



VHA Fellowships

VHA INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM

2024 ENTREPRENEUR IN RESIDENCE AND SENIOR INNOVATION FELLOWSHIPS APPLICATION GUIDE

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
Office of Healthcare Innovation and Learning



VHA Innovation Ecosystem

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VHA Innovation Ecosystem Fellowships Application Timeline

MAY 22

VHA Innovation Ecosystem (VHA IE) announces program.

June 1 | 1:30-2:30 PM ET

VHA IE hosts an information call for prospective applicants.

June 12

VHA IE Fellowships Applications open for VHA IE Entrepreneur in Residence and Senior Innovation Fellows. Applications must be written and submitted in one session. Sign up for Fellowships Application notifications [here](#).

June 28 | 11:59 PM PT

Full applications are due through VHA IE Fellowships Salesforce form.

June 30

Review period for applications begins.

July 28

VHA notifies applicants of acceptance/non-acceptance into the program.

October 1

2024 VHA IE Fellowships Year Begins.

September 1

VHA IE announces the 2024 VHA Entrepreneur in Residence and Senior Innovation Fellowships Cohort.

October

VHA Innovation Experience (iEX)

Guiding Principles



VHA
UNDER SECRETARY
FOR HEALTH

CORE PRIORITIES

- Hire Faster and More Competitively
- Connect Veterans to the Soonest and Best Care
- Serve Veterans with Military Environmental Exposures
- Accelerate VA's Journey to a High Reliability Organization
- Support Veterans' Whole Health, their Caregivers, and Survivors
- Prevent Veteran Suicide

When completing your application questions, it can be helpful to demonstrate how your project reflects the following values, strategies, and priorities.

VA Mission

"To fulfill President Lincoln's promise to care for those who have served in our nation's military and for their families, caregivers, and survivors."

VHA Mission

Honor America's Veterans by providing exceptional healthcare that improves their health and well-being.

VHA Innovation Ecosystem Mission

VHA Innovation Ecosystem (VHA IE), a core program of the VHA Office of Healthcare Innovation and Learning (OHIL), is the catalyst for enabling the discovery and spread of mission-driven healthcare innovation to advance care delivery and service that exceeds expectations, restores hope, and builds trust within the Veteran community. VHA IE leverages the collective power of innovation champions from across VA, academia, other government agencies, and industry to operationalize innovation and scale best practices. Through these collaborations, VHA IE is able to test, replicate, and scale innovations into practice to drive operational value for the enterprise.

VA CORE VALUES (I CARE)

Integrity
Commitment
Advocacy
Respect
Excellence



VHA Innovation Ecosystem Fellowships Overview



Education and
Empowerment
Exercises

Project
Promotion and
Expansion

Improved
Innovation
Competencies

Nationally
Recognized
Mentors and
Subject Matter
Experts

Community
of Innovation
Peers

Project
Resources
and Funding

VHA Innovation Ecosystem Fellowships (VHA IE Fellowships) present an unparalleled opportunity for emerging healthcare leaders who possess a dynamic presence, a passion for innovation, and a forward-thinking vision. VHA IE Fellowships provide the chance to gain valuable experience and hone the skills necessary to create positive contributions to VA Health Care Systems.

VHA IE Fellows remain at their assigned duty stations, working on existing transformational projects that may involve implementation trials throughout VA. Participants acquire essential innovation competencies, develop their leadership skills, and promote their

innovative visions across VHA. VHA IE Fellowships prepare emerging healthcare leaders for potential leadership positions within local VA Medical Centers (VAMC), VISN regions, and/or VHA Program Offices.

VHA Innovation Ecosystem Fellowships Mission

VHA Innovation Ecosystem Fellowships empower VHA employees through strategic guidance and relationship development to become change agents and catalytic leaders capable of championing solutions that will improve healthcare for Veterans.

VHA IE Fellowships Programs

Entrepreneur in Residence (EIR)

For emerging leaders to advance their innovative initiatives, leveraging internal and external collaborations, performing value-based evaluation, and navigating pathways to broader implementation.

EIR implemented a mobile orthotics and prosthetics service that utilized telehealth and portable digital technologies to provide care to Veterans that face challenges in traveling to VA Medical Centers.

Senior Innovation Fellow (SIF)

For accomplished leaders who are prepared to implement a national scale project or initiative that measurably improves clinical outcomes, cost, and/or Veteran experience. These projects should promote a diverse approach to innovation by leveraging internal and external collaborations across public, private, and non-profit sectors.

A SIF implemented a 3D printing initiative to enhance the delivery of care for Veterans, including surgical planning utilizing 3D models and reducing the manufacturing time between fitting and receiving an orthotic.

Program Structure and Curriculum

1. VHA Innovation Ecosystem Entrepreneur in Residence and Senior Innovation Fellows (VHA IE Fellows) attend virtual or in-person sessions in Washington, D.C. and other locations. Sessions feature professional enrichment content, highlighting innovation core competencies.

2. VHA IE Fellows implement an **existing** enterprise-wide innovation project or a project of relative significance. Eligible applicants must have successfully implemented their solution in at least one facility and have projects that are relevant to VHA mission, strategic priorities, and/or operations

3. VHA IE Fellows are expected to make substantive progress on their projects and identifiable contributions to VHA.

4. VHA IE Fellows have access to nationally recognized mentors and experts based on their area of interest. Mentors will assist Fellows with career development, and project focus and implementation.

5. VHA IE Fellows expand their community of peers, advancing their knowledge, networks, and abilities to bolster VHA innovation and educate external innovators on key VHA challenges and solutions.

6. VHA IE Fellows are **required to attend VHA Innovation Experience in Washington, D.C., typically held in October.**

7. VHA IE Fellows will attend an orientation as the program begins and attend subsequent monthly meetings to discuss project progress, challenges, and solutions with their peers. Fellows are also encouraged to attend leadership summits throughout the program.

8. To support Business Case development, VHA IE Fellows attend a 3-day VHA Diffusion of Excellence Diffusion Academy event to learn how to build an effective business case.

9. The program does not schedule sessions on weekends or over federal holidays. VHA IE Fellows are otherwise at their assigned duty station with the expectation that approximately 20% of their time will be focused on their VHA IE Fellowships project.

10. This program is a knowledge enrichment and leadership development opportunity and includes resourcing and funding as agreed upon after candidate selection. This may include salary reimbursement and/or project resource support and will be negotiated between each VHA IE Fellow, their leadership, and VHA. Additionally, travel expenses and administrative support related to work performed as a VHA IE Fellow will be covered by VHA IE.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

- Fellows Remain at Their Duty Station

- 20% Protected Time for Fellowships Project

- VHA Innovation Experience (iEX) (October)

- VHA IE Fellowships Kickoff Orientation

- Monthly Fellowships Enrichment Experiences
 - o 3rd Tuesday 1:00 - 3:00 PM ET

- Weekly Office Hours with VHA IE Director of Community Engagement and Fellowships

- Fellowships Peer Collaboration Opportunities

- Participation in Diffusion of Excellence Diffusion Academy (January)



Overview of Eligibility

VHA IE Fellows will be selected by VHA Innovation Ecosystem through a national applicant pool based on the applicant's commitment to innovation, leadership potential, and interest and ability to implement a transformational project that will modernize VA Health Care Systems and enhance the customer experience for Veterans, their families and caregivers. Fellows must be supported by their direct leadership.

The program has a broad interdisciplinary focus. VHA IE Fellows include physicians, nurses, allied health professionals, healthcare administrators, lawyers, engineers, and industry leaders. Participants are accomplished leaders currently leading an innovative project(s). Applicants must be a U.S. citizen or possess a current visa suitable for participation in this paid educational activity. U.S. citizens shall be given priority in selection.

A paid VHA appointment is required prior to starting the program but is not required at the time of the application. Part-time appointments are acceptable to meet eligibility criteria. Participants currently enrolled in VHA training programs or internships may apply

but must have an official VHA staff appointment at the start of the program.

All applicants must demonstrate that their underlying VHA position will allow them to use up to 20% of their time to participate in this program.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU INTENT)

The MOU does not need to be submitted with your application. However, we request that you socialize the document with your direct leadership before submitting your application to confirm their support.

If you are selected as a finalist, your direct leadership must sign the MOU. We will require written acknowledgment from your Director Level Leadership within two weeks of admission into the program.

Project

- Must be an existing Innovation project or project of relative significance.
- Directly relevant to VHA mission or operations.
- Relates to national, VISN, or local strategic priorities and needs.
- VHA IE Fellowships do not support clinical trials or other IRB research projects.

Fellow

- VHA employee at start of program if accepted.
- U.S. citizen or possess a current visa allowing paid educational activity.
- U.S. citizens shall be given priority in selection.
- Participation supported by direct leadership.
- Fellowship credentials: click [here](#) to view Fellowship credential requirements.

ELIGIBILITY

Application Package

To prepare your VHA IE Fellowships application, use the information provided below and enter your responses in a word processor or text editor (make sure to adhere to the character length limits). When the application portal becomes available, you can copy and paste the text into the portal to submit your application. Please be aware that the form can only receive plain text. Any stylization, such as lists, special characters, or text formatting will not be transferred.



The application portal does not allow saving. Applications must be written and submitted in one session.

For more information about previous fellows and to access the official application portal, please visit [VHA IE Fellowships](#). The application portal will open on June 12, 2023, and the deadline for submission is June 28, 2023 at 11:59 PM Pacific Time.

**SIGN UP
TO BE ADDED
TO THE
FELLOWSHIPS
APPLICATION
CALENDAR
HERE**

Application Questions

The application questions are divided into two sections, 'Applicant Profile, and 'Project Description.' Use the questions below to prepare your application for submission.

Applicant Profile

Answers should focus on the applicant as an individual. You will have the opportunity to define your Fellowships project in the next portion of the application.

- 1) **Applicant Name**
- 2) **Applicant VA.gov Email Address**
- 3) **Official Job Title and Credentials**
- 4) **Reporting Location**
- 5) **Innovation:** What is your definition of innovation? (250 Characters)
- 6) **Bio:** Provide a brief introduction, focusing on your personal and professional strengths and skill sets. (1000 Characters)
- 7) **Experience:** Describe your professional background and contributions to innovations in VA. (1000 Characters)
- 8) **Goals:** Tell us about the professional development goals and objectives you hope to achieve during the Fellowships experience. This is your chance to tell us how becoming a VHA IE Fellow will help you grow. (1000 Characters)
- 9) **Mentors:** Please describe your preferred Fellowships mentors and explain why they would be a good fit. If you have identified specific individuals, please include their names and email addresses. If you do not have any specific mentors in mind, you may instead indicate a particular office, department, or location that aligns with your interests. (1000 Characters)

Application Package

Project Description

This is your opportunity to layout your vision for your VHA IE Fellowships Project. Your project should focus on implementing an innovative solution within VHA. Innovation projects seek to create, design, and test impactful products, processes, etc. that directly improve outcomes, experiences, etc. The end goal isn't a body of information; thus, it is NOT research.

VHA IE Fellowships do not support clinical trials, or research projects that require Institutional Review Board Support.

Per 45 CFR 46.102(d) and the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP), the deciding question between Research (in need of IRB action) and quality improvement (covered under HIPAA's "health care operations" provisions) is the following: Is the activity a systematic investigation designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge? If the response is yes, it's research. If not, it's quality improvement.

Find out more about how VA defines Research.

[Is It Research](#)

[Human Subject Regulations Decision Charts | HHS.gov](#)

[Office of Research & Development \(va.gov\)](#)

1) Project Name

2) **Focus Area:** Choose the focus area(s) that best matches your project. *Specify Focus Area if you selected "Other". (255 Characters)*

3D Printing	Access to Care	Artificial Intelligence
Appeals	COVID-19	Data & Analytics
Specialty Care	Care Models	Operations
Benefits	Health Care System	Precision Medicine
Financial Management	Burial	Other
Workforce Development	Acquisition Management	Mental Health & Suicide Prevention
Veteran Experience/ Veteran - Facing Solutions		Immersive Technology

3) **Abstract:** Please provide a brief introduction to your project. What is the innovation project you are working on and would like to implement during the fellowships term? (1200 Characters)

4) **Mission:** In 3-4 sentences, please describe the mission of your project. Missions are typically written in the present tense. Describe why you do what you do and who benefits from the work. (250 Characters)

- *A consensus statement spelling out the project's principal role and activities, and the direction your project needs to be moving.*
- *Reference to project beliefs and place in the community.*

Sample Missions

Google: To organize the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful.

Apple: To bring the best user experience to its customers through its innovative computer hardware, computer software, and services

Louisville Youth Group, Inc.: LYG empowers QTBIPOC/LGBTQIA+ youth to grow into healthy and resilient leaders through community connection, life skills education, and social advocacy.

5) **Vision:** In 1-2 sentences, what is your vision for your project? Your vision should state the future objective of your work. Describe how the future looks different if you succeed. (100 Characters)

- *What is your vision for the practice—where should the practice be headed?*
- *Be realistic and compelling—not a pipe dream or fantasy.*
- *Communicate the vision in ways that are clear, exciting, and inspiring.*

Sample Visions

Google: To provide access to the world's information in one click.

Apple: To make the best products on Earth, and leave the world better than we found it.

Louisville Youth Group, Inc.: A community where youth of all genders and sexualities thrive.

Application Package

6) **Objectives:** Please discuss the project objectives you wish to achieve during your Fellowships year. Try to make your objectives S.M.A.R.T. (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timely). (1200 Characters)

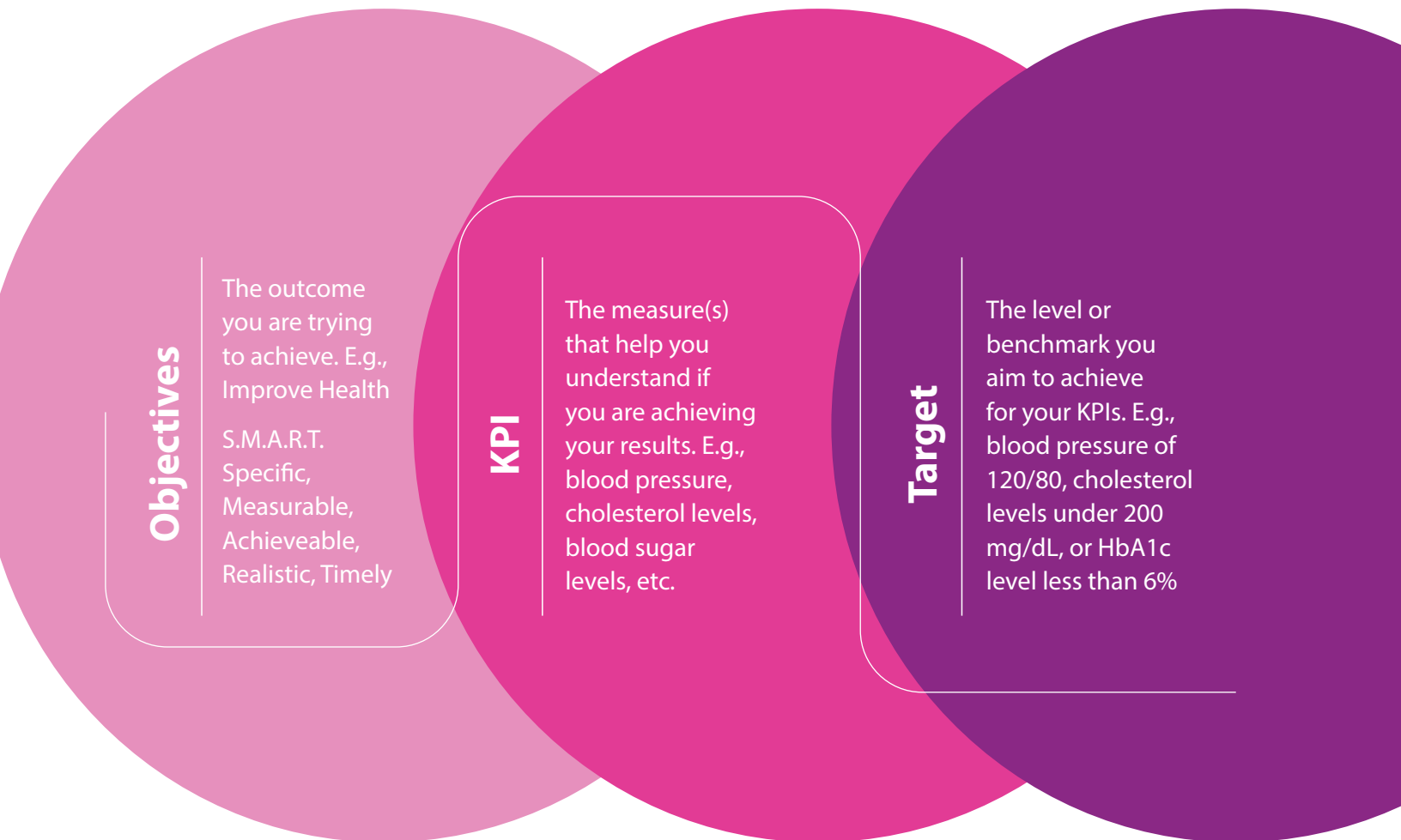
7) **Value:** How does the project deliver value? What specific metrics do you plan to capture to report on Outcomes and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) throughout the experience? (1200 Characters)

8) **Veteran Impact:** What is the relationship of the proposed project to impacting Clinical Outcomes, Ex-

perience Outcomes, and Cost Outcomes. (Your project does not have to affect all impact areas). (1200 Characters)

9) **Stakeholders:** Tell us about collaborators and their current or potential role or relationship to your project. Stakeholders can be departments, offices, service lines, or individual subject matter experts. Include any key stakeholders you would want to work with during your project year. (1200 Characters)

10) **Road map:** What is your proposed plan and timeline for implementation? (1200 Characters)



Application Package

References

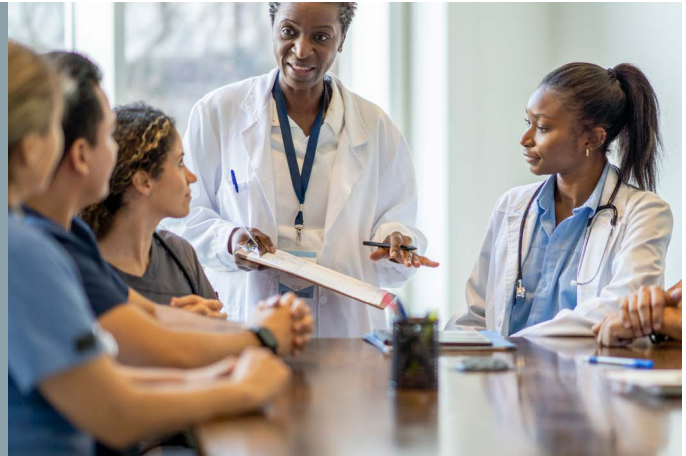
Please provide contact information for three professional references, including, name, email, and relationship to reference (colleague, supervisor, etc.). Two references must be VA references and the third can be any professional relationship. References will be contacted if you are selected for final consideration.

Required Reference Information

Full Name

Email Address

Relationship



Application Checklist

- ☐ Applicant Profile
- ☐ Project Description
- ☐ References
- ☐ Socialized MOU with Direct Leadership
- ☐ Attachments
- ☐ Current Resume or CV: Maximum attachment size is 5MB
- ☐ Signed COI If Appropriate

Signed Conflict of Interest (COI)

If you have a partnership with an external entity that is a part of, impacted by, or who is a potential collaborator during your Fellowships year, please sign and attach an Alt 450 COI form. Disclosure of certain conflicts may rule out the potential for selection as a VHA IE Fellow. Please note, if selected as a finalist, any disclosures on the Alt 450 COI form will be reviewed by Office of General Council.

Please reach out to VHAInnovationFellows@va.gov with inquiries or concerns regarding VHA Innovation Ecosystem Fellowships.

VHA IE Fellowships Credentials

Physician Fellows

Prior to beginning Fellowships, physician Fellows must meet the following criteria:

1. Have an active, unrestricted license to practice in any state in the U.S.
2. Be either board certified or eligible with demonstration of active pursuit of board certification.
3. Be appropriately credentialed and privileged for clinical practice at a local VA facility.
4. Be a U.S. citizen or possess a current visa suitable for participation in this paid educational activity. U.S. citizens shall be given priority in selection.
5. If a graduate of a foreign medical school, must have evidence of Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG) certification.
6. Demonstrate interest in pursuing a career with health innovation as a significant focus.

Nurse Fellows

Prior to beginning Fellowships, nurse and associated health Fellows must meet the following criteria:

1. Unless satisfied by another listed credential, Fellows must possess an advanced degree from an accredited program that would make them eligible for VA hire.
2. Be a U.S. citizen or possess a current visa suitable for participation in this paid educational activity. U.S. citizens shall be given priority in selection.
3. Not be simultaneously enrolled in an accredited clinical training program.
4. Demonstrate interest in pursuing a VA career in health innovation as a significant focus.

Postdoctoral Nurse Fellows

Prior to beginning Fellowships, must meet the following criteria to enter the program:

1. Possession of an unrestricted valid registered nurse license in any U.S. state or territory. Such a license must be maintained for continued eligibility.
2. Be appropriately credentialed and privileged for clinical practice at a local VA facility.
3. Have graduated (or completed all requirements for award of degree) from a doctoral program at a recognized academic institution. This can be a doctoral program in a clinical discipline such as nursing (either Ph.D. or D.N.P.), or in a non-clinical field relevant to Healthcare Quality (e.g., education, industrial psychology, anthropology, medical informatics, etc.).
4. Be a U.S. citizen or possess a current visa suitable for participation in this paid educational activity. U.S. citizens shall be given priority in selection.
5. Not be simultaneously enrolled in an accredited clinical training program.
6. Demonstrate interest in pursuing a VA career with health innovation as a significant focus.

Clinical and Counseling Psychology Fellows

Prior to beginning Fellowships, clinical and counseling psychology Fellows must meet the following criteria:

1. Possess an advanced degree from an accredited doctoral program that would make them eligible for VA hire. Applicants can demonstrate that all requirements for such a degree have been completed and award of the diploma is pending but will be completed prior to starting the Fellowship. Doctoral

VHA IE Fellowships Credentials

programs must be American Psychological Association (APA), Canadian Psychological Association (in relevant clinical degree areas), or Psychological Clinical Science Accreditation System (PCSAS) accredited to ensure eligibility for VA hire.

2. Have completed all requirements to become a staff psychologist at a VA facility. Applicants must have completed an APA or Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) accredited internship (or a new OAA funded, VA-based internship that is not yet accredited). If the candidate has not yet completed the internship, there must be convincing evidence from the Director of Clinical Training at the university and from the Director of Training at the internship that completion is on track and expected before the proposed start date of the Fellowship.

3. Have an active, unrestricted license to practice in the U.S., if such licenses are required for VA employment in the candidate's profession. Any application for a clinical or counseling psychologist who has not completed all training and licensure requirements to qualify for appointment as an independent practitioner must be accompanied by a support letter from either the lead psychologist at the facility or from the Psychology Director of Training. Such a support letter must address the types and amount of clinical experience that the Fellow will engage in and the types and amount of clinical supervision that will be provided. At least 4 hours of supervision must be provided weekly, of which 2 hours must be individual, face-to-face supervision by a licensed and privileged psychologist.

4. Be a U.S. citizen or possess a current visa suitable for participation in this paid educational activity. U.S. citizens shall be given priority in selection.

5. Not be simultaneously enrolled in an accredited clinical training program.

6. Demonstrate interest in pursuing a VA career with health innovation as a significant focus.

All Other Clinician Associated Health Fellows

Prior to beginning Fellowships, a clinician associated health Fellow (other than nurses and clinical or counseling psychology Fellows as described above) must:

1. Possess an advanced degree from an accredited doctoral program that would make them eligible for VA hire.

2. Have completed all requirements to become a fully credentialed independent practitioner (or the equivalent for that profession) at a VA facility.

3. Have an active, unrestricted license to practice in the U.S., if such licenses are required for VA employment in the candidate's profession.

4. Be a U.S. citizen or possess a current visa suitable for participation in this paid educational activity. U.S. citizens shall be given priority in selection.

5. Not be simultaneously enrolled in an accredited clinical training program.

6. Demonstrate interest in pursuing a VA career with health innovation as a significant focus.

Non-Clinician Fellows

Prior to beginning Fellowships, non-clinical Fellows must:

1. Possess a degree from an accredited university that would make them eligible for VA hire.

2. Be a U.S. citizen or possess a current visa suitable for participation in this paid educational activity. U.S. citizens shall be given priority in selection.

3. Not be simultaneously enrolled in an accredited training program.

4. Spend significant time in healthcare improvement activities.

5. Demonstrate interest in pursuing a VA career with health innovation as a significant focus.

Sample Memorandum of Understanding

Date: Insert Date

From: Executive Director, VHA Innovation Ecosystem (14HIL1)

Subject: Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) VHA Innovation Ecosystem Fellowships

To: Insert Direct Leadership Name(s) and Title(s)

1. **Purpose:** This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) specifies the conditions for mutual agreement between VHA Innovation Ecosystem (VHA IE) and Insert Fellow Duty Station regarding the requirements and funding for VHA Innovation Ecosystem Fellowships (VHA IE Fellowships). This MOU will be agreed upon by VHA Innovation Ecosystem leadership and respective VHA leader(s).

2. **Background:** VHA Innovation Ecosystem, a program office under VHA Office of Healthcare Innovation and Learning (OHIL), offers field-based employees the opportunity for career growth and development through Innovation Fellowships. The program lasts one calendar year (October Insert Year–September Insert Year), allowing for continuity across fiscal years. Selected VHA IE Fellows will oversee a national-, regional-, or local-level project that helps shape the vision and strategic direction for the larger innovation ecosystem and delivers enterprise-wide value.

3. **Scope:** Time commitment for VHA IE Fellows shall not exceed 20% of their current dedications. This program is a knowledge enrichment and leadership development opportunity and includes resourcing and funding, as agreed upon after candidate selection. This may include salary reimbursement and/or project resource support and will be negotiated between each Fellow, their leadership, and VHA OHIL. All travel expenses and administrative support related to work performed as a VHA IE Fellow will be covered by VHA OHIL.

4. **Administration:** The following outlines our mutual understanding and commitment regarding this agreement:

- a. **Administrative:** Insert Fellow will spend no more than 20% of time with VHA Innovation Ecosystem. Salary, benefits, and time card will be administered by Insert Fellow Duty Station. VHA Innovation Ecosystem will reimburse salary (not to include benefits) for time spent supporting VHA Innovation Ecosystem.
- b. **Leave:** Insert Fellow will notify their VHA IE and respective VA facility leadership of any leave or travel related to fellowships to ensure appropriate time card certification.
- c. **Travel:** Official travel associated with Fellowships will be arranged by Insert Fellow Duty Station and will follow all Federal Travel Regulations and local policy.

Reimbursement procedures are as follows:

- i. Travel related to VHA IE Fellowships should be approved by VHA IE Fellowships Director at least four weeks in advance of planned travel.
- ii. Traveler will submit the PAID voucher to VHA IE Fiscal Representative, within 30 calendar days of the last day of each travel event.
- iii. Upon receipt and acceptance of the PAID voucher, VHA IE will complete an expense transfer for the total cost of the PAID voucher. If the voucher is not received within 30 days, the voucher will not be reimbursed.
- d. **Duty Location:** Employee will work remotely or at their permanent duty station to fulfill fellowship duties.
- e. This agreement may be terminated or extended based on operational requirements. Notice of termination by any party should be communicated 14 days in advance.

Sample Memorandum of Understanding

5. **Period of Performance:** This MOU covers **Insert Start Date to Insert End Date.**

6. **Fiscal Requirements:**

- a. Total Salary Reimbursement Covered by MOU: **Insert Amount**
- b. Salary appropriation: #####
- c. Travel should be coordinated and approved at the originating/partner site. Reimbursement will be completed through an expense transfer as detailed above.

7. **Points of Contact:**

Area	Name	E-mail Address	Organization
Fiscal	<u>Insert Rep</u>	<u>Rep Email</u>	
Administrative	<u>Insert Rep</u>	<u>Rep Email</u>	
Fiscal	<u>Insert Rep</u>	<u>Rep Email</u>	
Administrative	<u>Insert Rep</u>	<u>Rep Email</u>	

8. Please contact VHAInnovationFellows@va.gov if you have any questions.

Director of Community Engagement and Fellowships,
VHA Innovation Ecosystem

Approved:

Executive Director, VHA Innovation Ecosystem

VISN/VACO/Facility Director Name
VISN/VACO/Facility Director Title