscal year. Training does not need to be completed by the close of the fiscal year.
- C. Focus groups and outreach
 - a. Funding for unenrolled veteran outreach supplies. Please submit an itemized list with pricing
- D. Public forums
 - a. Funding for tele-town hall or in person town hall unenrolled veteran outreach supplies. Please submit an itemized list with pricing.

Reporting:

- Each site must report quarterly on expenditures including obligations and excesses prepared in collaboration with fiscal officer. This will be submitted through Lead WVPM.

Part 1

Excel Spreadsheet [attached]

This portion will be reviewed and uploaded by the Lead WVPM by the deadline indicated above.

Part 2

Facility Attestation

Complete the template [attached] with each Medical Center Director and facility Chief Fiscal Officer.

Each Medical Center Director and facility Chief Fiscal Officer will be required to sign a statement of attestation. A templated letter has been created to share with these individuals in which you will need to enter your specific information into the blanks and submit as a signed PDF. Letters of Support should be addressed to Dr. Sally Haskell (see below). Submit the signed PDF to the Lead as a part of the completed package. They should not be mailed or e-mailed.

Sally Haskell, MD, MS
 Deputy Chief Officer for Clinical Operations/
 Director of Comprehensive Women's Health
 Women's Health Services (10P4W)
 810 Vermont Ave NW
 Washington, DC 20420