

**WILLIAM S. MIDDLETON AWARD PROCEDURAL HANDBOOK**

- 1. REASON FOR ISSUE:** This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Handbook clarifies policy and establishes procedures for the William S. Middleton Award Program.
- 2. SUMMARY OF MAJOR CHANGES:** A new nominating process has been added.
- 3. RELATED DIRECTIVE:** VHA Directive 1202 (to be published).
- 4. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE:** The VHA Office of Research and Development, Medical Research Service (121) is responsible for the contents of this VHA Handbook. Questions may be referred to 202-408-3600.
- 5. RESCISSION:** VHA Handbook 1201.14, dated August 19, 1998, is rescinded.
- 6. RECERTIFICATION:** This document is scheduled for recertification on or before the last working date May 2008.

Robert H. Roswell, M.D.  
Under Secretary for Health

DISTRIBUTION: CO: E-mailed 5/23/2003  
FLD: VISN, MA, DO, OC, OCRO, and 200 – E-mailed 5/23/2003

**CONTENTS**

**WILLIAM S. MIDDLETON AWARD PROCEDURAL HANDBOOK**

<b>PARAGRAPH</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
1. Purpose .....	1
2. Background .....	1
3. Scope .....	1
a. Eligibility .....	1
b. Award Criteria .....	2
4. Description of Award .....	2
5. Nomination .....	2
6. Application .....	2
7. Review Committee .....	3
8. Responsibilities .....	3
a. VHA Medical Center .....	3
b. VHA Central Office .....	3
<b>APPENDIXES</b>	
A Instructions for Preparation and Submission of Nominations for the William S. Middleton Award .....	A-1
B Instructions for Preparation and Submission of Applications for the William S. Middleton Award .....	B-1
C Timetable for Submission and Review .....	C-1

## WILLIAM S. MIDDLETON AWARD PROCEDURAL HANDBOOK

### 1. PURPOSE:

This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Handbook provides information and procedures relating to the nomination, application, review, and selection process for the annual William S. Middleton Award.

### 2. BACKGROUND

a. The William S. Middleton Award (WSMA) for outstanding achievement in biomedical or behavioral research is the Medical Research Service's (MRS) highest honor for scientific achievement. The WSMA was established in 1960 to honor William S. Middleton, M.D., distinguished educator, physician-scientist, and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Chief Medical Director from 1955 to 1963. WSMA recipients are senior VHA investigators who have achieved international acclaim for research accomplishments in areas of prime importance to VA's research mission.

b. Annually, the Director, MRS invites nominations from all VA medical centers, to be reviewed by MRS. Applications are then solicited from medical centers of selected nominees. In addition, MRS identifies highly qualified investigators and directly solicits applications from the appropriate medical centers. The Director appoints a committee to review the applications. If the committee identifies an appropriate candidate, the Director, MRS sends the recommendation through the Chief Research and Development Officer (CRADO) to the Under Secretary for Health for approval. This recommendation is based on:

- (1) The applicant's contributions to a defined field of biomedical or behavioral science that is pertinent to the advancement of knowledge and medical care within VA; and
- (2) Evidence of sustained service to VA.

*NOTE: If, in the committee's judgment, no applicant meets WSMA criteria, no award will be made.*

### 3. SCOPE

a. **Eligibility.** To be eligible for the WSMA, nominees must:

- (1) Currently have, at minimum, a 5/8 salaried VA appointment (or an approved waiver).
- (2) Currently be the principal investigator (PI) of a funded MRS Merit Review, National Institutes of Health (NIH), or National Science Foundation (NSF) award;
- (3) Have performed research at a VA facility for at least the previous 5 years;
- (4) Have held national peer-reviewed research support (e.g., VA, NIH, NSF) as a PI for a

minimum of 10 years, cumulatively; and

(5) Not have received the WSMA previously.

b. **Award Criteria**. The WSMA review committee bases its recommendation on the following criteria:

(1) The significance of the research to a field of biomedical or behavioral science aligned with VA's research portfolio;

(2) The originality of the research;

(3) Evidence that the research has had and/or will have a broad impact on scientific and/or clinical disciplines and evidence that the nominee has acknowledged VA employment and support in the majority of publications and presentations; and

(4) Evidence of outstanding scientific achievement including, but not limited to, sustained history of peer-reviewed funding, including current MRS Merit Review funding, publications in outstanding scientific journals, invited lectures at national and international scientific meetings, service to VA, membership in and service to national and international professional organizations, editorial service to professional journals, membership on grant review committees, other national and international research prizes.

#### **4. DESCRIPTION OF AWARD**

a. The recipient will receive a cash award in the amount of \$5,000 and an inscribed plaque commemorating the recipient's scientific achievements. The VA medical center at which the recipient is employed will also receive an inscribed plaque honoring the recipient.

b. The recipient will receive \$50,000 per year for 3 years in additional research support.

c. Whenever possible, the WSMA is presented to the recipient at a plenary session of an appropriate national professional meeting.

d. To honor the recipient, MRS will publish an announcement in a prestigious scientific journal.

#### **5. NOMINATION**

Each VA medical center may submit one nomination per year. The facility's Research and Development (R&D) Committee recommends the nomination to the medical center Director. Nominations are reviewed by MRS for eligibility based upon the stated criteria. To be considered, nominations must be prepared and submitted according to the instructions in Appendix A.

#### **6. APPLICATION**

Applications are solicited by MRS from selected nominees, and must be submitted by the

appropriate VA medical center. In addition, MRS may identify qualified candidates through consultation with advisory groups or other sources. In these cases MRS will directly solicit applications, which can be in addition to the candidate nominated by the medical center. To be considered, applications must be prepared and submitted according to the instructions in Appendix B. At the discretion of the review committee, an application may be retained by MRS and reconsidered during three subsequent rounds of review.

## 7. REVIEW COMMITTEE

The Director, MRS appoints a review committee from among VA field representatives, former WSMA recipients, faculty from affiliated universities, and representatives from other federal agencies that fund biomedical or behavioral research. Members will be chosen for knowledge of an appropriate scientific content area and knowledge of the scientific review process.

## 8. RESPONSIBILITIES

### a. VA Medical Center

(1) **Research and Development (R&D) Committee.** The R&D Committee evaluates the merits of all candidates for the Middleton Award, nominates the most outstanding candidate, and recommends the nominee to the VA medical center Director for approval.

(2) **Medical Center Director.** The Medical Center Director, with advice from the facility's R&D Committee, recommends one outstanding scientist to receive the Middleton Award.

(3) **Associate Chief of Staff (ACOS) for R&D.** The ACOS for R&D ensures that all required nomination and application materials are prepared correctly and submitted to VA Central Office by the specified deadlines.

### b. VHA Central Office

(1) **Medical Research Service.** Reviews and evaluates all nominations. Identifies highly qualified award candidates. Solicits applications for award from ACOS for R&D of the appropriate medical center.

(2) **WSMA Review Committee.** Evaluates all applications for the Middleton Award and selects the most qualified candidate. If no candidate meets WSMA standards, the committee will make no recommendation.

(3) **WSMA Coordinator.** Following the recommendation of the WSMA review committee, the WSMA coordinator submits a request for approval of the applicant, a request for a monetary award of \$5,000, and a VA Form 5-4659, Recognition of High Level Performance, to the Under Secretary for Health through the Director, MRS, the Chief Research and Development Officer (CRADO), and Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management (10N). Following approval, the WSMA coordinator instructs the sponsoring VA medical center to provide the monetary award and to request reimbursement from the Office of Research and Development (ORD), VA Central Office. The WSMA coordinator is responsible for ordering

commemorative plaques for the recipient and sponsoring VA medical center, and coordinating the presentation of the award and the placement of the announcement.

(4) **Director, Medical Research Service.** The Director, Medical Research Service, reviews the selection process, and recommends to the CRADO either approval or disapproval of the WSMA review committee recommendation. If approved, the Director forwards the recommendation to the CRADO.

(5) **Chief Research and Development Officer (CRADO).** The CRADO reviews the selection of the candidate. Upon approval, the CRADO signs VA Form 5-4659, and submits it for review to the Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management (10N), the Deputy Under Secretary for Health (10A), and for the approval of the Under Secretary for Health (10). The CRADO notifies the applicant's medical center Director in writing following approval by the Under Secretary for Health.

(6) **Under Secretary for Health.** The Under Secretary for Health, or designee, approves the candidate and presents plaques to the recipient and to the Director of the recipient's VA medical center at an appropriate ceremony.

(7) **Administrative Officer (AO) for the Office of Research and Development.** The AO authorizes reimbursement of funds for the Middleton Award to the VA medical center.

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION OF NOMINATIONS  
FOR THE WILLIAM S. MIDDLETON AWARD**

**1. BACKGROUND.** Each Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical center is invited to submit one nomination annually. Nominations are reviewed by Medical Research Service (MRS) for eligibility. Applications (see Appendix B) are then solicited by MRS from selected nominees only.

**2. FORMAT.** Nominations should consist of single-spaced typed pages with one inch margins at each edge. Use only letter-quality, black print. The font size should be at least 11 point with no more than 15 characters per inch and no more than 6 lines per inch.

**3. CONTENT.** Each nomination should consist of the following materials:

a. A cover sheet listing the following information in the order specified:

(1) William S. Middleton Award Nomination.

(2) Name, degree(s) and social security number (SSN) of nominee.

(3) Name of VA medical center.

(4) Nominee's current VA employment status (in 8ths).

(5) Number of years employed by VA.

(6) Nominee's academic title (indicate tenure status).

(7) Location of nominee's laboratory and office.

(8) Current VA funding (amount, title of project, role; i.e., principal or co-principal investigator) and year of last approved Merit Review and/or VA research support.

(9) Current extra-VA funding (amount, title of project, source, complete grant number, years of support, role, etc.).

(10) Administrative contact name, telephone number, e-mail, and fax number.

(11) Name, title, and signature of the Associate Chief of Staff for Research and Development.

b. A letter of transmittal from the medical center Director approving the nomination.

c. A complete and current curriculum vitae (with funding history) and bibliography of the nominee (not to include abstracts, submitted papers, or papers in preparation).

**4. SUBMISSION.** Submit the original and twelve copies.

- a. If mailed through the United States Postal Service, send to:

Department of Veterans Affairs  
Medical Research Service (121)  
Middleton Award  
810 Vermont Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20420

- b. If shipped to Medical Research Service by door-to-door courier or overnight delivery, send to:

Department of Veterans Affairs  
Medical Research Service (121)  
Middleton Award  
1400 Eye Street, NW, Suite 400  
Washington, DC 20005  
(202) 408-3600

- 5. DUE DATE.** The deadline for receipt of nominations is July 1.

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS  
FOR THE WILLIAM S. MIDDLETON AWARD**

- 1. BACKGROUND.** Medical Research Service (MRS) solicits applications from medical centers of selected nominees. In addition, MRS identifies highly qualified investigators directly and solicits applications from the appropriate medical centers.
- 2. FORMAT.** Applications should consist of single-spaced typed pages with 1-inch margins at each edge. Use only letter-quality, black print. The font size should be at least 11 point with no more than fifteen characters per inch and no more than six lines per inch.
- 3. CONTENT.** Each application should consist of the following materials:
  - a. A cover sheet listing the following information in the order specified:
    - (1) William S. Middleton Award Application.
    - (2) Name, degree(s), and social security number (SSN) of applicant.
    - (3) Name of Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical center.
    - (4) Applicant's current VA employment status (in 8ths).
    - (5) Number of years employed by VA.
    - (6) Applicant's academic title (indicate tenure status).
    - (7) Location of applicant's laboratory and office.
    - (8) Current VA funding (amount, title of project, role; i.e., principal or co-principal investigator) and year of last approved Merit Review and/or VA research support.
    - (9) Current extra-VA funding (amount, title of project, source, complete grant number, years of support, role, etc.).
    - (10) Administrative contact name, telephone number, e-mail, and fax number.
    - (11) Name, title, and signature of the Associate Chief of Staff for Research and Development and medical center Director.
  - b. A complete and current curriculum vitae (with funding history) and bibliography of the applicant (not to include abstracts, submitted papers, or papers in preparation).
  - c. A summary (two-page maximum) of the applicant's research achievements.
  - d. No more than two letters of support (generated within the previous 6 months) from scientists who are not employees of the applicant's VA medical center or members of the faculty

at the affiliated medical school.

- e. Three reprints representative of the applicant's major original research publications.

**4. SUBMISSION.** Submit the original and twelve copies.

- a. If mailed through the United States Postal Service, send to:

Department of Veterans Affairs  
Medical Research Service (121)  
Middleton Award  
810 Vermont Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20420

- b. If shipped to Medical Research Service by door-to-door courier or overnight delivery, send to:

Department of Veterans Affairs  
Medical Research Service (121)  
Middleton Award  
1400 Eye Street, NW, Suite 400  
Washington, DC 20005  
Phone (202) 408-3600

**5. DUE DATE.** The deadline for receipt of applications is October 1.

**TIMETABLE**

**1. TIMETABLE FOR SUBMISSION AND REVIEW**

- |   |                     |
|---|---------------------|
| a. Nominations due at Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Central Office | July 1              |
| b. Medical Research Service (MRS) review of nominations                   | July                |
| c. Solicitation of applications   | August 1            |
| d. Applications due at VHA Central Office                                 | October 1           |
| e. Committee review of applications                                       | January or February |

**2. CONTACT INFORMATION**

Department of Veterans Affairs  
Medical Research Service (121)  
Middleton Award  
1400 Eye Street, NW, Suite 400  
Washington, DC 20005  
Phone - (202) 408-3600  
Fax - (202) 275-6100