



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
OFFICE OF RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT  
BIOMEDICAL LABORATORY RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT  
PROGRAM GUIDE 1202.05:  
WILLIAM S. MIDDLETON AWARD

As of April 3, 2019, VHA Handbook 1202.05, William S. Middleton Award Procedural Handbook, dated July 17, 2014 has been rescinded and replaced with this Program Guide. This Program Guide replaces all prior official Office of Research and Development (ORD) guidance regarding the William S. Middleton Award.

**ISSUANCE DATE:** April 3, 2019

**WILLIAM S. MIDDLETON AWARD**

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**WILLIAM S. MIDDLETON AWARD**

**1. PURPOSE:** This Program Guide provides information and procedures relating to the nomination, review, and selection processes for the annual William S. Middleton Award for outstanding achievement in biomedical or behavioral research

**2. BACKGROUND:**

a. The William S. Middleton Award (Middleton Award) is Biomedical Laboratory Research and Development (BLR&D) Service's highest honor for scientific achievement in biomedical and behavioral research.

b. The Middleton Award 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. Dr. Middleton's service to medicine, Veterans, and the country spanned over 60 years, beginning in 1911 when he earned his medical degree from the University of Pennsylvania. He began teaching at the University of Wisconsin the following year, becoming a full professor in 1933, followed by his appointment as Dean of the medical school, a seat he held for the next 20 years.

c. Dr. Middleton's contributions to VA are unparalleled. He was appointed the Chief Medical Director at VA in 1955. One of his most significant contributions is the development of the VA research program. Dr. Middleton was instrumental in initiating and stimulating VA medical research. He established and appointed the first Advisory Committee on Research. By the time he retired in 1963, over 7,500 research projects, including VA cooperative studies, had been undertaken by VA as a result of his interest and initiative.

d. As a teacher, clinician, and investigator, Dr. Middleton set the highest standards. He won numerous awards and was elected as an Honorary Fellow or member of more than a dozen national and international societies. He contributed more than 300 scholarly papers related to internal medicine, medical education, and medical history.

**3. SCOPE:** The Middleton Award is the highest honor awarded annually by the BLR&D Service to VHA research scientists in recognition of their outstanding scientific contributions and achievements in the areas of biomedical and behavioral research relevant to the health care of Veterans. The award recognizes senior VHA investigators who have achieved national and international acclaim for research accomplishments in areas of prime importance to VA's research mission.

**4. ELIGIBILITY:** To be eligible for the Middleton Award, nominees must meet all of the following requirements:

a. **VA Employment Status.** A current VA paid appointment of at least 25 hours per week (5/8ths), or an approved waiver from the Director, BLR&D Service.

b. **Funded Research.** Current status as the principal investigator (PI) of a funded VA Merit Award, or a grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH), National Science

Foundation (NSF), or the Department of Defense (DoD).

c. **Presence at VA.** Performed research at a VA facility for at least the previous 5 years.

d. **Active Funding History.** Served as a PI on national peer-reviewed research grants (e.g., VA, NIH, NSF, DoD) for a minimum of 10 years, cumulatively.

e. **First-time Awardee.** Has not received the Middleton Award previously.

**5. NOMINATION PROCESS:** Nominees for the award may be nominated in two ways:

a. VA medical facilities may submit nomination packages to the Director, BLR&D Service, annually, by the specified nomination submission deadline.

b. Qualified candidates may be identified by BLR&D Service program staff and invited to submit nomination packages by the specified nomination submission deadline. **NOTE:** *These candidates must apply through their local Research and Development (R&D) Office and will be subject to review and selection by their local R&D Committee and medical facility Director.*

**6. MIDDLETON AWARD NOMINATION:** Detailed instructions on the preparation and submission of a Middleton nomination package can be requested by submitting an e-mail to [vhacobmareview@va.gov](mailto:vhacobmareview@va.gov). Nominations are due by the deadline specified in the submission calendar published on the VA Office of Research and Development (ORD) Funding website: <https://www.research.va.gov/funding>.

**7. MIDDLETON AWARD REVIEW COMMITTEE:**

a. The committee consists of Federal government employees, including VA clinician scientists, former Middleton award recipients, and representatives from other Federal agencies that fund medical research. Members are chosen for their scientific expertise and knowledge of the scientific review process.

b. Once the nomination submission deadline has passed, the Middleton Award Program Manager convenes a committee to review the nominations. **NOTE:** *The Director, BLR&D Service, and the Middleton Award Program Manager do not participate in the deliberation and voting for the Award but may provide information to the committee.*

c. Nominations are reviewed based on the criteria outlined in section 8 of this Program Guide, and the committee's recommendation is forwarded to the Director, BLR&D Service, for consideration and, as appropriate, recommendation to the Chief Research and Development Officer (CRADO).

d. At the discretion of the Middleton Award Review Committee, a nomination package may be retained by BLR&D Service and submitted for consideration in future

years.

**8. MIDDLETON AWARD CRITERIA:** The Middleton Award Review Committee bases its recommendation on the following criteria:

a. The significance of the nominee's contributions to a defined field of biomedical or behavioral research pertinent to the advancement of knowledge within VA or aligned with VA's research portfolio.

b. The originality of the research.

c. Evidence that the research has had or will have a real-world impact on scientific or clinical disciplines and evidence that the nominee's VA employment and support are acknowledged consistently in the nominee's publications and presentations.

d. Evidence of outstanding scientific achievement including, but not limited to, sustained history of national peer-reviewed funding, including current funding as a PI; publications in outstanding scientific journals; invited lectures at national and international scientific meetings; evidence of sustained high-quality service and leadership to VA at the local and national level; membership in and service to national and international professional organizations; editorial service to professional journals; membership on grant review committees; service on national and international scientific advisory panels; and other national and international research prizes.

**9. MIDDLETON AWARD:**The Middleton Award consists of:

a. **Personal Cash Award and Plaque.** The recipient receives a personal cash award in the amount of \$5,000 and an inscribed plaque commemorating the recipient's scientific achievements.

b. **Research Support.** The recipient receives additional research support in the amount of \$50,000 per year for 3 years.

c. **Ceremony.** The Middleton Award is presented to the recipient at an appropriate ceremony.

d. **Publication of Award.** BLR&D Service publishes the Middleton Award announcement in a scientific journal related to the recipient's field of research to honor the recipient. The VA medical facility at which the recipient is employed receives an inscribed plaque honoring the recipient.

**10. PROGRAM MANAGEMENT:**

a. **Under Secretary for Health.** The Under Secretary for Health, or designee, reviews, and as appropriate approves, the nomination and presents a plaque to the recipient and to the Director of the recipient's VA medical facility at an appropriate ceremony.

b. **VHA Awards Team.** The VHA Awards Team verifies the accuracy of the information submitted in the recommendation, ensures that it meets the standards outlined in VA Directive 5017 Employee Recognition and Awards, dated April 15, 2002 and assists in coordinating the approval process.

c. **Chief Research and Development Officer.** The CRADO reviews the recommendation of the Director, BLR&D Service. If the CRADO does not concur with the recommendation, the field will be notified that no award will be given for that year. If the CRADO concurs with the recommendation, the CRADO signs internal VA Form 4659, Incentive Award Recommendation and Approval, and submits it for approval through the Deputy Under Secretary for Discovery, Education and Affiliate Networks, to the Under Secretary for Health. Upon approval of the nomination by the Under Secretary for Health, the CRADO notifies the recipient's medical facility Director in writing of the Award.

d. **Director, Biomedical Laboratory Research and Development Service.**

(1) Reviews the recommendation of the Middleton Award Review Committee; recommends approval or disapproval of the committee's recommendation; and, if approved, forwards the recommendation to the CRADO. If the Director, BLR&D Service disapproves the recommendation the field will be notified that no award will be given for that year.

(2) Ensures award funding is distributed to the recipient's VA medical facility upon approval of the nomination by the Under Secretary for Health.

e. **Biomedical Laboratory Research and Development Service Scientific Program Managers.**

(1) Identify highly qualified candidates and solicit nominations from the Associate Chief of Staff (ACOS), or Coordinator, for R&D of the appropriate VA medical facility.

(2) At the request of the Middleton Award Program Manager, identify appropriate reviewers for the Middleton Award Review Committee.

f. **Middleton Award Review Committee.**

(1) Evaluates all nominations for the Middleton Award, received by the published deadline, and recommends the most qualified candidate for the award, based on the specified award criteria, to the Director, BLR&D Service.

(2) Recommends that no award be made that year if no candidate meets the Middleton Award criteria.

g. **Middleton Award Program Manager.**

(1) Convenes a Middleton Award Review Committee.

(2) Prepares a request for approval of the Committee's recommended candidate to the Director, BLR&D Service, together with a request for a monetary award of \$5,000, and a VA Form 4659, Incentive Award Recommendation and Approval.

(3) Notifies the recipient's VA medical facility of the Award and instructs the medical facility to provide the monetary award to the recipient and to request reimbursement from ORD following approval of the candidate by the Under Secretary for Health.

(4) Orders commemorative plaques for the recipient and for the sponsoring VA medical facility.

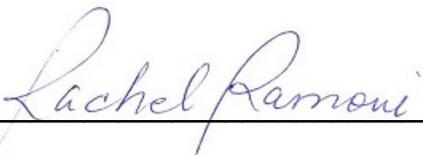
(5) Coordinates the presentation of the award and placement of the award announcement in a scientific journal related to the recipient's field of research.

h. **Medical Facility Director.** The medical facility Director, with advice from the facility's R&D Committee, may submit one nomination for the Middleton Award in a single year.

i. **Associate Chief of Staff, or Coordinator, for R&D.** The ACOS, or Coordinator, for R&D ensures that all required nomination materials are submitted to ORD by the deadline specified on the submission calendar published by ORD.

j. **Research and Development Committee.** The local facility R&D Committee evaluates the merits of potential candidates for the Middleton Award, nominates the single most outstanding candidate, and recommends the nominee to the medical facility Director for approval.

APPROVED:



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