



**Defense Hearing Center of Excellence JIF Proposal:
A Joint DoD-VA Hearing Technician
Training and Certification Program**

Information Brief

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HCE JIF Proposal

• Purpose of JIF Proposal

- **Topic:** Develop and implement a standardized online training program for Army (and eventually DoD) and VA hearing technicians (HTs) that ensures all HTs are trained to the nationally recognized standard of the Council for Accreditation in Occupational Hearing Conservation (CAOHC)
- **Desired Outcomes:** To successfully develop and pilot a training program that:
 - Standardizes Army (post-JIF available to Navy/AF) and VA HT training meeting or exceeding established CAOHC standards and increases HT competence
 - Increases access to hearing health care and improves patient satisfaction
 - Reduces travel and course registration costs realized by changing from an onsite course to an online training method
 - Ensures hearing loss prevention is included in the HTs' scope of practice and integrated into clinical encounters across DoD and VA

• Amount of Funding Requested

- Total Amount Requested - \$526,977 (\$37,500 annually – cost to HCE - for program sustainment post-JIF)
 - DoD Funds Subtotal = \$407,157
 - VA Funds Subtotal = \$119,820

• Background

- HTs are health care extenders in support of audiologists, improving access to certain hearing health services. Standardized training for DoD civilian and VA HTs currently does not exist consistently within the two departments.



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- Executive Summary

- The HCE, Army, and VA will collaborate to develop and implement a standardized online training program for Army and VA HTs that **ensures all HTs are trained to a nationally recognized standard.**
- Current cost (direct and indirect) of training DoD civilian and VA HTs at a multiple day, onsite workshop is high and difficult to obtain, especially in remote locations and installations not directly supported by an approved CAOHC course director.
- Proposed changes in VA policy requires CAOHC certification for completing separation health exams and air conduction audiograms w/o interpretation.
- DoD policy requires HTs to have CAOHC certification or its equivalent.
- VHA, Army, HCE, and MOG support proposed JIF proposal. Navy and AF will have access to the online program to supplement their current onsite training programs.
- Evaluation results of the training program model will be provided to CAOHC for consideration as a learning platform for Occupational Health courses throughout the world.



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- **Discussion**
 - Project Objectives

NLT Month	Objective
6	Conduct an onsite HT training at Orlando VAMC to fine-tune training materials and develop clearly defined preceptor training requirements for practicum portion of course.
9	Revise course content based on analysis of student feedback/HT performance on CAOHC certification exam. Transition onsite training into online training platform.
10	Provide onsite training to 128 practicum preceptors.
15	Finalize and publish online teaching curriculum that adheres to national training standards (CAOHC), establishes a standardized scope of practice for HTs agreed upon by DoD and VA, and teaches HTs strategies for hearing loss prevention.
18	Have enrolled and graduated four classes (128 HTs) from an online course platform, with a completed practicum. Conduct an analysis of the entire course to determine sustainability.
22	Coordinate with CAOHC to continue the online DoD and VA HT training and certification program.
24	Have a 95% course completion rate and a 90% CAOHC certification pass rate.



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• Risk/Benefit Implications

- If no actions taken: HTs may need to take CAOHC training courses offered by the civilian commercial sector at an average cost of \$600/course for registration alone (does not include travel expenses and time away from patient care) and where the course does not provide training specific to Service Members and Veterans
- Implementation Plan
 - Conduct one onsite training workshop to gather feedback and evaluate information to refine online didactic training
 - Conduct two Army and two VA online courses with onsite practicum, implement QI/PI evaluations/program refinement
 - Train VA and Army audiologists on practicum instruction requirements and Comprehensive Hearing Health Program (monitor, educate, protect) implementation at their facilities
 - Teach workshops and add additional training as needed
 - Communication plan includes regular meetings with development/implementation team (HCE/VA/Army) re: project execution and management and continual consultation/feedback/reviews with stakeholders/customers (at a minimum, HTs, audiologists, public health professionals, otolaryngologists, Service Audiology/Hearing Conservation and Otolaryngology Surgeon General Consultants, VA National Director for Audiology and Speech Pathology Service, MTFs/VAMCs/CBOCs, HEC/JEC, CoE Oversight Board, DHA/J-9/J-3/Education and Training, and CAOHC Board Members).



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Points of Contact

DoD POCs:

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