

SPARK – SEED – SPREAD INNOVATION FUNDING PROGRAM

Announcing three tiers of funding coupled with training to help support your innovation efforts

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Overview

As part of VA's Innovators Network, we wanted to find a way to further accelerate innovations taking place at the VA to best serve Veterans and their supporters. We believe that our employees are the beating heart of the VA—they know the challenges all too well, and are the most equipped to identify potential solutions. Therefore, we want to invest in the people who make this organization great to help further catalyze innovation efforts across the VA.

We are excited to announce a new platform to address VA system-level challenges called the **Spark-Seed-Spread Innovation Funding Program**. The program provides training to employees to learn innovation-related competencies, such as Human Centered Design, and provides access to funding and other support to enable employees' innovation efforts! We practice the belief that testing new ideas / products / processes on a small scale prevents the VA from committing resources on a large scale to things that don't work. This approach helps to ensure that they are delivering value to Veterans and employees along the way.

The employees selected to receive a Spark-Seed-Spread Innovation Funding grant will enter the **VA Innovators Network Accelerator**. (You can read an article [here](#) from the last round.)

Here's How It Works

We are providing 3 tiers of funding:

- **'Spark' grants (\$10K or less) - Proof of Concept Projects:** This level of funding helps you develop initial proof of concept 'prototypes' where there is a strong problem statement and potentially some preliminary evidence or strong theory of action.
- **'Seed' grants (\$50K or less) – Pilot projects:** This level of funding helps further develop your proof of concept and test it out in the form of a pilot. For these projects, there is a moderate evidence base and funding is provided for replication grants designed to pilot, test, and validate effectiveness of your proof of concept innovation.
- **'Spread' grants (\$200K or less): Implementation and scaling projects:** This level of funding helps you spread, diffuse, or scale your innovation projects to other clinics or sites at the VA. The evidence base for these projects is mature and they are deemed suitable for scaling because they have been vetted by the appropriate stakeholders and have been proven effective through pilot or replication studies.

We are interested in receiving a diverse set of applications that utilize innovation to deliver a better experience for Veterans, Veterans' families, and employees. In addition, we would like to receive applications in the following topic areas:

- **Chronic Kidney Disease**

- Approximately 1,000,000 VA enrollees have Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD). VA is committed to understanding the complexity of CKD in the Veteran population with goals of moving the state of science, clinical care delivery, and technological advancement forward to improve patient outcomes. Although we are open to receiving applications on any aspect of chronic kidney disease, some topics of interest related to kidney disease have been identified and are as follows:

- prevention
- data-driven decision making
- disease management
- clinical care delivery
- tele-health
- care coordination
- in-home and alternative in-facility dialysis models of care

- **Suicide Prevention**

Each day, more than 300 VA Suicide Prevention Coordinators (SPCs) and their teams, located at every VA Medical Center, work to get Veterans the care they need and to educate the community about suicide prevention programs and resources. In addition, VA just completed and released the most comprehensive report on Veteran suicide to date. From the data collected from 50 states and 4 territories, spanning 1979 to 2014, we know that in 2014, an average of 20 Veterans died by suicide each day and that 70% were not users of VHA services. Further, current VA data has shown that 65% of Veterans who die by suicide are over 50 years of age. The Department is initiating a public health model approach to suicide prevention. This new approach will help VA identify Veterans who could benefit from additional support sooner. The Office of Suicide Prevention is interested in receiving applications for innovations that improve community outreach and help to identify Veterans needing support and resources. Specifically, the office is looking for innovative ideas to outreach and prevent suicide among the following demographic groups:

- Men over the age of 50.
- Veterans who are not users of VHA healthcare.

- **Clinician Satisfaction and Burnout**

Factors affecting clinician professional satisfaction and burnout to transform culture so that a thriving, engaged clinical workforce can deliver the top-most care to our valued Veterans.

You can apply for this program through this VA Innovators Network link:
innovation.va.gov/innovatorsnetwork

This application process is quite different than you have seen elsewhere at the VA. We are using Human Centered Design practices to help guide the application to ensure we are focused on innovations that are Veteran- or employee-centric. By utilizing human centered design practices, it allows you to co-create and work directly with the people your innovation impacts throughout your application process. Depending on which level you are applying for, we will guide you through the human centered design methodology, including the following activities:

- Describe the problem that you propose to solve by first understanding the needs of the stakeholders involved.
- Describe a potential solution that you have co-designed with your users and project stakeholders.
- Provide us with the details about the value your innovation brings to the VA and Veterans!

You can apply and check out the application through the following link:
<http://www.innovation.va.gov/innovatorsnetwork/>. You can also check out a copy of the application questions in the Appendix at the end of this fact sheet.

If selected to receive funding, you and your grantee team will enter the VA Innovators Network Accelerator!

Modeled after the Department of Health and Human Service's Ignite Program, NASA's Launch Program, and the Department of Energy's Catalyst model, grantees will get teaching, training, and guidance on bringing their innovation forward. This 5-month accelerator model will provide the following through a combination of in-person and online programming:

- Kick-off 'bootcamp' and finale demonstration presentations to help provide teaching and training opportunities, and a stage to showcase your innovation efforts.
- Coaching and individualized mentorship.
- Access to a larger network of innovators and advisors, a "tribe" of like-minded VA innovators, and support from the Innovation Specialist at your site.
- On-the-job exposure to human centered design methodologies, creating and measuring value with innovation projects, and entrepreneurship skills.
- A framework and guidance for bringing your innovation forward to implementation and sustainment.

- Financial and resource support through Spark-Seed -Spread innovation grants.

| The proposed project must be: | Explanation |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|

What are the criteria by which the grant applications will be assessed?

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Truly Innovative | Innovation is the conversion of a NEW idea into impact. NOTE: Process improvement/Lean projects will be redirected to the Systems Redesign Coordinator of the applicant's site. Have you done the research to determine that your proposal is unique/groundbreaking? What have you done? |
| Able to deliver value | How does your innovation project deliver value in some or all of the areas below? <u>Clinical Value:</u> Expressed as an improvement in health (ex: overall management of chronic disease within a panel, such as A1c <8%). <u>Operational Value:</u> Expressed as a measure of increased efficiency or productivity (ex: time to appointment, number of patients seen). <u>Financial Value:</u> Expressed as a reduction or avoidance of a hard dollar cost, or return of investment. <u>Customer Value:</u> Expressed as an increase in convenience or reduction in cost to Veterans (ex: access or receipt of timely visit, self-reported quality of life). <u>Societal Value:</u> Expressed as a broad good to society. May or may not be financial (ex: Does this help inform broader healthcare challenges for Veterans and non-Veterans?) |
| Feasible to implement | Is this project feasible to implement at the VA? Can the award money be spent/obligated within FY17? Are the purchases allowed? Does the project integrate well with existing systems, such as existing organizations, infrastructure, technology systems, processes, and policies? |
| Important to VA | Is this project addressing system-level challenges? (i.e. is this project helping more than 1 domain and more than 1 site?) Is this project of strategic importance to VA (ex: is it tied to improving the employee experience, improving the Veteran experience?) |
| Portable/ Scalable | Can this innovation be easily implemented or diffused at other sites or other locations within your facility? |
| Supported by Stakeholders | Does the applicant have passion for this work? Does the applicant have local support for this innovation project from both potential users and leaders? For Seed and Spread grants, has this gained leadership and champion support at the local level (or national level)? |
| Measurable | How will you measure the success of your innovation? What datasets already exist that can be used to measure the desired outcomes? If new data needs to be collected, what is the data and why is it important to collect? At what frequency will you collect / observe this data? |

If I get a grant, what am I committing to?

- Weekly / Every-other-week check-ins with a mentor over the phone or in person.
- Obtaining your supervisor's approval.
- 5-20% of your time over the duration of the program depending on the size of your project.

- Meeting milestones associated with the Accelerator.

How can I apply?

You can apply through this VA Innovators Network link:

innovation.va.gov/innovatorsnetwork

What are the deadlines?

The deadline to apply is **Wednesday, December 7th**. At this point, you will begin to receive feedback from mentors and further iterate on your application and submit further information. The goal for this application is to co-build it with your innovation users, get feedback from innovation mentors, and then submit your final application based on stakeholder’s feedback. Even though you will continue to iterate on your application until the final deadline, we **highly, highly, highly** encourage you to submit your first pass of your application by Wednesday, December 7th. As you can see from the application, it is very short! The timeline for the Spark-Seed-Spread Innovation Program is below.

| Milestone | Date |
|--|---------------------------|
| Deadline to apply | December 7, 2016 |
| Feedback on application provided to applicant | December 21, 2016 |
| Final submission due with supervisor approval | January 11, 2017 |
| Notification of grantee recipients | January 31, 2017 |
| Launch of VA Innovators Network Accelerator Bootcamp for all selected recipients | 2 – 3 days in March, 2017 |
| VA Innovation Demo Day! | 1 day in September, 2017 |

Collaborating to measure value with the White House Social and Behavioral Sciences Team

The White House Social and Behavioral Sciences Team (SBST) works across the federal government to apply findings and methods from the social and behavioral sciences to help the policies, programs, and operations of government better serve the nation. The VA Innovators Network is collaborating with the SBST to identify 1-2 proposals that will receive particular technical support from the SBST. Finalists will be asked to provide additional information about how their project may fit under this collaboration.

Projects identified for SBST support should meet the following criteria:

- The outcome of interest depends in part on people’s actions (e.g., individuals taking up a program, making a payment, choosing among alternative health insurance plans, etc.).
- It is possible to assign groups of people to different versions of an intervention in order to compare outcomes and learn what works best (e.g., half of program recipients receive information presented in a standard way, and half in a modified, behaviorally-informed format).
- The size of the program population is large enough to be statistically and policy relevant.

- Administrative data on the relevant outcomes is already being collected (or could be easily collected).

See www.sbst.gov for more examples of the team's work.

FAQ

Who can I contact to learn more?

You should contact your site's Innovation Specialist to learn more about the Spark-Seed-Spread Innovation Funding program (see names and emails below). If you don't know who your Innovation Specialist is, please contact Andrea Ippolito (andrea.ippolito@va.gov) and she will introduce you!

- Albany P.O.C.: Michael McCarthy and Patricia Kidder, michael.mccarthy8@va.gov, patricia.kidder@va.gov
- Albuquerque P.O.C.: Katrina Bressler and Peter Woodbridge, katrina.bressler@va.gov, peter.woodbridge@va.gov
- Atlanta: Michelle McBee and Rachel Dalton, Michelle.McBee2@va.gov, rachel.dalton@va.gov
- Biloxi: Boots Brinkman, Helen.Brinkman@va.gov
- Boston: John Dadamo, Saurabha Bhatnagar and Samantha Sissel, John.Dadamo@va.gov, Saurabha.Bhatnagar@va.gov, samantha.sissel@va.gov
- Chicago/Hines P.O.C.: Jamie Mathews, Mandi Evanson, Meghan McCoy-Hess, and Laura Miller, jamie.mathews@va.gov, mandi.evanson@va.gov, meghan.mccoy-hess@va.gov, laura.miller8@va.gov
- Chillicothe: Scott Bryant, Scott.Bryant3@va.gov
- Cleveland P.O.C.: Pete Spanos, pete.spanos@va.gov
- Grand Junction P.O.C.: Elizabeth Roten and Karl Prager, elizabeth.roten@va.gov, karl.prager@va.gov
- Jackson: Katie Babineaux and Sekila Argrett, Katie.Babineaux@va.gov, Sekila.Argrett@va.gov
- Lebanon P.O.C.: Ashley Whitehead and Glenn Wikel, larkin.harris@va.gov, ashley.whitehead@va.gov
- Lexington P.O.C.: Veronica Herst, veronica.herst@va.gov
- Loma Linda P.O.C.: Deanna Callahan, deanna.callahan@va.gov
- Milwaukee: Kayt Havens, Hilary Ryan, Kristyn Ertl, Michelle Piwowarczyk, Kathryn.Havens@va.gov, Hilary.Ryan@va.gov, Kristyn.Ertl@va.gov, Michelle.Piwowarczyk@va.gov
- Portland: Judy McConnachie, Judy.McConnachie@va.gov
- Puget Sound P.O.C.: Jonathan Medverd, Shirley Moore, and Beth Ripley, jonathan.medverd@va.gov, shirley.wood@va.gov, beth.ripley2@va.gov
- Richmond P.O.C.: Melissa Oliver and Natalie Maixner, melissa.oliver@va.gov, natalie.maixner@va.gov
- San Antonio P.O.C.: Craig Caya, Rory Turner, Katherine Haley, and Wayne Martin
- San Diego P.O.C.: Elizabeth Floto, elizabeth.floto@va.gov

- San Francisco: Angie Waldrop, Angela.Waldrop@va.gov
- Tuscaloosa P.O.C.: April Jones and Jay Moyer, april.jones2@va.gov, jay.moyer@va.gov
- White River Junction P.O.C.: Brynn Cole, brynn.cole@va.gov

What are the deadlines?

The deadline to apply is December 7th.

Can I apply at any point?

Ideally, you would begin your application to meet the first deadline on December 7th. That being said, the application builds, so you can apply at any point. We **highly, highly** encourage you to apply in the first round though because mentors will be helping to shape and guide your proposal, thus making it more likely that you will get selected!

How does the funding work?

After you are selected, we will transfer the money to your medical center through a Transfer of Disbursing Authority (TDA). This funding can be used for materials, personnel, services, designer and developer time through the Veterans Engineering Resource Center and the Office of Personnel Management Innovation Lab (and other items as well). We will work with you to approve the funding use. Please note: the funding for personnel must be used in FY 2017.

Can the funding cross fiscal years?

If the funding is being used for resources, then it can cross fiscal year. The purchase must occur in FY 2017 but can be received in the next FY. If the funding is being used for personnel, then it cannot cross fiscal years.

What type of dollars are these?

The dollars are a mix of medical service and IT dollars. They are appropriated.

Is this just for IT innovations?

NO!!! This is for all types of innovation, whether they are IT, devices, processes, policies, services, platforms, care pathways, new care models, etc. We are innovation agnostic! Innovation takes all shapes and forms and we want to hear your thoughts!

What resources are available to help us develop and execute on our ideas?

If you are in need of developer or designer resources for your projects, check out the [GSA micropurchasing platform](#). Essentially, you can post your project on their platform and people will bid to work on your project and they need to deliver the result within 30 days. All micro-purchase reverse auctions start at \$3,500 or less and vendors bid down the price they accept for completing the tasks presented. Winning bids have ranged across the spectrum from \$1 to near the \$3,500 cap. Also GSA Open Opportunities allows you to post your projects to federal stakeholders as volunteer opportunities. You can learn more about this program through the following link: <https://openopps.digitalgov.gov/>.

How do I fill out the spend plan?

A spend plan is a realistic estimate of all costs involved in implementing and operating your project. Cost estimates should be broken down into logical categories, such as salaries, travel costs, and non-personnel costs (i.e. supplies, services, software, etc.) The spend plan is used to project what you intend to purchase and how much you expect it to cost. A spend plan must be included with your initial proposal request.

View a [Spend Plan Example](#) here.

How do I fill out the business case for Seed and Spread grants?

The main objective of a business case model, or business plan, is to establish a strategy and action plan for your innovation proposal. This should include a clear picture of where you are starting – and where you expect to be – over the duration of the project. The primary objective is to demonstrate accountability for decision makers and leaders reviewing your plan that based on currently available information and reasonable assumptions; this is a good business decision. Business case models will vary for each proposal and are dependent largely on the complexity of the proposal. Some will begin with a prototype phase while others might begin with a full implementation.

Your innovation proposal should include a timeline defining your goal(s) and the objectives that will be met in order to accomplish the goal(s). A projected timeline should include estimates of when key milestones and key services are expected to be delivered. This information does not have to be in the final business case model but you will reference it frequently when building it.

Your business case should be based on:

- The established goal(s) and corresponding objective(s) of your proposal.
- An outline of changes that you will accomplish.
- Any impact to performance indicators (highly recommended).
- Any identified assumptions or risks.
- The applicable “values” (clinical, operational, financial, customer, and/or societal).
 - Clinical – improvement in health outcomes.
 - Operational – increased efficiency or productivity.
 - Financial – reduction or avoidance of a hard dollar cost, redeployment of personnel.
 - Customer – increase in convenience or reduction in cost to Veterans.
 - Societal – broad good to society.

For your reference:

A goal is a brief, clear statement of an outcome to be reached within a timeframe. A goal is a broad, general, tangible, and descriptive statement. It does not say how to do something, but rather what the results will look like. It is measurable both in terms of quality and quantity. It is time based. It is achievable. It is a stretch from where we are now. Above all, it is singular. In comparison, an objective is a specific, measurable, actionable, realistic, and time-bound condition that must be attained in order to accomplish a particular goal. Objectives define the **actions** that must be taken to reach the strategic goals. For example, the VA has a goal to "increase access". An objective to achieve the goal may be "standardize at least 80% of all primary care clinic scheduling grids." Other examples of common objectives are, increase MSA staffing by 25% in 2017, combine 50% of the MSA staff into teams that work day and evening shift, etc. Notice how the objectives are more specific and provide more detail.

A goal is where you want to be and objectives are the steps taken to reach the goal.

This is an example of a [Business Case](#).

How do you define what an innovation is?

Innovation is the conversion of a new idea into impact, whether it be for employees or for our customers.

What are some examples of projects from last year's round of Spark-Seed-Spread?

You can learn more about last year's project in this blog post from our VA Innovation Demo Day: <https://medium.com/vainnovation/sparking-innovation-meet-the-innovations-ac2b97163380#.uqh5olql2>. These are some examples of projects presented from our first round.

What is human centered design?

Human Centered Design (HCD) is a methodology for problem solving that focuses on human needs first, that takes a creative and iterative approach to finding new solutions to their human needs. Human Centered Design training is one of Secretary Bob's top priority areas for the VA because it will enable us to create a consistent experience for Veterans across the VA. As defined by Tim Brown, the CEO of one of the nation's leading design firms Ideo, 'a human centered design approach to innovation draws from a designer's toolkit to integrate the needs of people, the possibilities of technology, and the requirements for business success.'

Check out VA Center for Innovator's Network to learn more about Human Centered Design: <http://www.innovation.va.gov/hcd.asp>

What is the difference between human centered design and lean six sigma?

Human Centered Design is at the front end of innovation and it is a discipline in which the needs, behaviors, and experiences of an organization's customers (or users) drive product, service, or technology design processes. It is a practice used heavily in the private sector to build a strong understanding of users, generate ideas for new products and services, test concepts with real people, and ultimately deliver easy-to-use, consistent products and positive customer experiences.

Lean Six Sigma is a complementary methodology that is focused on the back end of an innovation process. It helps streamline operations and be more responsive to customers once a product, service, or technology is already in place.

What is VA's Innovators Network?

The Innovators Network is composed of a growing number of sites in VA Health Care Systems across the country that work together to create safe spaces for VA employees to test new ideas and join forces with stakeholders across the Veteran community to improve the way VA serves Veterans. As of October 2016, we are up to 22 sites!

The Innovators Network is driven by a few core principles:

- **Our employees are the beating heart of the VA**—they know the challenges all too well, and are the most equipped to identify potential solutions.
- **Innovation is not just ideas.** It's the conversion of a new idea into impact, whether it be for employees or for our customers.
- **The solutions are in the field, not in the central office.**
- **Innovation is a process to lean on** as an employee to improve and reimagine the way VA serves Veterans.
- **Innovation is a muscle**, and we want VA employees to have the muscle they need to develop professionally in their own careers and serve Veterans in the process.
- **Innovation is most effective when it is borne of diverse perspectives.** We create actionable opportunities for VA employees, Veterans, and other stakeholders to co-design solutions.
- **Innovation is most valuable when it is shared.** We are not solving problems for any one VA site—we are solving problems for an entire community. Our success is their success and we need to do a better job of celebrating innovation and sharing best practices across VA sites.
- **Test small, fail small, scale big.** Testing new ideas / products / processes on a small scale prevents the VA from committing resources on a large scale to things that don't work.
- **We are Veteran-Centered.** Solving problems effectively requires a relentless commitment to prioritizing the needs of Veterans over the needs of the agency.

After, one year of pilot testing VA Innovators Network at 8 sites across the VA (2015-2016), we have recently expanded to 22 sites.

The components of VA Innovators Network include:

- Dedicated Innovation Specialists – 1.0 FTE per pilot site for 1 year
- Training to develop core competencies and toolkits, e.g. HCD, innovation value creation
- Engagement and outreach support to share good news stories of VA
- Spark – Seed – Spread Innovation Funding Program for innovation development delivered over three phases: 1) prototype development, 2) pilot initiative, 3) implement/deploy

You can learn more about the Innovators Network at innovation.va.gov/innovatorsnetwork

How is this different than VA Idea House?

VA Idea House is a platform for any VA employee to offer ideas online to help modernize VA's culture, processes and capabilities (not just innovation). You can submit ideas online and reviewers from across the enterprise will review and get selected. The Spark-Seed-Spread Innovation Funding Program is for employees to both learn innovation-related competencies, such as Human Centered Design, and also gain access to funding + support to enable employees' innovation efforts.

APPENDIX

The final application questions across the Spark – Seed – Spread innovation grants are shown below.

SPARK INNOVATION (Tier 1 funding is \$10K or less) – application questions

1. What is your name?
2. What is your email?
3. What is your location?
4. What is your phone #?
5. What is your title and position?
6. What is a 1-3 line summary of your proposed innovation project?
7. Please perform research on whether this innovation or proposed concept exists in other locations internal to the VA or external to the VA. For internal to VA projects, we encourage you to check the “Diffusion Hub” @ <https://vhaindwebsim.v11.med.va.gov/hub2/ppd/index.html> - (copy and paste link to your browser) to see if this exists at the VA or check VA Pulse as well. Were you able to find any similar work? If so, please describe any similarities or differences between your proposed concept and the existing work. Describe in 200 words or less.
8. What problem are you trying to solve? ([Here](#) is a link to a straightforward explanation of what a problem statement does and does not include.) *Identify this problem in 200 words or less.*
9. Based on your problem statement in the last question, please interview 2-5 stakeholders related to the problem you are trying to solve to further understand their needs and experiences. Based on this research, please identify the following in 600 words or less: 1) Number and type of stakeholder interviewed 2) List of high-level open-ended interview questions 3) 4-8 overarching themes from this research and identify specific quotes from your interviews to support these themes. These interviews are one of the first steps in Human Centered Design Methodology. You can learn how to conduct these interviews by reviewing the “Interview Guide for Innovator’s Network Spark-Seed-Spread Innovation Funding Program Application” at the link below. Also when you identify the stakeholders you interviewed, do not identify them by their names, only by their stakeholder type. For instance, you can state, "I interviewed 2 prosthetists and 2 Veterans."

Interview Guide for Innovator’s Network Spark-Seed-Spread Innovation Funding Program Application can be found here:
<https://www.vapulse.net/docs/DOC-57709> (copy and paste link to your browser).

10. What is your proposed ‘proof of concept’ design? With your answer, please include the following: Proposed ‘proof of concept’ design that you hope to develop with this Tier 1 funding and resources (200 words or less). One or two use cases for this proof of concept design (150 words or less)
11. What is your proposed plan for developing this proof of concept design (150 words or less)? *Identify the goal, timeline, and milestones for developing this proof of concept design.*
12. How much funding do you need (\$10K or less) and what will this funding be used for (150 words or less)? Also please fill in the Excel file spending plan template and attach with the proposed budget. The Spending Plan Template can be found here: <https://www.vapulse.net/docs/DOC-56116> (copy and paste link to your browser). You can attach this spending plan in the “attachment” section on the home landing page for your application. Be sure to label the attachment for content.
13. Describe how this proof of concept project provides value in the following areas: clinical value, operational value, financial value, customer value, and societal value. The text below further defines these categories. Note: Your project does not have to provide value across all 5 categories.
Describe this in 150 words or less. The definitions for each value type is as follows
 - Clinical Value: Expressed as an improvement in health.
 - Operational Value: Expressed as a measure of increased efficiency or productivity.
 - Financial Value: Expressed as a reduction or avoidance of a hard dollar cost.
 - Customer Value: Expressed as an increase in convenience or reduction in cost to Veterans
 - Societal Value: Expressed as a broad good to society. May or may not be financial.
14. How you will measure success? What data will you observe or collect to track how your innovation is reaching the desired outcomes? Are there datasets that already exist that can be used to measure the desired outcomes? If you will be collecting new data, what will you collect and why is it important to collect? *Describe this in 200 words or less.*
15. At the beginning of innovation projects, it is important to measure the risks associated with each innovation project. Please try to identify the risks with your project and the steps you will take to mitigate these risks. *Describe this in 150 words or less.*

16. Will your project require a procurement or contract with an external to VA entity?
(Yes/No)
17. What are the names, positions, and email addresses of all of your team members involved with this project?
18. Please include a letter of support from your supervisor. You can attach the letter in the “attachment” section on the home landing page for your application. Be sure to label the attachment for content.

SEED INNOVATION (Tier 2 funding is \$50K or less) – application questions

1. What is your name?
2. What is your email?
3. What is your location?
4. What is your phone #?
5. What is a 1-3 line summary of your proposed innovation project?
6. Please perform research on whether this innovation or proposed concept exists in other locations internal to the VA or external to the VA. For internal to VA projects, we encourage you to check the “Diffusion Hub” @ <https://vhaindwebsim.v11.med.va.gov/hub2/ppd/index.html> - (copy and paste link to your browser) to see if this exists at the VA or check VA Pulse as well. Were you able to find any similar work? If so, please describe any similarities or differences between your proposed concept and the existing work. Describe in 200 words or less.
7. What problem are you trying to solve? ([Here](#) is a link to a straightforward explanation of what a problem statement does and does not include.) *Identify this problem in 200 words or less.*
8. Based on your problem statement in the last question, please interview 2-5 stakeholders related to the problem you are trying to solve to further understand their needs and experiences. Based on this research, please identify the following in 600 words or less: 1) Number and type of stakeholder interviewed 2) List of high-level open-ended interview questions 3) 4-8 overarching themes from this research and identify specific quotes from your interviews to support these themes. These interviews are one of the first steps in Human Centered Design Methodology. You can learn how to conduct these interviews by reviewing the “Interview Guide for Innovator’s Network Spark-Seed-Spread Innovation Funding Program Application” at the link below. Also when you identify the stakeholders you interviewed, do not identify them by their names, only by their stakeholder type. For instance, you can state, "I interviewed 2 prosthetists and 2 Veterans."

Interview Guide for Innovator’s Network Spark-Seed-Spread Innovation Funding Program Application can be found here:

<https://www.vapulse.net/docs/DOC-57709> (copy and paste link to your browser).

9. What is your proposed solution to help solve this problem? Please describe the current state of this project and how you developed this proposed solution.

Describe this in 200 words or less. Also feel free to attach images of your proposed proof of concept. Be sure to label the attachment for content.

10. What is your proposed pilot to test out your proposed solution? Describe the pilot plan, including goals, timeline, milestones, ‘what success looks like’, and how you will measure success (activity and outcome measures). Please describe this in 300 words or less. Feel free to attach 1-2 slides or an excel file if you need it to help describe your plan. You can attach the information in the “attachment” section on the home landing page for your application. Be sure to label the attachment for content.

11. Who are the key stakeholders who are driving this effort? For instance, describe your local champions, along with key stakeholders executing and supporting the pilot project.

Identify them only by their titles, not names.

12. Describe the business case for this pilot project. Please define the different types of value and get more granular (clinical value, operational value, financial value, customer value, and societal value). The text below further defines these categories. Note: Your project does not have to provide value across all 5 categories.

Describe this in 150 words or less. The definitions for each value type is as follows

- *Clinical Value: Expressed as an improvement in health.*
- *Operational Value: Expressed as a measure of increased efficiency or productivity.*
- *Financial Value: Expressed as a reduction or avoidance of a hard dollar cost.*
- *Customer Value: Expressed as an increase in convenience or reduction in cost to Veterans*
- *Societal Value: Expressed as a broad good to society. May or may not be financial.*

13. What work have you done to validate that this proposed solution solves the problem and is ‘pilot ready’ (150 words or less)?

14. How much funding do you need (\$50K or less) and what will this funding be used for (150 words or less)? Also please fill in the Excel file spending plan template and attach with the proposed budget. The Spending Plan Template can be found here:

<https://www.vapulse.net/docs/DOC-56116> (copy and paste link to your browser). You can attach this spending plan in the “attachment” section on the home landing page for your application. Be sure to label the attachment for content.

15. How you will measure success? What data will you observe or collect to track how your innovation is reaching the desired outcomes? Are there datasets that already exist

that can be used to measure the desired outcomes? If you will be collecting new data, what will you collect and why is it important to collect? Describe this in 200 words or less.

16. At the beginning of innovation projects, it is important to measure the risks associated with each innovation project. Please try to identify the risks with your project and the steps you will take to mitigate these risks.

Describe this in 150 words or less.

17. Will your project require a procurement or contract with an external to VA entity? (Yes/no)

18. What are the names, positions, and email addresses of all of your team members involved with this project?

19. Please include a letter of support from your supervisor. You can attach the letter in the “attachment” section on the home landing page for your application. Be sure to label the attachment for content.

SPREAD INNOVATION (Tier 3 funding is \$200K or less) – application questions

1. What is your name?

2. What is your email?

3. What is your location?

4. What is your phone #?

5. What is your title and position?

6. What is a 1-3 line summary of your proposed innovation project?

7. Please perform research on whether this innovation or proposed concept exists in other locations internal to the VA or external to the VA. For internal to VA projects, we encourage you to check the “Diffusion Hub” @

<https://vhaindwebsim.v11.med.va.gov/hub2/ppd/index.html> - (copy and paste link to your browser) to see if this exists at the VA or check VA Pulse as well. Were you able to find any similar work? If so, please describe any similarities or differences between your proposed concept and the existing work. Describe in 200 words or less.

8. What problem are you trying to solve? ? ([Here](#) is a link to a straightforward explanation of what a problem statement does and does not include.)

Identify this problem in 200 words or less.

9. Based on your problem statement in the last question, please interview 2-5 stakeholders related to the problem you are trying to solve to further understand their

needs and experiences. Based on this research, please identify the following in 600 words or less: 1) Number and type of stakeholder interviewed 2) List of high-level open-ended interview questions 3) 4-8 overarching themes from this research and identify specific quotes from your interviews to support these themes. These interviews are one of the first steps in Human Centered Design Methodology. You can learn how to conduct these interviews by reviewing the “Interview Guide for Innovator’s Network Spark-Seed-Spread Innovation Funding Program Application” at the link below. Also when you identify the stakeholders you interviewed, do not identify them by their names, only by their stakeholder type. For instance, you can state, “I interviewed 2 prosthetists and 2 Veterans.”

Interview Guide for Innovator’s Network Spark-Seed-Spread Innovation Funding Program Application can be found here:

<https://www.vapulse.net/docs/DOC-57709> (copy and paste link to your browser).

10. What is your proposed solution to help solve this problem?? Describe the current state of this project and how you developed this proposed Diffusion-ready solution.

Describe this in 200 words or less. Also feel free to attach images of your proposed innovation. You can attach this information in the “attachment” section on the home landing page for your application. Be sure to label the attachment for content.

11. What is your implementation, scaling and diffusion plan? Describe the plan, including goals, timeline, milestones, locations, stakeholders, ‘what success looks like’, and how you will measure success (activity and outcome measures). Describe this in 300 words or less. Feel free to attach 1-2 slides or an excel file if you need it to help describe your plan. You can attach the information in the “attachment” section on the home landing page for your application. Be sure to label the attachment for content.

12. Who are the key stakeholders who are driving this effort? For instance, describe your local champions, along with key stakeholders executing the scaling of your project.

Identify them only by their titles, not names.

13. Please include and attach letters of support from champions at the sites that will be helping you to scale and implement your solutions. You can attach the information in the “attachment” section on the home landing page for your application. Be sure to label the attachment for content.

14. Describe the business case for this pilot project. Please define the different types of value and get more granular (clinical value, operational value, financial value, customer value, and societal value). The text below further defines these categories. Note: Your project does not have to provide value across all 5 categories.

Describe this in 150 words or less. The definitions for each value type is as follows

- *Clinical Value: Expressed as an improvement in health.*
- *Operational Value: Expressed as a measure of increased efficiency or productivity.*
- *Financial Value: Expressed as a reduction or avoidance of a hard dollar cost.*

- *Customer Value: Expressed as an increase in convenience or reduction in cost to Veterans*
- *Societal Value: Expressed as a broad good to society. May or may not be financial.*

15. *What work have you done to validate that this proposed solution solves the problem and is 'implementation and scale' ready to other sites at the VA? Describe this in 150 words or less.*

16. How much funding do you need (\$200K or less) and what will this funding be used for? Describe it in 200 words or less and fill in the Excel file spending plan template as an attachment with the proposed budget. The Spending Plan Template can be found here: <https://www.vapulse.net/docs/DOC-56116> (copy and paste link to your browser). You can attach this spending plan in the "attachment" section on the home landing page for your application. Be sure to label the attachment for content.

17. How you will measure success? What data will you observe or collect to track how your innovation is reaching the desired outcomes? Are there datasets that already exist that can be used to measure the desired outcomes? If you will be collecting new data, what will you collect and why is it important to collect? Describe this in 200 words or less.

18. At the beginning of innovation projects, it is important to measure the risks associated with each innovation project. Please try to identify the risks with your project and the steps you will take to mitigate these risks.
Describe this in 150 words or less.

19. Will your project require a procurement or contract with an external to VA entity?
(Yes/No)

20. What are the names, positions, and email addresses of all of your team members involved with this project?

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