

AVAS Early Career Faculty Research Award

VA surgeons are eligible to apply for this award within 7 years following completion of their post-graduate training. Research proposals in clinical outcomes, health services research, education research, and basic science or translational research will be considered. The primary mentor may be a VA surgeon or other senior investigator with which the PI has a research affiliation.

The award is \$25,000 for one year.

This Award is intended for scientifically rigorous projects that are aligned with the VA mission, have the potential to impact VA patients, and/or directly involve VA data/resources.

Applications will be accepted until **March 1** of the academic year and must be submitted through the AVAS website.

The AVAS Research committee will serve as the selection committee.

Members of the AVAS Research Committee have an obvious conflict of interest and are ineligible to apply. Members of the AVAS executive council submitting or supporting applications from their institution are eligible but will recuse themselves from deliberations involving the selection of the awardee. Candidates are expected to attend the AVAS annual meeting where the awardee will be announced.

Scientific findings will be presented at the AVAS annual meeting the year following completion of the award. A project completion report will also be submitted prior to the annual meeting the year following completion of the grant.

ELIGIBILITY:

- VA surgeons within 7 years of completion of their post-graduate training
- VA faculty with a minimum of a 3/8ths appointment
- AVAS membership is required for application

FUNDING PERIOD: July 1 – June 30 of each year

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION:

- Significance of the research
- Relevance to mission of the Department of Veterans Affairs and the AVAS
- Scientific merit and approach
- Feasibility for completion of proposed investigations
- Qualifications of the investigator
- Environment and resources available to conduct the research
- Mentorship and career development plan

PROPOSALS:

Proposals must be submitted as a single .pdf file, adhere to the page limits, and follow the structure of items listed below. Proposals must be single spaced with 11 point Arial typeface and 1" margins. The individual components of the proposals should be as follows:

- A. Application form (downloadable from website, 1 page)
- B. Project summary (limit to 1 page)
- C. Research proposal (limit to 5 pages)
 1. Hypothesis
 2. Specific aims
 3. Significance, innovation and rationale.
 4. Relevance to the veteran population and mission of the AVAS
 5. Background/preliminary data
 6. Research design and methods (should include potential problems and alternative approaches)
 7. Timeline
- D. Bibliography (1 page limit)
- E. Budget summary. This should denote expenses for personnel, equipment/start-up costs, travel, and other direct costs (i.e. material & supplies, animals, publication costs, etc.)
- F. Budget justification. This should follow the standard format for all VA Merit grants. See VA-ORD SF424 Application Guide for more information
- G. Equipment available to the applicant (limit to 1 page)
- H. Facilities and resources available to the applicant, including description of research environment (limit to 1 page)**
- I. Specific plans for future extramural research grant applications (i.e. NIH, Merit Review, CSP, institutional foundations, etc.) (limit to 1 page)
- J. NIH-style biosketch for the following individuals*:
 1. Principal investigator
 2. Mentor
 3. Consultants/collaborators
- K. Letters of Support:
 1. Chief of Surgery at the VA (1 page limit)
 2. Chairman of the Department of Surgery (1 page limit)
 3. Associate Chief of Staff for Research (1 page limit)
 4. Mentor Letter with Career Development/Mentoring plan (2 page limit)
 5. Consultants/collaborators essential to the project (1 page limit for each). Each should clearly delineate their role in the proposed research and state their commitment to support it.
- L. Dean/fiscal officer approval letter stating that no indirect costs will be covered with this award
- M. Online attestation to conduct the proposed research in compliance with the requirements of the local

research committee, the requirements of the animal welfare act, IRB, and/or Good Clinical Practice guidelines if selected

* All biosketches are required to follow the most recent published NIH format (<https://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm>)

** For animal protocols, provide verification that your proposed facility is in compliance with animal welfare assurance for research by organizations such as the Association for Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care International (AAALAC) or equivalent.

*** Just-in-time institutional assurances (e.g. IRB, IACUC) need to be obtained prior to release of funding.

SELECTION:

The AVAS Research Committee will review submitted proposals and score them based upon the stated criteria. The committee will make recommendations for selection subject to the approval of the Executive Council. It is expected that the written proposals should be sufficient to determine the awardee. However, in the unusual situation where further discussion and review are deemed necessary, interviews with applicants may be arranged at a time and place convenient for the members of the committee; most probably the interview and selection will take place at the AVAS annual meeting. If proposals are not competitive, the grant may not be awarded that year.

The proposed research may be simultaneously submitted to other funding sources, however, only one source of funding for the project can be accepted. An updated Other Support Document must be submitted prior to distribution of funds.

PUBLICATION:

We encourage submission of manuscripts in which the research was supported by this award to JAMA Surgery, but this is not a requirement.

ADMINISTRATION:

Following the completion of the 1-year funding period, a succinct 2-page written report and copies of all related publications are required to be submitted at the conclusion of the one-year funding period (June 30th). The final report should include: 1) financial expenditures, 2) scientific accomplishments, 3) publications that resulted from the work, and 4) pending or successful grant applications. This report should be submitted via email to the Chair of the Research Committee of the AVAS. Additionally, the investigator is required to present the findings and results of the research at the next annual meeting of the AVAS.

Manuscripts and presentations generated from this award will acknowledge this award as a source of funding. Copies of published manuscripts supported in whole or in part, with AVAS Award funds, will be submitted even if published after funding has terminated.