

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUBMITTING QUERI SERVICE DIRECTED PROJECT (SDP) CONCEPT PAPERS

The Concept Paper should not exceed 5 pages (11 point font), single-spaced, 1-inch margins, exclusive of references. Please include as a header the Title, PI, PI location, QUERI Center, and VHA partner(s). In the concept paper please address the following (noted page lengths are approximate):

1. **Specific Aims (1 page):** Summarize the overall goal, specific aims, and hypotheses of the project. Briefly describe the significance, i.e., the quality gap or problem in VA practice to be addressed.
2. **Rationale (1 page):** Briefly summarize the evidence supporting the importance of the clinical intervention or program and the strengths of the approach taken. This should include a brief summary of the evidence (e.g., from randomized controlled trials-RCTs, systematic reviews/meta-analyses, or clinical practice guidelines). It should also summarize an assessment of the relative strength of the evidence, and whether the evidence is based on VA patient populations. If the program is not currently supported by strong and relevant prior evidence, then provide justification for why a VA implementation study is warranted at this time. For example, the program may have time-sensitive potential for high impact, such as through an opportunity to study naturalistic program roll-out or to further test an implementation intervention. If the supporting evidence is based on non-VA patient populations, describe the rationale for why adaptations to VA are sufficient to warrant an implementation study at this time.
3. **Research Plan (1.5 pages):** Describe proposed study design and approach; specifically:
 - a. Proposed implementation or quality improvement strategy, including the underlying conceptual framework and core components, citing evidence supporting the hypothesized effectiveness of the strategy.
 - b. Study design and methods and how the conceptual framework informs design and variable selection.
 - c. Key outcomes and analyses related to the program and implementation strategy, including summative/process evaluation, and if applicable, formative evaluation and economic impact. Patient outcomes are desired unless the program evidence base is sufficient to warrant focus on program uptake.
 - d. Key covariates: Describe measurement of contextual factors that are potentially relevant to the generalizability, success, spread, or sustainability of the approach (e.g., system, site, provider, and patient). Analyses of context sensitivity are particularly desirable in studies across multiple sites.
4. **Impact (0.5 pages):** Describe how study might achieve a measurable impact on VA practice and Veterans
5. **Partnerships/Management (1 page):** Summarize key partnerships and project management plan
 - a. List key personnel (PI, Co-Is), including names, affiliations, and discipline or specialty. Describe the PI and Co-I's past or current experience with implementation research, VA operations, and QUERI.
 - b. Briefly describe partnerships with QUERI centers, VA program offices, regional networks, facilities, etc., their specific involvement (e.g., tangible resources, participation), and how they might use study results.
 - c. State the expected project duration and estimated total cost. For studies involving systematic roll-out of programs supported by an operational partner, provide evidence that the project can be completed within the preferred timeline of the partner.

General Review Criteria: Concept papers will undergo a review by QUERI staff, VHA Program Office/Operations representative as appropriate, and peer review by at least two QUERI investigators to determine appropriateness for the SDP funding mechanism and fit with VA priorities. The PI must be at least a 5/8 VA employee at the time of funding and eligible to conduct research in VA. The full SDP proposal should be submitted no later than 6 months after approval of the Concept Paper, and the full proposal should address the comments, concerns, and suggestions made in the concept paper review.

Transmission to QUERI Program: The PI should send electronic copies of the Concept Paper to **Jorge Caridad, QUERI Program Assistant (Jorge.Caridad@va.gov)**, copying **Angela.Whatley@va.gov**

Concept Paper Deadlines: October 25, February 15, or June 15

Further instructions on SDP proposals are specified in the RFA located on the VA-ORD intranet site at <http://vaww.research.va.gov/funding/rfa.cfm> (see Table 4 for list of deadlines). Please contact QUERI Program Coordinator Angela Whatley, PhD (Angela.Whatley@va.gov) if you have additional questions.

The following references also provide guidance for writing implementation research studies:

1. VA QUERI Implementation Guide: <http://www.queri.research.va.gov/implementation/>
2. Curran G, Bauer M, Mittman B, et al. Effectiveness-implementation hybrid designs. *Med Care* 2012;50:217-26
3. Proctor EK, Powell BJ, Baumann AA, et al. Writing implementation research grant proposals: ten key ingredients. *Implement Sci* 2012 (<http://www.implementationscience.com/content/pdf/1748-5908-7-96.pdf>)