

**Association of Veterans Affairs Surgeons (AVAS)
Request for Applications**

AVAS 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 that emphasize minimal invasive innovations, patient safety, OR flow, and/or education utilizing new technologies will be considered. The award is \$25,000 for one year. Priority will be given to proposals with the potential to impact the clinical management of surgical patients in the VA setting which are well grounded in scientific principles. Applications will be accepted at any time between **November 1 and February 1** of the academic year and should be emailed to the administrator of the AVAS Foundation AND the Chair of the Research Committee (see AVAS website for email addresses).

The AVAS research committee will serve as the selection committee. If there are numerous and competitive proposals, interviews may be needed to determine the best candidate; however, this is expected to be uncommon. If interviews are needed to make the final selection, this can be done at the annual meeting with the recipient chosen and announced during the meeting. Selected proposals will be sent to the AVAS Executive Council for final approval.

Members of the 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.

ELIGIBILITY:

- VA surgeons within 7 years of completion of their post-graduate training
- VA faculty with a minimum of a 5/8ths appointment
- The physical research need not be performed at a VA campus
- AVAS membership is required for application

APPLICATION DUE DATE: February 1 of each year

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

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. Title page (limit to 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
- 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. Co-investigator(s)
 3. Consultants and/or collaborators
- K. Letters of Support:
 1. Chief of Surgery at the VA
 2. Chairman of the Department of Surgery
 3. Associate Chief of Staff for Research
 4. Consultants/collaborators essential to the project. 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 follow² 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. For clinical protocols, prior approval by the IRB and research committees will enhance the probabilities of funding

SELECTION:

The research committee will review submitted proposals and score them on a 1-9 scale based upon the stated criteria. The committee will make recommendations for selection subject to the advice and 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.

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:

Immediately following the completion of the 1-year funding period, the investigator is required to present the findings and results of the research at the next annual meeting of the AVAS.

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.

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.