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## VA Research Need to Know - October 2025

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From Quinto, Jenna W. (she/her/hers) <Jenna.Quinto@va.gov>

Date Wed 10/1/2025 11:08 AM

To Quinto, Jenna W. (she/her/hers) <Jenna.Quinto@va.gov>

Hello VA PIs and researchers,

Here are this month's key updates and guidance relevant to running your research projects.

1. **The federal government is shut down as of today, October 1.** We anticipate having two weeks of funding to pay VA personnel and current IPAs, though the timeline will be under constant evaluation. The longer the government is shut down, the more likely it is that research staff be furloughed. PIs should begin to make contingency plans if research staff are furloughed and unable to perform study procedures. All decisions will be made in consultation with ORD and other VA leadership. We will continue to send updates as we receive them.
  - **VA-paid research personnel:** VA research employees are initially "exempt" from furlough and will continue to be paid with our remaining prior year funds. Once prior year funds are exhausted, the only research functions authorized to continue would be functions that are required to maintain life and property ("excepted" from furlough). VA research personnel that do not meet the "excepted" definition would be furloughed and cannot work. After the shutdown ends, both furloughed and excepted employees would be paid their salary retroactively. Please see [this memo](#) from ORD that provides further details about what duties are considered "excepted" and other FAQs (from 2024 but likely still applies).
  - **IPAs:** We anticipate that IPAs that were recently renewed or modified with 10/1 start dates will be funded for two weeks. New IPAs that were set to start on 10/1 unfortunately cannot start until the shutdown ends.
  - **WOCs:** Personnel on WOC appointments can continue work if their supervisor and the Research Office are working. If their supervisor and/or the Research Office staff are furloughed, work must stop.
  - **Purchasing:** There will be no purchase card orders accepted, unless there is a risk to safety or life (such as animal studies). If you have a purchase that meets these exceptions, please contact Aaron, John, and Jacque.
2. **VA employees should complete their performance appraisal self-assessment by October 14.** Performance appraisals were released today (10/1) to all VA employees (not IPAs). VA employees should check their VA email and look for an email from ePerformance to access their appraisal. Self-assessments must be completed for supervisors to justify a high rating and should be submitted by October 14.
3. **November 1 (internal deadline October 30) is the pre-application deadline for several upcoming VA funding opportunities.** Pre-applications are due for Merit/Pilot applications for the Winter 2025 cycle (HSR/Rehab) and Clinical Trial/Career Development/RCS applications for the Spring 2026 cycle (Medical Health/Brain, Behavioral, and Mental Health). Please reach out to Jenna Quinto ([jenna.quinto@va.gov](mailto:jenna.quinto@va.gov)) if you are planning to apply.
4. **End of the year guidance for records management.** The end of the fiscal year (9/30/25) is also a Record Management disposition date for closed studies. In the Federal Record Control

Schedule (RCS) 10-1, the 8300.6 series categorize Research materials as working files and finalized documents in hard copy, audio, and digital formats. Most Research records are considered “temporary”, and their disposition is on-site storage for an allotted time or destruction; both are documented on Form VA7468. Records are “permanent” and archived if important to VHA business or function. File destruction is calculated as End of Fiscal Year (FY) + 6 years (i.e., materials associated with a project that closed in RDC on May 31, 2019, are eligible for destruction after October 1, 2025). Please reach out to the Research Service Records Liaison, Aaron Heneghan, or alternate, Amy Reeder, for additional information and Form VA 7468.

5. **Risk assessments are planned for animal facility procedures.** The ARF Supervisor, Research Safety Officer, Employee Health, and the Industrial Hygienist are working together to conduct risk assessments and evaluate procedures performed in the Animal Facility. This collaborative effort aims to enhance workplace safety and reduce employee exposure to animal allergens. Please be on the lookout for these assessments in the coming weeks. You may be asked to be observed while performing certain procedures – this is a routine part of the evaluation process and no cause for concern. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated as we work to maintain a safe and healthy environment for all staff.
6. **Server issues are preventing some communication to UW email addresses.** It has come to my attention that some UW email addresses did not receive the August and September “Need to Know” emails due to UW server issues. I am trying a new method of sending this October email to address the issue. As a reminder, please remember to check your VA email address regularly to ensure you receive all relevant communications. The Need to Know emails are also available on the Madison VA Research Help Desk under [Newsletter and "Need to Know" Email Archive](#).

If you would like team members added to the distribution list for this communication, please email Jenna ([jenna.quinto@va.gov](mailto:jenna.quinto@va.gov)).

Best,  
Jenna

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