

Boston VA Research Institute, Inc.

Educational Handbook

The Boston VA Research Institute, Inc. (BVARI) supports the ongoing development of the VA Boston Healthcare System's (VABHS) and BVARI faculty and staff through educational activities designed to increase the breadth of knowledge used to facilitate research and veteran's health related issues. BVARI is committed to facilitating such activities so that four (4) major goals are achieved:

- Research and Evaluation
- Professional Development
- Management Solutions and/or enhancing employee specialized proficiencies
- Public Service: Expanding the knowledge pertaining to advances and changes in veteran care, technology and health care administration encompassing those stakeholders to include veterans, VA and BVARI employees.

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REVIEW PROCESS

- a. Education Event approvals must be obtained from BVARI after a VA Educational Committee has approved the intended event or project.
- b. Education Forms must be submitted to BVARI at least four weeks prior to the event.
- c. Upon approval, the event organizer will receive a written approval letter from BVARI.

EXTRAMURAL SPONSORSHIP

VA employees who would like to apply for external funds to support an educational event must submit such requests through BVARI. It is a Federal offense for VA employees to solicit external funding directly.

BVARI FEES AND CHARGES

BVARI Indirect Cost Rate for Education is 15% and will be applied to all Educational funds received by BVARI. This fee should be included on the Education Budget Form on the appropriate line in the cost estimate and should be included in the total budget, i.e., deducted from the function revenues, or from an existing BVARI account.

ALLOWABLE EDUCATIONAL EXPENSES

- a. Meals.

A meal is considered a consequence, and not the primary purpose, of a function. In order to use funds from BVARI for a meal, a disclosure statement or the agenda must indicate that a meal is provided and distributed to all attendees.

This statement must appear on both the agenda for the event, as well as on all forms of invitation to attendees. This agenda and a final, complete list of event attendees must be provided for the reimbursement for “light” refreshments. This statement is required to support BVARI’s obligation for full disclosure of availability of meals to all participants at an educational event.

1. At a single-day educational event, it is permitted to use BVARI funds to serve light refreshments at a reasonable cost only if the educational program is the purpose of the event.

2. For a multi-day event, daily meals must be paid for by attendees through a registration fee. One meal may be covered by BVARI funds, provided the cost is reasonable.

b. Alcohol. It is not permissible to use BVARI funds to pay for alcohol under any circumstances.

c. Hotel/Other

1. It is not permissible to use BVARI funds to pay for hotel services, e.g., spa, sport facilities, video rentals, etc.

2. If overnight accommodations are necessary (following federal regulations for distance from office/home,) attendees will be reimbursed for guest rooms at the amount of an allowable per diem rate for the location.

d. Gifts/Promotional Items.

1. Incidental promotional items e.g., pens, may be paid for by BVARI funds and distributed at an educational event.

2. Gifts to speakers, guests, or attendees with a value of more than \$25 are not permitted.

e. Honoraria

1. An honorarium is permitted to be paid to VA employees, with some restrictions. Please see VA regulations pertaining to honoraria for details.

2. The amount of an honorarium should be consistent with amounts provided at similar educational functions at other local academic institutions. This is particularly relevant for events that receive commercial support. BVARI is not to be used as a pass-through for commercial supporters to fund the honoraria of presenters.

3. Intake and budget forms must indicate the source of payment for honoraria.

FORMS

Educational Project Intake Form

Educational Project Budget Template

Conflict of Interest Policy and Forms

Review Process

New programs will require a request for review and approval of nonprofit education activities will be prepared and be submitted to the VA Associate Chief of Staff for Education. These submissions shall explicitly state how the proposed expenditures for an education activity meet the definition of nonprofit education and training. The VA Education Committee and BVARI require review and approval prior to the program. Once these approvals have been granted, BVARI will contact the program lead to review the details and advise on the next steps.

Requests will explicitly identify the source of the funds that will be used to support the activity (unrestricted education funds already deposited in BVARI, name of donor of restricted education funds, etc.)

Supporting documentation will be attached to the request.

The BVARI Education Subcommittee will review, on an on-call basis, the requests submitted via e-mail.

The Subcommittee will have oversight over the following use of funds by BVARI where there is no research component involved:

- Educational seminars.
- Employee education and training activities.
- Patient education and training activities.

The Subcommittee will base its recommendations for proposed nonprofit education activities on applicable VA Education Manual policies pertaining to conflict of interest and appropriateness to VA's education missions as well as the definition of education and training established by PL 106-117, Section 204 (Title 38, Section 7362).

Contact Information

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