

FY 2011 Clinical Educator Grants Program



South Central (VISN 16) MIRECC Clinical Educator Grants Program

I. Background

Funded in October 1998, the South Central (VISN 16) Mental Illness Research, Education, and Clinical Center (MIRECC) is one of ten MIRECCs in the Department of Veterans Affairs. Congress mandated the establishment of MIRECCs to improve the provision of healthcare services to veterans living with mental illness through research and education and through the development of improved models and systems for delivering mental healthcare in VHA. The mission of the South Central MIRECC is to “improve access to evidence-based practices for rural and other under-served populations, especially returning war veterans, veterans experiencing natural disasters, and vulnerable elderly veterans.”

II. Purpose

The South Central MIRECC formed the Clinical Educator Grants Program in 1999 to support and encourage clinicians to develop innovative, exportable educational interventions. The Clinical Educator Grants Program supports the mission of the MIRECC and the VA’s Uniform Mental Health Services Handbook by funding projects that:

- promote evidence-based psychotherapies;
- implement and evaluate recovery oriented services;
- improve treatment adherence and medication compliance;
- improve access to and quality of mental health care in rural settings;
- enhance Veteran input in treatment planning and family involvement in care;
- provide greater knowledge and understanding of mental illness and treatment to Veterans, their families, providers, and trainees; and
- coordinate with community resources.

*** The MIRECC gives funding priority to proposals that address clinical educational needs in rural settings, such as community-based outpatient clinics (CBOCs).**

Educator awards are typically employed in one of three ways, although you are not limited to these approaches:

1. *Apply existing educational materials in a new way* (e.g., adapt materials to Veterans in CBOCs or for delivery to a smartphone) or *compile and organize a new educational program from existing, published materials* (e.g., organize published materials on anger management into modules for a group format or brief cognitive behavioral therapy);
2. *Develop a new educational intervention and pilot it* (e.g., create and assess a new patient education intervention, like the SAFE family curricula or the Courage sexual trauma group treatment manual, or improve the delivery of clinical information to improve treatment adherence, like the Helping Dementia Caregivers CD or Psychotherapy Group DVD);
3. *Update an existing educational product*. Previous grant recipients are invited to apply for a follow up education grant to: a) update their previously developed products, or b) repackage existing products and compare them to the original (e.g., develop an educational DVD and compare its effectiveness to a workbook).

III. Eligibility

A single individual is the “Principal Applicant,” although the project may be a group effort. For collaborations across VA sites, where an individual at each site has a leadership role, those individuals can be “Co-Principal Applicants”.

Awards are made to VA personnel in VISN 16 who are affiliated with or collaborating with Mental Health staff. Funds will be transferred to a Mental Health Fund Control Point (FCP) at a VA medical center. Although student trainees may apply, **a permanent VA staff member must be listed as a co-applicant.** Consumers or non-VA community members can be co-applicants but cannot be the Principal Applicant. Awarded applicants are identified as “Affiliate MIRECC Educator(s)” during the course of their project.

IV. Award

An award is between \$500 and \$7,000, depending on the scope of the project, number of sites, and budget appropriateness. Larger awards are possible with strong justification.

V. Use of Grant Funds

Congress and VHA have strict regulations on how education grant funds can be used. The table below provides general guidelines about what can and cannot be purchased with these funds.

You CAN purchase these items	You CANNOT purchase these items
 Travel of a non-VA employee to a VA site (e.g., a guest speaker)	 Travel by VA employees
 VA hiring of a new and temporary employee (please note that approval from your HR department is required; this can be a cumbersome and slow process and success varies by site).	 Salary or honorariums to VA employees (even for work on personal time)
 Incentives for participation (e.g., Canteen coupons, door prizes, etc.)	 Food (including participant snacks)
 Commercial materials to be used in the development of your project	 Lodging
 Professional services (e.g., voice recording; computer programming; web page design) that cannot be provided by your VA facility. Please check with your facility to ensure that this service is not available.	 Photocopying or binding that can be provided by your VA facility
 Material reproduction that cannot be provided by your VA facility. Please check with your facility to ensure that this service is not available.	 Equipment or IT (computers, projectors, CD players, and some software)
 Additional materials and/or supplies that are not available at your facility and are a part of your project (e.g., anatomical models and condoms to demonstrate safer sex practices)	 Reproduction of electronic data (e.g., audiotapes, videotapes, CDs) that can be provided by your VA facility

VI. Budget Justification

Prepare an itemized budget using the budget table template provided in Attachment A. The award can purchase materials, supplies, and services. Include a justification for each item, explaining why you need it. If a similar item or service is commonly available through Care/Service Lines, please state why the purchase is being requested.

VII. Planning a Project and Spending the Funds

Before you begin writing, talk to someone in the MIRECC about your idea. A meeting with your local MIRECC site leader is the first step, and your grant will be submitted through this individual. If you are at the following sites, talk to the individuals below as well as others who are knowledgeable about your content area. Contact information can be found in Outlook.

<i>Jackson VA – Dr. Randy Burke</i>	<i>Oklahoma City VA – Dr. Tom Teasdale</i>
<i>Houston VA – Dr. Melinda Stanley</i>	<i>New Orleans VA – Dr. Joe Constans</i>
<i>Little Rock VA – Dr. Jeff Pyne</i>	<i>All other sites – Dr. Michael Kauth or Dr. Randy Burke</i>

Get advice about whether your idea is innovative, unique, doable, and fundable. The MIRECC may be able to help connect you with a partner or co-applicant who has expertise in areas that you need on your team. Getting advice does not guarantee funding, but it can significantly improve your chances of being funded. Good advice will save you time and effort and result in a stronger application.

In planning your project and the budget, keep in mind some important fiscal limitations. Awards are usually announced by November. Funds are usually transferred by December. **Clinical Educator Grant funds MUST be spent or obligated for spending (in the Fiscal system) before the end of the fiscal year (September 30), or risk being swept by the facility and returned to VA Central Office.** Swept funds cannot be returned. Therefore, plan your project so that you spend your funds between January, realistically, and mid-September. You are not required to complete your project by mid-September. We will remind you of upcoming fiscal deadlines.

Often proposals are too big to be completed in one funding cycle (end of September that fiscal year). Large projects can be divided into two phases (e.g., developing program materials in Year 1, and applying and evaluating the materials in Year 2). If you take this approach, please propose “Part one” in the current application, and then briefly describe the future phase(s) of the project (stating that you intend to apply for funding for that part of the project). We cannot fund future phases in advance, but it will help your current application if reviewers know your next steps.

VIII. Use and Distribution of MIRECC Clinical Educator Grant Products

All products developed with support from a MIRECC Clinical Educator Grant (e.g., manuals, videotapes, DVDs, etc.) are South Central MIRECC and VHA products. All products must acknowledge funding from the MIRECC. These products are not for profit and will be distributed to VA facilities at cost or at no cost. Products may be posted on the MIRECC web site and shared with other Networks.

IX. How to Apply

A. What do I send, when is it due, and where do I send it?

An application outline is attached. Applications for the fiscal year 2011 funding cycle should be submitted by email to randy.burke@va.gov and must be received by **4:00 PM (CT), August 16, 2010**. ***Most applicants are asked to make changes: e.g., provide additional information, modify their plan or intervention, or submit a revision.*** Funding decisions will be made no later than late October 2010.

When submitting your application, please be sure to include:

- title of the project;
- name(s) of the principal applicant and co-applicants;
- your postal address;
- name of your facility;
- contact phone number; and
- **Cc: the local MIRECC Site Leader listed above and the VAMC Mental Health Care/Service Line Chief/Director for concurrence. You may also need concurrence from your Clinic Director, if at a CBOC. *If the Care/Service Line Chief/Director or MIRECC Site Leader are not included on the email, we cannot accept your proposal.***

IMPORTANT NOTE - Please talk to your Chief/Director(s) about your project and give your Chief/Director(s) time to read your proposal BEFORE submitting it. Some proposals have not been accepted because the Care/ Service Line Chief/Director did not know about them or did not support them.

B. How long is the application and what should it look like?

The application should describe your project in **1500 words or less** using a **12-point font** and **1-inch margins**. The budget (with justification text) is additional and should describe any supportive services that you plan to use (e.g., the name of graphic design services that you will use). A suggested outline for writing your application is below.

C. What is the process?

All applications are reviewed by the MIRECC Education Core and outside experts, when necessary. Applications are rated in terms of consistency with the MIRECC mission, appropriate goals, target population, attention to population needs, feasibility of plans, appropriate evaluation, potential outcomes, justified budget, etc. All applicants will receive written feedback about their proposal. The review committee often asks applicants to make specific changes in their project or provide additional information in a revised application. Revised applications are reviewed for adherence to the review committee's recommendations. Funding decisions are usually made by late October.

X. Questions

If you have questions about the application or the appropriateness of your project, please contact Dr. Randy Burke at randy.burke@va.gov or 601-362-4471 ext. 1152.

Outline for Applications

I. INTRODUCTION / JUSTIFICATION

- A. Provide a brief statement of the clinical issue or problem that will be addressed by your project
- B. What, if any, materials currently exist to address this need? [*Search the national MIRECC website (<http://www.mirecc.va.gov/>) and the Internet!*]
- C. How does your project meet the MIRECC goal of improving access to evidence-based practices to rural and underserved Veterans?

II. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

- A. Who is the target audience (Veterans, families, VA staff)?
- B. How many Veterans / people will take part in the project? Give a number.
- C. What do you plan to do in your project? What are the start and finish dates?
- D. How will you evaluate your project? How will you make sure your project is carried out as planned? How do you plan to measure your outcomes? How will you know if your project was a success?

III. FUTURE PLANS

- A. What might be the long-term impact of your project?

IV. BUDGET SHEET (outside the 1500 word limit)

- A. Individually list all materials/services you will need to purchase, including costs.
- B. Provide brief text justifying each purchase
- C. Sum all costs to give a total cost for the project.

Additional Tips for Success:

1. Be complete but brief. Reviewers won't know what you want to do unless you tell them clearly. Have colleagues read drafts of your proposal and solicit feedback. Proposals that are vague, general, or duplicate what has already been done receive poor reviews and low scores.
2. Review previously funded projects and search the national MIRECC web site, Internet, library, and educational catalogs for products similar to what you propose. Use your search to justify the uniqueness of your proposal.
3. Itemize your budget and explain why you need those items. Do not bundle items together. Be aware of ways that you cannot spend these funds (see table above). If you have a question, ask!
4. Make your project doable. Plan a project that you can complete (or nearly so) between about January, realistically, and mid-September. Bigger projects may need to be divided into smaller pieces and separate grants.

5. Make your product easily exportable. Materials that can be put in electronic form or posted on a web site are exportable. DVDs are exportable. Projects that involve purchasing commercial videos for each site are not exportable. Products that are specific to one facility are not exportable.
6. Work with colleagues on the project. Accomplishing a project on your own can be tough. Working with others can be more satisfying and can make it easier to stick to deadlines.
7. Get feedback on your written proposal. I cannot stress this enough! Have colleagues who are not involved in the project and have the MIRECC site leader read your proposal. If they don't understand what you want to do, the reviewers won't either. It is tough to write clearly. Sometimes people don't ask for feedback because they are anxious about their writing. However, not getting feedback on your proposal is a fatal flaw.
8. Get advice from MIRECC staff or from clinicians who have had funded projects! Call/email now! We want you to be successful. Below is also a short list of people who have developed MIRECC-funded education products and who are willing to provide informal consultation. Contact information can be found in the Outlook Global Address List.

Houston – Dr. Melinda Stanley, Dr. Jeff Cully, Dr. Quang (Charlie) Nguyen
Jackson – Dr. Randy Burke, Dr. Jefferson Parker
Little Rock – Dr. Jeff Pyne
New Orleans – Dr. Joe Constans
Oklahoma City – Dr. Michelle Sherman, Dr. Tom Teasdale, Dr. Ursula Bowling
All other sites – Dr. Michael Kauth, Dr. Randy Burke

