

ORDE “KNOW YOUR AGENCY” SERIES:

CONGRESSIONALLY DIRECTED MEDICAL RESEARCH PROGRAMS (CDMRP)

CDMRP Site: <http://cdmrp.army.mil>

OVERVIEW

The Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs (CDMRP) was the result of a grassroots advocacy movement pushing Congress for greater federal investment in breast cancer research. In 1992, the first Congressional appropriation of \$25 million was provided to what is now the US Army Medical Research and Materiel Command (USAMRMC). After receipt of a \$210 million appropriation the following year, USAMRMC went to the Institute of Medicine (IOM) for recommendations on how to manage this new research enterprise. The main IOM recommendation was creation of CDMRP as a new scientific research directorate within USAMRMC, tasked to manage these targeted research appropriations. (Source: FY99 CDMRP Annual Report, Overview Section)

Specific Interests

CDMRP funding comes directly from Congress and is then added to the DOD budget. Congress also specifies the Research Programs to be funded every fiscal year based on constituent and advocacy group input. For Fiscal Year 2018, Congress appropriated \$995.2 million for multiple Research Programs: Alcohol and Substance Abuse, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, Autism, Bone Marrow Failure, Breast Cancer, Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy, Epilepsy, Gulf War Illness, Hearing Restoration, Joint Warfighter Medical, Kidney Cancer, Lung Cancer, Lupus, Military Burn, Multiple Sclerosis, Neurofibromatosis, Orthotics and Prosthetics Outcomes, Ovarian Cancer, Parkinson's, Peer Review Alzheimer's*, Peer Review Cancer*, Peer Review Medical*, Peer Review Orthopaedic*, Prostate Cancer, Reconstructive Transplant, Spinal Cord Injury, Tick-Borne Disease, Trauma Clinical, Tuberous Sclerosis, and Vision.

* These programs include multiple topics.

Approach

CDMRP funds “innovative and impactful research” to “transform healthcare for Service Members and the American public.” CDMRP defines its stakeholders as Congress, the American public, and the military. This viewpoint drives their decision-making processes and influences their goal of transparency in all processes. (Source: FY16 CDMRP Annual Report, p. 1)

AGENCY ORGANIZATION

CDMRP consists of a series of research programs, defined by Congress annually. Each research program operates separately, identifying knowledge gaps and defining investment strategies. This is accomplished through an annual strategic visioning process conducted through the individual research programs' advisory panels. Advisory panels also recommend award mechanisms to be offered in a given year (e.g., young investigator grants or investigator-initiated grants) and play a crucial role in the grant review process – deciding which projects best meet program needs. Advisory panel members include scientists, clinicians, military members, and consumers. CDMRP defines consumers as patients, survivors, family members, and/or caregivers and they are included in every step of the process – as peer reviewers, advisory panelists, and research team members. The role of consumer is a formal designation based on a nomination and application process. They are charged with bringing a different perspective to the grants process as well as providing a “sense of urgency to the discussions.”

(Source: FY 17 CDMRP Annual Report, p. 10)

GRANTS PROCESS

Nearly \$12.7 billion in funding and 16,000 project awards later (Fiscal Years 1992-2018), this agency has developed a standardized grants process out of sheer necessity. Research programs use a two-tier application process starting with either letters of intent or pre-applications. This process allows program staff and advisory panels to select well-defined projects pertinent to agency needs. Finalists are then invited to submit full applications.

FY 2016 Awards/Success Rates:

CDMRP received 6,029 applications and funded 859 for an overall success rate of 14%. Individual program success rates ranged from 9% - 65%. (Source: FY 17 CDMRP Annual Report, p. 5)

Contact with CDMRP Staff:

CDMRP maintains a help desk to assist applicants with questions about program announcements and application submission. Questions of a scientific nature are not addressed. Help desk inquiries may be submitted via

telephone or email. Applicants are not directed to contact CDMRP program officers prior to application submission. Instead, Science Officers are assigned as the first step in the negotiation and award process and act as liaisons for PIs and their institutions throughout that process and the subsequent award period.

Typical Agency Application Process:

- 1) PI determines suitability of proposed project in relation to CDMRP Research Programs.
- 2) PI contacts CDMRP Help Desk with questions concerning application process.
- 3) PI submits pre-application (or letter of intent).
- 4) Research program staff and advisory panel review pre-application to determine suitability and then invite a full application.
- 5) PI submits full application via grants.gov.
- 6) Application goes through peer review to determine scientific and technical merit.
- 7) A second application review is conducted by advisory panel to determine research program relevance.
- 8) Advisory panel makes funding recommendation.
- 9) Funding recommendation is reviewed and approved by the Commanding General.
- 10) Notification is provided to PI and institution concerning application status.
- 11) The agency conducts negotiation and award process with PI/institution for approved project.

Proposal Review Process:

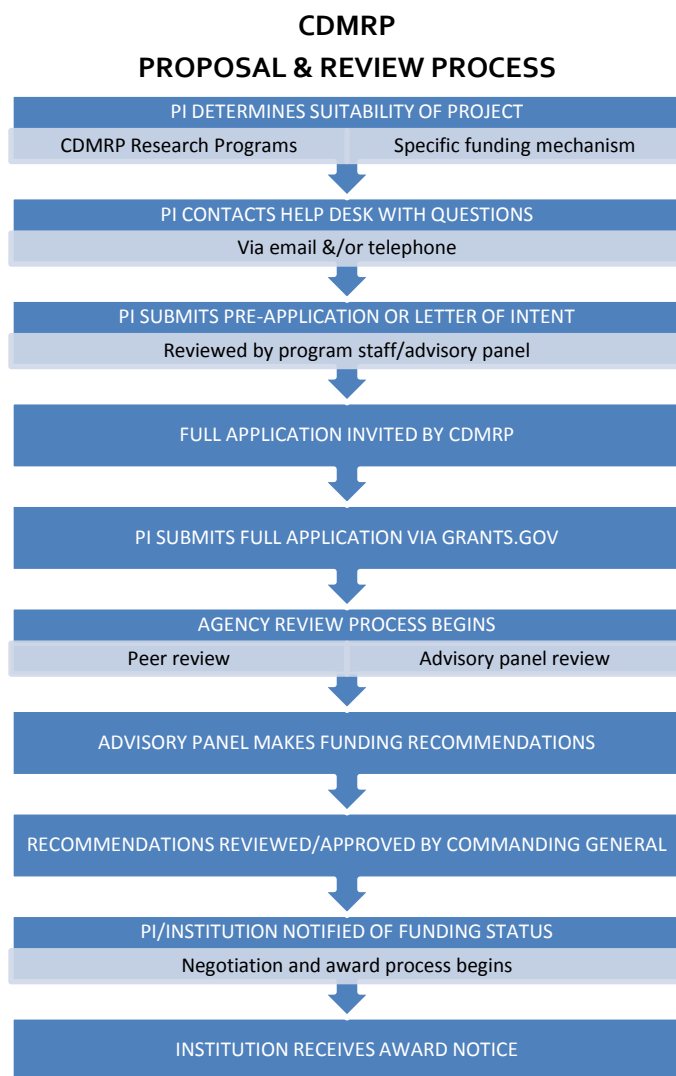
CDMRP pulls together review panels based on the expertise needed to review grant applications received for specific competitions. A two-tier review process is used:

Tier 1: SCIENTIFIC PEER REVIEW – This evaluation is based on the specific review criteria set for each competition, and measures scientific and technical merit of proposed projects. Peer review panels consist of scientists, clinicians, consumers, and, in some instances, military representatives. Each application is reviewed and scored individually.

Tier 2: PROGRAMMATIC REVIEW – This evaluation is designed to ensure funded applications are good matches in terms of relevance to research programs. All applications with favorable Tier 1 reviews go through programmatic review. Programmatic review is conducted by the specific research program's

advisory panel, which evaluates applications in relation to each other in terms of program relevance.

After completion of the review process, applications that best meet agency needs are recommended for funding by the advisory panels. Recommendations are reviewed and approved by the Commanding General, USAMRMC, and, in some instances, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs.



What Happens Next?

CDMRP issues both grants and contracts, depending on the nature of the project. A negotiation process between the receiving institution and CDMRP precedes award; the CDMRP Science Officer acts as liaison through this process. Those who are turned down are encouraged to consider new applications for the next competition. While awards are not renewable, successful investigators may submit applications for new projects in the future.