

Date: June 20, 2023

From: Chancellor, VA Acquisition Academy (003A5)

Subj: Revised Approval Memo for the 2023 Acquisition Workforce Innovation Symposium (AWIS) Events (VIEWS 09290453)

To: Principal Executive Director, Office of Acquisition, Logistics, and Construction (003)

Thru: Executive Director, Office of Acquisition and Logistics (003A)

1. This memorandum replaces the Acquisition Workforce Innovation Symposium (AWIS) approval memorandum signed on February 8, 2023 (Attachment 1). At the time, two 2-day back-to-back symposiums were being planned by the VA Acquisition Academy (VAAA). Based on logistics and available space, a decision was made to adjust the conference to one 4-day event for up to 1500 in-person participants and up to 2500 virtual attendees. This memorandum provides the symposium details, given the change in length and scope, and updates the VA Form 10008 (Attachment 2), which serves as the official budget document for the event.

2. In accordance with current published VA conference policies, guidelines and all Federal mandates, the VAAA continues to plan and will host one four-day AWIS event on July 31-August 3, 2023, with travel dates on July 30 and August 4, 2023, at the Gaylord Rockies Resort and Conference Center in Aurora, Colorado. This is the first AWIS held since December 2019, at which more than 1,400 acquisition professionals attended. This AWIS will be delivered in a hybrid format allowing attendees to participate face-to-face or virtually. As part of the conference, there are several events being planned specific to the Administrations and VACO Heads of Contracting Activities (HCAs). HCAs and select staff will travel on July 30, 2023, to prepare for HCA engagement sessions with their teams on Monday, July 31, 2023. This activity and pre-conference support travel is represented under "Miscellaneous 3" on VA Form 10008.

3. Transportation will be provided for attendees to and from the airport overflow hotels. Transportation will be provided from July 30 through August 4. Those expenses are included in the "Other Non-Travel Contractor Costs" on the VA Form 10008.

4. In addition, approval has been granted to provide meals (breakfast and lunch) and refreshments at the main AWIS event August 1 through 3, to encourage networking throughout the AWIS and avoid disruptions that would detract from the training. The cost per meal will be based on current Federal Travel Regulations meals and incidental expenses (M&IE) breakfast (\$18) and lunch (\$20) meal rate. These cost will be offset and will not be claimed by the participants on the travel vouchers. The food and beverage approval memo is attached, and the full amount without M&IE reduction is included under Food and Beverage on VA Form 10008. It's estimated that amount will be reduced by approximately \$138,000.

Subject: Revised Approval of 2023 AWIS (VIEWS 09290453)

5. Purpose: The goal of the 2023 AWIS is enhance the professional readiness and increase the intrinsic knowledge of VA's acquisition workforce (AWF) across the Enterprise. The theme for this year's event is, "Connecting with Our Mission: One VA."

6. Goals and Objectives: The AWIS is part of continuing efforts by the Office of Acquisition, Logistics, and Construction (OALC) senior leadership, hosting learning opportunities in-person and virtual connections and collaborations. The AWIS is a critical success factor for the Enterprise. The event is intentionally aligned with VA's Strategic Stewardship Goal 4.1 (Our Employees are our Greatest Asset); OALC's Strategic Goals of People, Transformation, and Value; OAL's Acquisition Management Program Goal -- Build, Enable, and Sustain a Knowledgeable Workforce; and furthers the All-Employee Survey growth initiative. The AWIS brings the VA AWF along with others in the Acquisition Community together to collaborate and leverage best practices, enabling them to champion better business outcomes in service to our Nation's Veterans.

7. Justification: VA proposes the AWIS training event to comply with Federal mandates related to agency responsibilities for the training, professional development, and career management specific to the AWF in order to ensure an AWF that is enabled and trained to provide quality acquisition support/services through the end-to-end acquisition lifecycle leading to Enterprise mission success. This AWIS will bring 3,500 acquisition professionals together in person and virtually, with participants from the VA acquisition community, which includes VA Administrations, VA Central Office, Federally certified AWF, other government agencies, and industry, joining together in a controlled environment focused on learning, share, networking, and providing comprehensive training venues designed to enhance the performance of the VA AWF and ultimately provide quality acquisition support/services improving the Veterans' experience.

8. Business Case Analysis: While the revised estimated cost for AWIS remains \$4.6 million, the hybrid format allowing attendees to participate face-to-face or virtually is expected to realize cost savings in actual spend. The selected site allows for efficient travel, facilities use, and services which is economical given the scope of the proposed attendees. The Conference Request Form 10008 (Attachment 2) provides cost data to support one 3-day 2023 AWIS. The Responsible Conference Executive (RCE) for this event is Ms. Terri McCrea-Robertson.

9. Contracted Services: OALC will need to solicit the anticipated contractual services for logistical support and execution of the 2023 AWIS. In addition to these services, the contractor shall provide all on-site and closeout support services.

10. Proposed Location and Dates: VAAA will hold the 2023 AWIS on August 1-3, 2023 (with travel dates of July 31 and August 4) at the Gaylord Rockies Resort and Convention Center in Aurora, Colorado, with HCA Engagement Sessions on July 30, 2023 (with a travel date of July 30, 2023).

Subject: Revised approval of 2023 AWIS (VIEWS 09290453)

11. If you have questions please contact Judith Dawson (202) 461-1533 or [Judith.Dawson@va.gov](mailto:Judith.Dawson@va.gov)

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Judith Dawson

Attachments (2):

1. Revised VA Form 10008 Conference Request
2. Approved Food and Beverage Memo

Concur/~~Non-Concur~~

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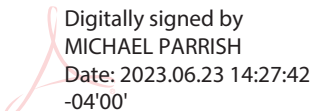
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Angela Billups, Ph.D.  
Executive Director, Office of Acquisition and Logistics (003A)

Approved / ~~Disapproved~~

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Michael D. Parrish  
Principal Executive Director  
Office of Acquisition, Logistics, and Construction  
and Chief Acquisition Officer (003)

Date:

From: Executive Director, Office of Human Capital Services

Subj: Request Approval to Implement Human Capital Services (HCS) Training Symposium in April 2023

To: Senior Advisor for Policy, Performing the Delegable Duties of the Under Secretary for Benefits

1. In accordance with existing Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Conference policies and guidelines, applicable statutes, and regulations, we request approval to implement a three-day Human Capital Services (HCS) Training Symposium in April 2023.

This symposium is necessary to identify, discuss, and improve quality service to VBA and our VACO customers in the areas of recruiting, hiring, training, labor and employee relations, reasonable accommodations, employee retention, and PACT Act requirements. Participation is limited to required attendees within HCS. The execution of this symposium will be in accordance with all social distancing rules in effect during the conference dates. Funding is subject to availability of FY23 funds.

2. Purpose: The purpose of this training is to provide HCS staff with training on the HCS LIFT Initiative to improve upon our ability to Listen, Improve, Facilitate, and Transform HCS into a world class Human Capital Service organization. We will also provide training on Workforce Planning and Strategic Analysis, Employee Management and Oversight, Personnel Security, Learning and Development, Policy and Procedures, Training Management and Performance, Reasonable Accommodation and Workers Compensation. This training will also provide communication and training opportunities for HCS employees to increase their ability to improve the employee and customer experience.

3. Goals and Objectives: The primary goals and objectives of this event are to provide face-to-face training on our LIFT Initiative, quality service, improved methodologies for recruiting, hiring, training, and retention. Reducing Human Resource document processing times and observe and participate in new ideology and techniques for building strategic partnerships through service. The primary audience for this training will be HCS Directors and employees.

4. Justification: The training is required to provide an opportunity for all HCS employees to come together to train HCS employees on recruiting, hiring, training, and retention, share ideas and best practices, and continue to build on the HCS Strategic Workforce Plan. This training is an important training element that is needed for our strategic goals of sustaining organizational innovations, enhancing employee engagement, improving customer experience, increasing accountability and quality assurance, and refining outcomes and results.

Additionally, this training will allow face-to-face interaction between HCS employees from various locations and VBA Central Office. Face-to-face interaction is required to achieve the collaboration described above. All alternate means have been considered and were determined to be insufficient for achieving the stated purpose, goals, and objectives.

It is also determined that it is more advantageous to host this symposium in Atlanta, Georgia to ensure VBA is being good stewards of VBA Travel funds as hosting this symposium in Atlanta, Georgia greatly reduces the overall travel and per diem costs. As evidenced in VA Form 10008, a cost savings of approximately \$50,000 is realized by hosting this symposium in Atlanta, Georgia instead of the 2<sup>nd</sup> lowest location, New Orleans, Louisiana.

5. Business Case Analysis: Due to the large number of conference participants and meeting space needed to accommodate social distancing needs for both the plenary and breakout training sessions, VBA was unable to find space at a government facility that would meet our requirements. Therefore, we found a facility that meets our requirements, the Atlanta Marriott Marquis hotel. Site selection was based on best value, such as hotel cost and dates of availability, weather, and other factors.

6. The proposed dates and location are:

DATE	POTENTIAL LOCATION
April 11 - 13, 2023	Atlanta, GA

\*Travel dates for the Human Capital Services Symposium: April 10, 2023 and April 14, 2023.

VBA HCS Symposium participant breakdown			
	4/11/2023	4/12/2023	4/13/2023
<b>HCS Staff</b>	600	600	600
<b>Totals</b>	600	600	600

- a. The VBA HCS Training Symposium will occur with 600 participants.
- b. There are 600 travelers on 4/10/2023 and 4/14/2023.
- c. No SWAG or entertainment items will be purchased.

7. The overall proposed per event cost estimate is provided below:

Number of VA employees	Non-Travel Cost	Travel Cost	Contractor Support	Total Cost	Cost per Participant
600	\$188,942	\$1,112,112	\$0.00	\$1,301,055	\$2,168

8. The “VA Hosted or Co-Hosted Conference Proposed Checklist for Responsible Conference Executives” and the “Department of Veterans Affairs Hosted or Co-Hosted Conference Request Guidance” were used in the planning of this event. The Responsible Conference Executive (RCE) has reviewed and signed the attached Conference Certification Form.

9. Chuck Wright is the RCE for this conference and can be reached at (202) 413-4520, should you wish to further discuss this proposed training event.

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Aaron M. Lee, Ph. D  
Executive Director, Office of Human Capital Services

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Charles Tapp II  
Chief Financial Officer  
Veterans Benefits Administration

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Josh Jacobs  
Senior Advisor for Policy,  
Performing the Delegable Duties of the Under  
Secretary for Benefits

\_\_\_\_\_ Date

APPROVE /  DISAPPROVE

Date: 4/14/2023

From: Chief Learning Officer, Institute for Learning, Education and Development (106B)

Subj: Request Approval to Implement 106B Institute for Learning, Education and Development (ILEAD), VHA Senior Leader Conference (BIS 19252 / 140315)

To: Under Secretary for Health (10)

1. In accordance with existing Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) conference policies and guidelines, and all applicable statutes and regulations, Institute for Learning, Education and Development requests your approval to implement 106B Institute for Learning, Education and Development (ILEAD), VHA Senior Leader Conference (BIS 19252 / 140315) in fiscal year 2023.
2. Purpose: The primary purpose of the summit is to develop and sustain strategies in leading services pertaining to clients' complex operational needs. The secondary purpose of the summit is to gain capabilities in leading methods and opportunities to change operational practices through improvements in knowledge application. The third purpose of this summit is for Institute for Learning, Education and Development to promote strategic understanding among executives in the Department, especially Veterans Health Administration (VHA).
3. Goals and Objectives: The summit will improve the VHA service capability by enhancing understanding among staff and reinforcing the value of best practices through in-person cooperation among colleagues. The summit will also enhance the quality of services to Veterans by preparing and encouraging staff to apply their improved understanding to plans and other conditions affecting intricate operations in VHA. This face-to-face summit will help staff clarify and coordinate future requirements that Institute for Learning, Education and Development is promoting in executives with the goal of improving operational procedures across major work functions.
4. Justification: The summit requires extended, uninterrupted episodes of face-to-face engagement to sustain attention on complex operational factors and conditions affecting stakeholders. The content of the summit is consistent with goals of VA and VHA, as it will include an extensive set of peer-to-peer presentations that concentrate on necessary designs, methods and professional requirements for improving executive governance and overall organizational policy. The summit is required for attendees to fully achieve their professional development to meet best practice standards for full participation in the mission of the VA and its growth of performance capability. Lodging taxes are included in estimated costs even if the Federal Government is tax-exempt in selected locations because all travelers attending the conference may not hold a government issued travel card. All travelers will have completed mandatory travel card and ethics training as required by VHA.

Request Approval to Implement 106B Institute for Learning, Education and Development (ILEAD), VHA Senior Leader Conference (BIS 19252 / 140315)

5. Business Case Analysis: The proposed training, 106B Institute for Learning, Education and Development (ILEAD), VHA Senior Leader Conference (BIS 19252 / 140315), beginning on 06/13/2023 and ending on 06/15/2023 (3-day event) will be held in Phoenix / Scottsdale, AZ and includes 425 VA personnel of which 419 will be air travelers and 2 POV travelers, at a total estimated cost of \$1,522,734.72. The estimated cost per attendee is \$3,582.91. The travel dates are 06/12/2023 returning 06/16/2023. The value of the event to the VA mission is that it will reinforce vital Veteran services; as well as reinforce proficiency in planning contextual analyses of the operational conditions affecting such services. Detailed market cost research was conducted on three potential locations. The location selected was determined to offer the VA the best value, especially regarding contracting costs and travel costs.

All efforts will be made to utilize a free, government facility. However, \$245,171.30 of non-travel costs will cover expenses such as meeting space rental, AV equipment rental and all related services should it be necessary to hold the event in a non-government facility.

Funding Justification: All audience attendee's home station are paying their own travel. ILEAD will be paying for venue space and audio visual. VHA 108 (Strategy) will be paying for their facilitating contractors. VHA 108 and ILEAD will be paying for their support employees and presenter/facilitator travel.

Contractor Justification: This conference will include contractor services. Contractor fees and travel costs of \$366,000.00 are included in this estimate.

Cost Justification: The cost estimate lists the per person cost as over \$2,000 due to increase travel, space, and audio visual costs due to current market conditions.

On 30 June 2022, the VHA Governing Board & VHA Assistant Under Secretary for Health Operations approved an Executive Decision Memo (EDM) tasking VHA Human Capital Management (HCM) via ILEAD to manage an Annual VHA Senior Executive Service (SES) Leadership Development Conference in years FY24 and beyond. The Undersecretary for Health has directed this conference execute in FY23. A total of 22 contracted personnel is necessary for this event. 2 local audiovisual specialists to assist with the live switching and videography of the event and 20 Subject Matter Experts trained and currently involved in the strategy area of VA health care business. These contracted personnel have an in-depth understanding of the strategic topics being discussed enabling them to lead the discussions, document the outcomes, and develop after action reports/plans for actionable next steps.

COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS FOR IN-PERSON EVENTS: In accordance with the Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer (OCHCO) Bulletin dated 09/20/2022, Secretary approval is no longer required for VA-hosted in-person meetings, conferences, and events in non-health care settings. When attending a VA-hosted meeting, conference, or event that is not in a health care setting, individuals are not required to provide information about their COVID-19 vaccination status. Individuals should follow relevant safety protocols around mask wearing and physical distancing from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Safer Federal Workforce Task Force (Task Force) based on the community level at the time of the event. For meetings,



Request Approval to Implement 106B Institute for Learning, Education and Development (ILEAD), VHA Senior Leader Conference (BIS 19252 / 140315)

Force) based on the community level at the time of the event. For meetings, conferences, and events hosted by Veterans Affairs (VA) at a facility in a county where the COVID-19 Community Level is MEDIUM or HIGH, all in-person attendees should provide information about their vaccination status using the Certification of Vaccination form. In requesting this information, facilities should comply with any applicable Federal laws, including requirements under the Privacy Act and the Paperwork Reduction Act. For meetings, conferences, and events, in-person attendees who are not fully vaccinated or decline to provide information about their vaccination status should provide proof of a negative COVID-19 test completed within the previous three days and comply with relevant safety protocols, consistent with their vaccination status. Visit CDC COVID-19 Community Levels to determine the level at the locations listed in this Conference Package.

6. The proposed dates and location are:

Dates	Potential Location
06/13/2023 - 06/15/2023 (3-day event)	Phoenix / Scottsdale, AZ

7. The overall proposed per event cost estimate is provided below:

	Number of employees	Support Staff/VA Faculty	Non-Travel Cost	Travel Cost	Contractor Support	Total Cost	Cost per Participant
106B Institute for Learning, Education and Development (ILEAD), VHA Senior Leader Conference (BIS 19252 / 140315)	425	25 Support / 10 faculty out of 425 Employees	\$353,171.30	\$803,563.42	\$366,000.00	\$1,522,734.72	\$3,582.91

Request Approval to Implement 106B Institute for Learning, Education and Development (ILEAD), VHA Senior Leader Conference (BIS 19252 / 140315)

8. The Responsible Conference Executive (RCE) for this event is Yasmin Nasser, Director, Employee and Leadership Development, and is available at 937-933-2721 should you wish to further discuss the proposed 106B Institute for Learning, Education and Development (ILEAD), VHA Senior Leader Conference (BIS 19252 / 140315).

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April 10, 2023

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Jessica Salyers, PsyD  
Chief Learning Officer, Institute for Learning,  
Education and Development

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Date

Approve /  Disapprove:



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Shereef Elnahal, M.D., MBA  
Under Secretary for Health

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4/14/2023

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Date

Date: February 1, 2023

From: Director, Field Operations Services

Subj: Approval for the 2023 Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs (OPIA) National Training Academy in Indianapolis, IN, Aug. 21-25, 2023

To: Assistant Secretary, OPIA

1. In accordance with existing Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Conference policies and guidelines, all applicable statutes and regulations, and Secretary memo "Delegation of Authority for Travel and Conferences" dated Aug. 27, 2021, request your approval to implement the OPIA National Training Academy in Fiscal Year (FY) 2023.

2. Purpose: This training provides a vital professional development opportunity for VA public affairs and communication professionals. It will strengthen core communication skills and share more effective and innovative ways for VA public affairs and outreach practitioners to connect with key stakeholders.

3. Goals and Objectives: The goal of the conference is two-fold. The first is to improve communications with Veterans. Ultimately, VA's communications efforts are undertaken to provide Veterans and their families with a better understanding of the care and benefits available to them. Those efforts depend largely on the second goal: A well-trained and professional communications workforce that understands the full range of capabilities available to them and possesses the ability to leverage those capabilities at the appropriate time through the correct platform. The training academy will offer a comprehensive curriculum that will help VA communications professionals improve their communications with Veterans. The training will focus on the delivery of timely and accurate information to internal and external audiences, enhancement of the Department's ability to communicate during a crisis and the understanding of the most up-to-date communications platforms and the methods to employ them effectively.

Training will emphasize the importance of communicating our commitment to VA's mission, our I-CARE Values and the core responsibilities of the Department: providing all our Veterans timely, world-class health care; ensuring that they and their families have access to the benefits they have earned; and honoring our Veterans with a final resting place that is a lasting tribute to their service. The foundation of the academy will be a Veteran-centric mindset bolstered by the understanding that our mission is only achieved through the embrace of the diversity that characterizes the VA employee base, the Veteran population, their families, survivors and Caregivers.

The curriculum will focus heavily on communicating best practices developed during an unprecedented time in the Department and our country – a worldwide pandemic. We will share case studies from the field that demonstrate we serve Veterans best by being accessible to reporters, transparent in our delivery of information and facts, and fully accountable for our actions when we make mistakes. Training will also focus on increasing

Subj: Request Approval for the 2023 Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs National Training Academy in Indianapolis, IN, Aug. 21-25, 2023

understanding of the importance of integrating social media into daily communications and developing effective and creative ways to communicate and strengthen relationships with Veterans Service Organizations and other stakeholders.

4. Justification: OPIA holds the functional responsibility for training public affairs personnel in the department. Many VA employees with communications responsibilities often have no formal training in the field and few training opportunities to further develop the skills they have acquired through experience. The training academy often provides the only opportunity for VA to conduct collective and comprehensive training for all those who communicate on behalf of the Department. Historically, this training event has been held annually to ensure all communicators are aware of current departmental and industry best practices. Due to a number of factors – including the pandemic – it has not been held since 2017.

During the last training academy in Nashville in 2017, instructors conducted more than 5,000 individual training hours on a wide variety of topics. For comparison, a July 2022 Public Relations Society of America virtual class focused solely on crisis communications will cost \$200 per individual for just one hour of instruction. Applying that cost factor to the training produced in Nashville would suggest a value equivalent of \$1 million – more than covering the estimated costs of the training academy, which includes instruction and all travel expenses.

A training academy where attendees interact with each other is the most effective means to conduct that training. It not only creates a venue that encourages interaction, it also fosters a spirit of collaboration and teamwork where best practices and lessons learned are shared across business lines and throughout the organization.

For example, part of the curriculum includes training in on-camera interview techniques, in which participants undergo a taped interview where they apply what they have learned. The anxiety created by the physical presence of the camera, the interviewer and an audience of their peers cannot be duplicated using remote means. The interview is followed by instant, real-time feedback from instructors and audience members, which often includes playback of the interview itself. This training most closely replicates the typical real-world interview experience and provides valuable insight for participants from which they can draw when preparing subject matter experts for interviews.

Experience has shown that attendees take advantage of the opportunity to provide input to organizational strategies and emerging communication initiatives, not just during the training academy itself, but throughout the year. Public affairs leadership has the opportunity to confirm employee understanding of key issues, identify gaps and encourage on-the-spot feedback and engagement. Interacting directly with communicators and leaders allows

Subj: Request Approval for the 2023 Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs National Training Academy in Indianapolis, IN, Aug. 21-25, 2023

VA employees to expand their professional networks and establish shared experiences to enhance future communication. This training academy underscores VA's commitment to communications and helps develop cohesiveness amongst all communicators, which forms the basis of cooperation and success across the Department.

OPIA will arrange guest speakers who are experts in specific communications areas and, as such, can provide up-to-the-minute techniques and information tempered with experience drawn from practical application. These experts enhance the curriculum and provide efficiency by being able to address the largest gathering of VA public affairs professionals during the year.

OPIA has identified critical needs to be addressed in the areas of crisis communications, social media, employee/internal communications, television interviews, and outreach. While OPIA has conducted training in these areas at previous training academies, and will at this one, training provided from an external viewpoint will bolster the overall strength of the training.

In order to keep costs for such an addition to a minimum, OPIA will work with acknowledged experts who reside in the area.

TIME	POTENTIAL LOCATION
August 21-25, 2023	Indianapolis, IN

5. The overall event cost estimate is provided below:

	Number of employees	Support Staff	Non-Travel Cost	Travel Cost	Contractor Support	Total Cost	Cost per Participant
<b>National Training Academy</b>	350	25	\$130,000	\$633,645	\$40,000	\$803,645	\$2143

Page 4.

Subj: Request Approval for the 2023 Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs National Training Academy in Indianapolis, IN, Aug. 21-25, 2023

6. The Responsible Conference Executive (RCE) for this memo is Mark Ballesteros, Director of Field Operations, and is available at (202) 461-7559 should you wish to further discuss this proposed public affairs training event.

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Mark Ballesteros  
Director, Field Operations Service  
Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs



Sue Fulton  
Assistant Secretary

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Date

02/02/2023  
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Date

Date:

From: Assistant Under Secretary for Health for Discovery, Education and Affiliate Networks (14RD)

Subj: Request Approval to Implement FY23 - VA National Artificial Intelligence Institute (NAII) Summit Series (BIS 18721 / 140218)

To: Under Secretary for Health (10)

1. In accordance with existing Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) conference policies and guidelines, and all applicable statutes and regulations, Research and Development requests your approval to implement FY23 - VA National Artificial Intelligence Institute (NAII) Summit Series (BIS 18721 / 140218) in fiscal year 2023.
2. Purpose: The primary purpose of the summit is to develop and sustain knowledge in developing services pertaining to clients' complex medical needs. The secondary purpose of the summit is to gain awareness in deploying methods and opportunities to change operational best practices through improvements in knowledge application. The third purpose of this summit is for Research and Development to promote operational strategies among stakeholders in the Department, especially Veterans Health Administration (VHA).
3. Goals and Objectives: The summit will improve the VHA service capability by enhancing proficiency among staff and reinforcing the value of knowledge application through in-person cooperation among colleagues. The summit will also enhance the quality of services to Veterans by preparing and encouraging staff to apply their improved skills to technologies and other conditions affecting intricate operations in VHA. This face-to-face summit will help staff clarify and coordinate future requirements that Research and Development is promoting in colleagues with the goal of improving employee engagement across major work functions.
4. Justification: The summit requires extended, uninterrupted episodes of face-to-face engagement to sustain attention on complex research factors and conditions affecting patients. The content of the summit is consistent with goals of VA and VHA, as it will include an extensive set of peer-to-peer presentations that concentrate on necessary designs, methods and professional requirements for improving knowledge application and overall service effectiveness. The summit is required for attendees to fully achieve their professional development to meet best practice standards for full participation in the mission of the VA and its growth of performance capability. Lodging taxes are included in estimated costs even if the Federal Government is tax-exempt in selected locations because all travelers attending the conference may not hold a government issued travel card. All travelers will have completed mandatory travel card and ethics training as required by VHA.

Request Approval to Implement FY23 - VA National Artificial Intelligence Institute (NAII) Summit Series (BIS 18721 / 140218)

5. Business Case Analysis: The proposed training, FY23 - VA National Artificial Intelligence Institute (NAII) Summit Series (BIS 18721 / 140218), beginning on 09/06/2023 and ending on 09/08/2023 (3-day event) will be held in Washington, DC and includes 175 VA personnel of which 45 will be air travelers and 15 rail travelers, at a total estimated cost of \$648,212.40. The estimated cost per attendee is \$3,704.07. The travel dates are 09/05/2023 returning 09/09/2023. The value of the event to the VA mission is that it will reinforce vital Veteran services; as well as reinforce proficiency in planning contextual analyses of the operational conditions affecting such services. Detailed market cost research was conducted on three potential locations. The location selected was determined to offer the VA the best value, especially regarding travel proximity and location services.

All efforts will be made to utilize a free, government facility. However, \$202,000.00 of non-travel costs will cover expenses such as meeting space rental, AV equipment rental and all related services should it be necessary to hold the event in a non-government facility.

Funding Justification: Program Office 14RD - Research and Development will fund 100% of travel and non-travel costs for this event.

Contractor Justification: This conference will include contractor services. Contractor fees and travel costs of \$215,000.00 are included in this estimate.

Cost Justification: The cost estimate lists the per person cost as over \$2,000 due to the system not calculating the total attendees. The system is only calculating in person VA attendees and not accounting for virtual VA attendees and non-VA attendees. The cost of the event includes costs for the hybrid event. The calculation should be the total cost of \$648,212/1,000 = \$648.21 per attendee. The AV costs includes the ability to host international speakers and attendees and allows our Veteran population who are unable to travel to participate in the event.

VA and VHA Senior Leaders will be invited to attend, present, and engage with participants. The event needs to be in downtown Washington, DC, to facilitate their participation without hindering central office operations. The event will showcase technological advancements and AI, so the NAI must use a suitable caliber venue to produce state-of-the-art technology and broadcast capabilities to support our homebound Veterans attendees and the planned international speakers and attendees. The proximity to the DC area will also provide unique access to more senior White House leadership and high-level VA Personnel. Additionally, a DC venue will allow for the availability of the White House and interagency leadership and staff to be close to the venue for the opportunity of new initiatives that the AI Summit Series can introduce. Finally, given this is a 3-day program, hosting the event at a hotel will increase participation and provide opportunities for networking while maximizing time and cutting down on local daily travel.

COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS FOR IN-PERSON EVENTS: In accordance with the Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer (OCHCO) Bulletin dated 09/20/2022, Secretary approval is no longer required for VA-hosted in-person meetings, conferences, and events in non-health care settings. When attending a VA-hosted meeting, conference,



Request Approval to Implement FY23 - VA National Artificial Intelligence Institute (NAII) Summit Series (BIS 18721 / 140218)

events in non-health care settings. When attending a VA-hosted meeting, conference, or event that is not in a health care setting, individuals are not required to provide information about their COVID-19 vaccination status. Individuals should follow relevant safety protocols around mask wearing and physical distancing from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Safer Federal Workforce Task Force (Task Force) based on the community level at the time of the event. For meetings, conferences, and events hosted by Veterans Affairs (VA) at a facility in a county where the COVID-19 Community Level is MEDIUM or HIGH, all in-person attendees should provide information about their vaccination status using the Certification of Vaccination form. In requesting this information, facilities should comply with any applicable Federal laws, including requirements under the Privacy Act and the Paperwork Reduction Act. For meetings, conferences, and events, in-person attendees who are not fully vaccinated or decline to provide information about their vaccination status should provide proof of a negative COVID-19 test completed within the previous three days and comply with relevant safety protocols, consistent with their vaccination status. Visit CDC COVID-19 Community Levels to determine the level at the locations listed in this Conference Package.

6. The proposed dates and location are:

Dates	Potential Location
09/06/2023 - 09/08/2023 (3-day event)	Washington, DC

7. The overall proposed per event cost estimate is provided below:

	Number of employees	Support Staff/VA Faculty	Non-Travel Cost	Travel Cost	Contractor Support	Total Cost	Cost per Participant
FY23 - VA National Artificial Intelligence Institute (NAII) Summit Series (BIS 18721 / 140218)	175	2 Support / 25 faculty out of 175 Employees	\$235,000.00	\$198,212.40	\$215,000.00	\$648,212.40	\$3,704.07

Request Approval to Implement FY23 - VA National Artificial Intelligence Institute (NAII) Summit Series (BIS 18721 / 140218)

8. The Responsible Conference Executive (RCE) for this event is Rafael B. Fricks, Associate Director for AI in Medical Imaging, and is available at should you wish to further discuss the proposed FY23 - VA National Artificial Intelligence Institute (NAII) Summit Series (BIS 18721 / 140218).

Carolyn M.  
Clancy

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3/14/2023

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Carolyn M. Clancy, M.D.  
Assistant Under Secretary for Health for  
Discovery, Education and Affiliate Networks

Date

Approve /  Disapprove:



3-15-2023

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Shereef Elnahal, M.D., MBA  
Under Secretary for Health

Date

Date: October 25, 2022

From: Assistant Under Secretary for Health for Discovery, Education and Affiliate Networks (14)

Subj: Request Approval to Implement FY23 - Health Services Research and Development Scientific Conference (BIS 16084 / 137565)

To: Under Secretary for Health (10)

1. In accordance with existing Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) conference policies and guidelines, and all applicable statutes and regulations, Research and Development, Health Service Research & Development requests your approval to implement FY23 - Health Services Research and Development Scientific Conference (BIS 16084 / 137565) in fiscal year 2023.
2. Purpose: The primary purpose of the conference is to develop and sustain knowledge in studying services pertaining to clients' complex operational needs. The secondary purpose of the conference is to gain proficiency in studying methods and opportunities to change operational practices through improvements in knowledge application. The third purpose of this conference is for Research and Development, Health Service Research & Development to promote research capabilities among customers in the Department, especially Veterans Health Administration (VHA).
3. Goals and Objectives: The conference will improve the VHA service capability by enhancing proficiency among staff and reinforcing the value of knowledge application through in-person cooperation among colleagues. The conference will also enhance the quality of services to Veterans by preparing and encouraging staff to apply their improved knowledge to practices and other conditions affecting intricate operations in VHA. This face-to-face conference will help staff clarify and coordinate future requirements that Research and Development, Health Service Research & Development is promoting in stakeholders with the goal of improving service delivery across major work functions.
4. Justification: The conference requires extended, uninterrupted episodes of face-to-face engagement to sustain attention on complex research factors and conditions affecting stakeholders. The content of the conference is consistent with goals of VA and VHA, as it will include an extensive set of peer-to-peer presentations that concentrate on necessary designs, methods and professional requirements for improving knowledge application and overall service quality. The conference is required for attendees to fully achieve their professional development to meet Department standards for full participation in the mission of the VA and its growth of performance capability. Lodging taxes are included in estimated costs even if the Federal Government is tax-exempt in selected locations because all travelers attending the conference may not hold a government issued travel card. All travelers will have completed mandatory travel card and ethics training as required by VHA.

Request Approval to Implement FY23 - Health Services Research and Development Scientific Conference (BIS 16084 / 137565)

5. Business Case Analysis: The proposed training, FY23 - Health Services Research and Development Scientific Conference (BIS 16084 / 137565), beginning on 02/08/2023 and ending on 02/10/2023 (2.5-day event) will be held in Baltimore, MD and includes 350 VA personnel of which 325 will be air travelers, at a total estimated cost of \$869,111.75. The estimated cost per attendee is \$2,483.18. The travel dates are 02/07/2023 returning 02/10/2023. The value of the event to the VA mission is that it will reinforce vital Veteran services; as well as reinforce proficiency in planning contextual analyses of the operational conditions affecting such services. Detailed market cost research was conducted on three potential locations. The location selected was determined to offer the VA the best value, especially regarding location services and travel proximity.

\$3,000.00 in non-travel costs is to cover printing of training materials. \$350,000.00 in non-travel costs is to cover meeting space rental and associated services, audiovisual equipment rental and associated services, should free/government space be unavailable. All efforts will be made to utilize free/government space.

6. The proposed dates and location are:

Dates	Potential Location
02/08/2023 - 02/10/2023 (2.5-day event)	Baltimore, MD

7. The overall proposed per event cost estimate is provided below:

	Number of employees	Support Staff/VA Faculty	Non-Travel Cost	Travel Cost	Contractor Support	Total Cost	Cost per Participant
FY23 Health Services Research and Development Scientific Conference (BIS 16084 / 137565)	350	5 Support / 0 faculty out of 350 Employees	\$353,000.00	\$516,111.75	\$0.00	\$869,111.75	\$2,483.18

Request Approval to Implement FY23- Health Services Research and Development Scientific Conference (BIS 16084 / 137565)

8. The Responsible Conference Executive (RCE) for this event is David Atkins, MD, MPH, Director, Health Services Research and Development Service, and is available at 202-443-5726 should you wish to further discuss the proposed FY23 - Health Services Research and Development Scientific Conference (BIS 16084 / 137565).

Carolyn M. Clancy Digitally signed by Carolyn M. Clancy  
Date: 2022.10.06 11:38:17 -0400

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Carolyn M. Clancy, M.D.  
Assistant Under Secretary for Health for Discovery,  
Education and Affiliate Networks

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Date

**Approve** / Disapprove:



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Shereef Elnahal, M.D., MBA  
Under Secretary for Health

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10/25/2022

Date

Date:

From: Acting Assistant Under Secretary for Health for Support (19)

Subj: Request Approval to Implement VHA Biomedical Engineering Conference (BIS 18717 / 140054)

To: Under Secretary for Health (10)

1. In accordance with existing Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) conference policies and guidelines, and all applicable statutes and regulations, Healthcare Technology Management requests your approval to implement VHA Biomedical Engineering Conference (BIS 18717 / 140054) in fiscal year 2023.
2. Purpose: The primary purpose of the conference is to develop and sustain capabilities in managing services pertaining to clients' complex operational needs. The secondary purpose of the conference is to gain proficiency in operating methods and opportunities to change operational practices through improvements in performance measurements. The third purpose of this conference is for Healthcare Technology Management to promote operational proficiency among colleagues in the Department, especially Veterans Health Administration (VHA).
3. Goals and Objectives: The conference will improve the VHA service capability by enhancing capabilities among staff and reinforcing the value of performance measurements through in-person cooperation among colleagues. The conference will also enhance the quality of services to Veterans by preparing and encouraging staff to apply their improved skills to practices and other conditions affecting intricate operations in VHA. This face-to-face conference will help staff clarify and coordinate future requirements that Healthcare Technology Management is promoting in colleagues with the goal of improving service standardization across major work functions.
4. Justification: The conference requires extended, uninterrupted episodes of face-to-face engagement to sustain attention on complex operational factors and conditions affecting customers. The content of the conference is consistent with goals of VA and VHA, as it will include an extensive set of peer-to-peer presentations that concentrate on necessary designs, methods and professional requirements for improving performance measurements and overall service effectiveness. The conference is required for attendees to fully achieve their professional development to meet industry standards for full participation in the mission of the VA and its growth of performance capability. Lodging taxes are included in estimated costs even if the Federal Government is tax-exempt in selected locations because all travelers attending the conference may not hold a government issued travel card. All travelers will have completed mandatory travel card and ethics training as required by VHA.

Request Approval to Implement VHA Biomedical Engineering Conference (BIS 18717 / 140054)

5. Business Case Analysis: The proposed training, VHA Biomedical Engineering Conference (BIS 18717 / 140054), beginning on 06/14/2023 and ending on 06/16/2023 (2.5-day event) will be held in Long Beach, CA and includes 275 VA personnel of which 159 will be air travelers and 112 POV travelers, at a total estimated cost of \$492,572.92. The estimated cost per attendee is \$1,791.17. The travel dates are 06/13/2023 returning 06/16/2023. The value of the event to the VA mission is that it will reinforce vital Veteran services; as well as reinforce proficiency in planning contextual analyses of the operational conditions affecting such services. Detailed market cost research was conducted on three potential locations. The location selected was determined to offer the VA the best value, especially regarding travel costs and location services.

All efforts will be made to utilize a free, government facility. However, \$35,000.00 of non-travel costs will cover expenses such as meeting space rental, AV equipment rental and all related services should it be necessary to hold the event in a non-government facility.

Funding Justification: Program Office pays for meeting space and AV. Individual facilities and VISNs will pay for travelers cost.

Contractor Justification: This conference will include contractor services. Contractor fees and travel costs of \$21,000.00 are included in this estimate.

This conference is intended to bring representatives from each facility and VISN together to further instill principles of high reliability and learning organizations by sharing standards, policies, emerging technologies, key initiatives, and best practices in a collaborative training setting. HTM is working to foster a culture of continuous improvement and learning through emphasis on systematic problem solving, innovation, learning from experience and best practices, and sharing information effectively through its community.

**COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS FOR IN-PERSON EVENTS:** In accordance with the Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer (OCHCO) Bulletin dated 09/20/2022, Secretary approval is no longer required for VA-hosted in-person meetings, conferences, and events in non-health care settings. When attending a VA-hosted meeting, conference, or event that is not in a health care setting, individuals are not required to provide information about their COVID-19 vaccination status. Individuals should follow relevant safety protocols around mask wearing and physical distancing from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Safer Federal Workforce Task Force (Task Force) based on the community level at the time of the event. For meetings, conferences, and events hosted by Veterans Affairs (VA) at a facility in a county where the COVID-19 Community Level is MEDIUM or HIGH, all in-person attendees should provide information about their vaccination status using the Certification of Vaccination form. In requesting this information, facilities should comply with any applicable Federal laws, including requirements under the Privacy Act and the Paperwork Reduction Act. For meetings, conferences, and events, in-person attendees who are not fully vaccinated or decline to provide information about their vaccination status should provide proof of a negative COVID-19 test completed within the previous three days and comply with relevant safety protocols, consistent with their vaccination

Request Approval to Implement VHA Biomedical Engineering Conference (BIS 18717 / 140054)

days and comply with relevant safety protocols, consistent with their vaccination status. Visit CDC COVID-19 Community Levels to determine the level at the locations listed in this Conference Package.

6. The proposed dates and location are:

Dates	Potential Location
06/14/2023 - 06/16/2023 (2.5-day event)	Long Beach, CA

7. The overall proposed per event cost estimate is provided below:

	Number of employees	Support Staff/VA Faculty	Non-Travel Cost	Travel Cost	Contractor Support	Total Cost	Cost per Participant
VHA Biomedical Engineering Conference (BIS 18717 / 140054)	275	0 Support / 20 faculty out of 275 Employees	\$35,500.00	\$436,072.92	\$21,000.00	\$492,572.92	\$1,791.17



Request Approval to Implement VHA Biomedical Engineering Conference (BIS 18717 / 140054)

8. The Responsible Conference Executive (RCE) for this event is Michelle Baquie, Biomedical Engineer, and is available at 601-206-6911 should you wish to further discuss the proposed VHA Biomedical Engineering Conference (BIS 18717 / 140054).

**Alfred A.  
Montoya 139504**

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Date: 2023.02.02 16:31:50 -05:00  
Reason: Approval

February 02, 2023

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Alfred Montoya  
Acting Assistant Under Secretary for Health for  
Support

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Date

Approve /  Disapprove:



2-6-2023

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Shereef Elnahal, M.D., MBA  
Under Secretary for Health

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Date

Date: Sep 9, 2022

From: Assistant Under Secretary for Health for Discovery, Education and Affiliate Networks (14)

Subj: Request Approval to Implement VHA Resuscitation Symposium (BIS 17213 / 138760)

To: Under Secretary for Health (10)

1. In accordance with existing Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) conference policies and guidelines, and all applicable statutes and regulations, SimLEARN requests your approval to implement VHA Resuscitation Symposium (BIS 17213 / 138760) in fiscal year 2023.
2. Purpose: The primary purpose of the conference is to develop and sustain strategies in developing services pertaining to clients' complex physiological needs. The secondary purpose of the conference is to gain understanding in evaluating methods and opportunities to change operational practices through improvements in performance measurements. The third purpose of this conference is for SimLEARN to promote operational capabilities among employees in the Department, especially Veterans Health Administration (VHA).
3. Goals and Objectives: The conference will improve the VHA service capability by enhancing awareness among staff and reinforcing the value of performance measurements through in-person cooperation among colleagues. The conference will also enhance the quality of services to Veterans by preparing and encouraging staff to apply their improved knowledge to practices and other conditions affecting intricate operations in VHA. This face-to-face conference will help staff clarify and coordinate future requirements that SimLEARN is promoting in employees with the goal of improving service quality across major work functions.
4. Justification: The conference requires extended, uninterrupted episodes of face-to-face engagement to sustain attention on complex operational factors and conditions affecting patients. The content of the conference is consistent with goals of VA and VHA, as it will include an extensive set of peer-to-peer presentations that concentrate on necessary designs, methods and professional requirements for improving knowledge application and overall service quality. The conference is required for attendees to fully achieve their professional development to meet best practice standards for full participation in the mission of the VA and its growth of performance capability. Lodging taxes are included in estimated costs even if the Federal Government is tax-exempt in selected locations because all travelers attending the conference may not hold a government issued travel card. All travelers will have completed mandatory travel card and ethics training as required by VHA.

Request Approval to Implement VHA Resuscitation Symposium (BIS 17213 / 138760)

5. Business Case Analysis: The proposed conference, VHA Resuscitation Symposium (BIS 17213 / 138760), beginning on 02/14/2023 and ending on 02/16/2023 (3-day event) will be held in Orlando, FL and includes 325 VA personnel of which 265 will be air travelers and 25 POV travelers, at a total estimated cost of \$909,874.20. The estimated cost per attendee is \$2,799.61. The travel dates are 02/13/2023 returning 02/17/2023. The value of the event to the VA mission is that it will reinforce vital Veteran services; as well as reinforce proficiency in planning contextual analyses of the operational conditions affecting such services. Detailed market cost research was conducted on three potential locations. The location selected was determined to offer the VA the best value, especially regarding location services and travel proximity.

Non-travel costs of \$170,600.00 covers the following services:

\$132,000.00 covers meeting space rental and associated services; and, audiovisual equipment rental and associated services.

\$10,000.00 covers printing of conference training materials.

\$4,600.00 covers the use of the Whova mobile application. This application allows for unlimited document storage to upload presentations, ability to capture evaluations for CE, COVID screening capabilities, networking and session selections.

\$6,000.00 is to cover transportation services to and from the conference, lodging locations and the National Simulation Center throughout the event.

\$3,000.00 is to cover marketing and community outreach activities related to the event to bring positive media attention to the VA as the conference coincides with American Heart Month.

\$125,000.00 in contractor support is part of an existing contract for event support for any approved OHIL activities in addition to non-VA faculty presenting on evidence-based science, quality metrics and latest research initiatives; and \$18,000.00 for their travel.

\$15,000.00 in non-travel costs is to cover two abstract proposals will be selected and awarded the cost of materials and or services (up to 5K and 10K) to conduct facility-based resuscitation performance improvement project that will allow the facility to demonstrate the impact it has on Veteran outcomes.

Request Approval to Implement VHA Resuscitation Symposium (BIS 17213 / 138760)

6. The proposed dates and location are:

DATE	POTENTIAL LOCATION
02/14/2023 - 02/16/2023 (3-day event)	Orlando, FL

7. The overall proposed per event cost estimate is provided below:

Number of employees	Support Staff/VA Faculty	Non-Travel Cost	Travel Cost	Contractor Support	Total Cost	Cost per Participant
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VHA Resuscitation Symposium (BIS 17213 / 138760)	325	2 Support / 0 faculty out of 325 Employees	\$170,600.00	\$596,274.20	\$143,000.00	\$909,874.20	\$2,799.61
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8. The Responsible Conference Executive (RCE) for this event is Lisa M. Baker, Director Clinical Learning & Innovation National Program Redi, and is available at 847-452-7574 should you wish to further discuss the proposed VHA Resuscitation Symposium (BIS 17213 / 138760).

Carolyn M. Clancy Digitally signed by Carolyn M. Clancy  
Date: 2022.09.08 09:21:40 -04'00'

Carolyn M. Clancy, M.D.  
Assistant Under Secretary for Health for Discovery,  
Education and Affiliate Networks

Date

Approve / Disapprove:



Shereef Elnahal, M.D., MBA  
Under Secretary for Health

9/9/2022

Date