

## **Health System Research (HSR) COIN Multiple Principal Investigator (MPI) Policy** **Updated March 2025**

The COIN Multiple Principal Investigator (MPI) policy:

- Recognizes that COIN leadership is complex and can require substantial levels of commitment by investigators with distinct knowledge, skills, and experience;
- Encourages succession planning and COIN strategic planning to ensure long-range goals and consistent success of COINs;
- Allows additional commitment of VA 8<sup>th</sup> to COIN leadership and direction;
- Encourages medical center leadership to provide additional protected time to support COIN strategic plans and long-term success; and
- Supports expanded academic recognition and advancement.

This policy defines the eligibility criteria designed to appropriately designate two multiple principal investigators per COIN site (dual site COINs may request MPIs for each site.) COIN MPIs will share the authority and responsibility for leading and directing the COIN activities, intellectually and logistically. Approved MPIs will be responsible and accountable to HSR and VHA for the proper conduct of the Center, including the submission of all required reports, conduct of required Center meetings and attendance at required national meetings. The approval of COIN MPIs does not diminish the accountability of any individual COIN Principal Investigator (PI) to HSR and VA. Each COIN MPI must demonstrate the appropriate level of authority and responsibility to direct the COIN and be supported by research funding or contributed effort in the case of clinician leadership effort. The following details the policy criteria and procedures to apply for COIN MPI status.

### **Policy**

Criteria for requesting COIN MPIs include: the contribution of critically important, well defined, non-overlapping intellectual skills; distinct project responsibilities and substantial percent effort; and the needs of the COIN (for example, size, location, disciplines, structure of the research team, and/or the interdisciplinary nature of the Impact Goals). One of the MPIs shall be designated as the Corresponding PI.

The HSR Director will approve/disapprove the MPI application, with the advice of the HSR Deputy Director and the COIN Program Manager, and if submitted as part of the scientific review, the COIN peer review committee. The request for MPI status will be considered upon request via a submitted project modification in early FY25 to take effect in FY25, or during the peer review process for subsequent COIN funding cycles.

### **General Administrative Issues**

- This MPI policy applies to all COINs approved for FY25 funding and subsequent COINs that are submitted via eRA for scientific review.
- Each of the MPIs must meet VA eligibility criteria according to requirements in VHA Handbook 1200.15, HSR&D Handbook 1204.1 and merit proposal application instructions at: <https://www.research.va.gov/resources/policies/handbooks.cfm>.
- MPI salary costs must be covered within the existing COIN budget. No additional funding will be allocated.

- Subsequent MPI COINs must be submitted through NIH eRA grants.gov, prepared according to the instructions at [VA-SF424-RRGuide.pdf](#). The Corresponding PI will change only upon submission and approval of a Project Modification.

**MPI Leadership Plan**

A Leadership Plan must be included as part of the project modification requesting a MPI for FY25 or as part of a subsequent COIN application. The rationale for choosing a MPI approach must be described. The governance and organizational structure of the leadership team and the COIN should be described, including communication plans, process for making decisions on scientific direction, and procedures for resolving conflicts. The roles and administrative, technical, and scientific responsibilities for the COIN should be delineated for each of the MPIs as well as Associate Directors and others on the leadership team. The corresponding PI: is responsible for communicating with HSR staff about COIN-related scientific, administrative, and ethical issues; serves as the point of contact for communications from VACO; and is responsible for disseminating communications from VACO to the other MPI(s) and project staff. It is not appropriate for individuals who would normally be listed as COIN investigators to be elevated to MPI status. The MPI option is reserved for team science efforts, explained and justified in the Leadership Plan in the modification/application in a clear and convincing manner. Each MPI must have a defined COIN role and the request must provide a convincing case that the MPIs will function as a cohesive leadership team. MPIs must share responsibility for the scientific and technical direction of the COIN as a whole and be fully accountable for the proper conduct of the COIN and its activities.

**MPI Table**

Include the following MPI table with the MPI request. In addition, provide an organizational chart demonstrating the connections between the MPIs, local medical center leadership, COIN Associate Directors, other members of the COIN leadership team, investigators, and staff.

<b>Tabular Summary of Distinguishing and Shared PI Responsibilities</b>					
<b>Name &amp; Degree</b>	<b>Location - Station #</b>	<b>COIN FTEE</b>	<b>Distinguishing Responsibilities</b>	<b>Shared Responsibilities</b>	<b>Other Comments</b>
MPI #1 *					
MPI #2					

\* Indicates the Corresponding PI