



**Research Foundation**  
**Paralyzed Veterans of America**

# **PVA RESEARCH FOUNDATION**

## **POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

**FY 2021**

**PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA**

**801 Eighteenth Street, N.W.**

**Washington, DC 20006**

**202-416-7611**

**[www.pva.org/research](http://www.pva.org/research)**

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## ABOUT THE PVA RESEARCH FOUNDATION

Since its founding more than 70 years ago, Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) has worked to support our members and others living with spinal cord injuries and disabilities in achieving their goals. Our mission includes four 'pillars' to accomplish this goal:

- **Quality health care** for our members,
- **Research and education** addressing spinal cord injury and dysfunction,
- **Benefits** available as a result of our members' military service,
- **Civil rights** and opportunities that maximize the independence of our members.

In 1975, Paralyzed Veterans of America's Board of Directors formalized the research efforts by establishing a nonprofit foundation, the Technology and Research Foundation. The following year, the Foundation was legally incorporated as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation, now known as the PVA Research Foundation.

## MISSION

The mission of the PVA Research Foundation is:

- To promote innovative research to find better treatments and cures for paralysis.
- To support efforts to improve the quality of life for individuals with spinal cord dysfunction until treatments are found.
- To train post-doctoral fellow investigators and encourage them to specialize in the area of spinal cord research.

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## **FUNDING CATEGORIES**

The Foundation supports one or two-year grants in four areas of emphasis, at varying funding levels.

➤ **Basic Science**

Laboratory research in the basic sciences related to spinal cord injury or disease.

Grants funded up to \$75,000 for 1 year or up to \$150,000 for 2 years.

➤ **Clinical Applications**

Clinical and functional studies of the medical, psychosocial, and economic effects of spinal cord injury or disease, and / or interventions proposed to alleviate these effects.

Grants funded up to \$75,000 for 1 year or up to \$150,000 for 2 years.

➤ **Design and Development/Assistive Technology**

Design and development of new or improved rehabilitative and assistive devices to improve function for individuals with spinal cord injury or disease.

Grants funded up to \$75,000 for one year or up to \$150,000 for 2 years.

➤ **Post-doctoral Fellowships**

Fellowships for postdoctoral students in basic science, clinical applications, or design and development, intended to encourage training and specialization in the field of spinal cord research

Grants funded up to \$50,000 for 1 year or up to \$100,000 for 2 years.

Two-year awards are made as a single grant. The work plan must cover the entire 24 months of activity. Compliance with reporting requirements is a significant criterion for continued funding.

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## **ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS**

Applications are accepted from fiscally responsible organizational entities in the name of the Principal Investigator (applicant). Entities should be not-for-profit academic institutions, healthcare providers, associations, and/or organizations in the United States or Canada. PVA does not make grants to for-profit companies.

### **Applicant Citizenship**

While grantee institutions must be located in the U.S. or Canada, investigators and fellows are not required to be U.S. or Canadian citizens. Foreign nationals may apply for grant funding. If this individual will serve as Project Director, Principal Investigator, Research Fellow, or a Significant Project Staff member (>20% FTE), he or she must provide verification of a *current* United States or Canadian Visa. Upon grant award, verification must be submitted with the grant acknowledgement form. If at any point during the grant cycle a Visa status changes, PVA must be notified immediately.

Visa verification is required by submitting a copy of his or her current Visa that includes the expiration date. This should be submitted with the application as part of the supporting documents.

### **Other Eligibility Requirements**

The Foundation does not fund undergraduate or pre-doctoral students.

## **SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS**

### **Special Requirement for All Grants**

The PVA Research Foundation is committed to consumer involvement on our funded projects. One of the review criteria is impact, how the project impacts the lives of veterans and others living with spinal cord injuries/disorders (SCI/D) and diseases including Multiple Sclerosis (MS) and Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS).

To this end, for FY 2021, each grant project and fellowship must include at least one person living with a SCI/D, MS or ALS. This individual, who should be described as the SCI/D Advocate, will provide insights and support in assuring that the project has a positive impact on the target audience. This role can be filled by a member of the research team, in addition to their other roles and responsibilities.

For both project and fellowship grants, this person should be identified by name, title, and project role in the narrative under key personnel, as well as in the budget justification.

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### Special Requirements for Design and Development/Assistive Technology Projects

Grant funding for design and development projects may be used to develop drawings, schematics, or prototypes, and for the testing necessary to further the design of assistive technology devices. The Foundation prohibits the use of grant money for the expenses of bringing a product to market (e.g., patent attorney costs, mass production, promotion and marketing, etc.).

### Special Requirements for Fellowship Applicants

Fellowships may be granted in basic science, clinical applications, or design and development. **These grants are awarded to the fellow, not to the mentor, sponsor or host institution and may not be transferred.**

The fellow must write the proposal, although the mentor/sponsor may serve as an advisor.

Fellowship applicants must apply within 4 years of receiving a PhD, or within 4 years of completing a formal MD residency program. Applicants with more than 4 years of training should apply for a research grant, not a fellowship.

Fellowship applicants must have a designated and identified mentor/sponsor who is a senior-level investigator in the laboratory in which the research is to be conducted. In addition to the standard proposal contents, fellowship proposals must include:

- One 'blind' letter of support written by the mentor/sponsor. The mentor should be identified in the application and will be contacted by email to attach the blind letter of support to the application. This letter should include:
  - A statement about the applicant.
  - A brief overview of the sponsor's training and number of fellows and students previously trained.
  - A description of the training environment provided by the laboratory and department, such as seminar programs, and availability of other investigators for discussion and consultation.
- Two additional letters of support from individuals familiar with the qualifications of the fellow. These individuals need to be identified in the application as sponsors and will be contacted by email to attach the blind letter of support to the

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application.

- A biosketch of the mentor/sponsor (submitted as part of the “Biosketch” section of the online application).

### **Indirect Cost Requirement**

Grant contribution to institutional indirect costs is limited to 8% of total direct expenditures, regardless of the institution’s actual or federally negotiated overhead rate. This is not negotiable.

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## TIMELINE FOR PROPOSALS

The PVA Research Foundation has one grant cycle per fiscal year. The anticipated timeline for the 2021 grant cycle is:

April 1, 2020	Application submission open on <a href="http://pva.aibs-scores.org">pva.aibs-scores.org</a>
July 1, 2020	Application submission deadline
November 25, 2020	Award recipients notified
January 1, 2021	Grant projects begin

Please check [www.pva.org/research](http://www.pva.org/research) routinely for program updates and announcements.

### Deadline for Submission

The deadline for submitting applications is **July 1, 2020**, no later than 11:59 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time [EDT], **without exception**. Only applications submitted online to [pva.aibs-scores.org](http://pva.aibs-scores.org) will be accepted.

### Grant Requirements

Prospective applicants are **strongly encouraged** to start a submission in the system by **May 1, 2020**, indicating a **title, keywords, abstract, proposal type and creating a person record for the applicant**. This information will be used to develop the review panel in a timely manner.

**Submit full applications early**. The applicant will need to create person records for institutional officials (IO) and Mentors (required for Fellowship Applicants only) and then invite them through the system, which will then email them directly with instructions to submit letters (Mentor) or to approve (IO) the application when it is submitted.

**Applications are not fully submitted until institutional approval is submitted.**

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**Notification of Grants**

Notification of grant decisions will be made to the applicants no later than November 25, 2020. You will be notified via email or first-class mail. Please be sure you include your full and correct email address **and** mailing address on your application. Inaccurate or incomplete addresses may delay notifications of awards.

Please do not contact our staff to ascertain the status of your proposal, unless you have not received notification by December 1, 2020.

**Grant Start Date**

If you are awarded a grant, you will be sent a Grant Acknowledgment Form to complete and return to the Foundation office. No funds will be disbursed until we receive an original Grant Acknowledgment Form, signed by both the Principal Investigator and the Grant Administrator, together with appropriate supporting items as outlined in the grant award letter. In general, grants awarded by November 15, 2020 will be funded for a one- or two-year grant period beginning January 1, 2021.

If you require a grant start date up to 60 days after January 1, please state this in your application or on the Grant Acknowledgement Form. A written justification for the delay is required. Once the Grant Acknowledgement form is signed, delayed start dates will not be considered except in the case of dire emergency.

**FOUNDATION STAFF CONTACTS**

**Grant application or administration questions should be directed to:**

- Lindsay Perlman  
Associate Director, Research & Education  
Phone: (202) 416-7611  
Email: [lindsayp@pva.org](mailto:lindsayp@pva.org)

**Policy or program questions should be directed to:**

- Cheryl L. Vines  
Director, Research & Education  
Phone: (202) 256-5526 or (805) 439-2804  
Email: [cherylv@pva.org](mailto:cherylv@pva.org)

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## **ONLINE APPLICATION PROCESS**

**All application submissions MUST be made online through [pva.aibs-scores.org](http://pva.aibs-scores.org)** which can be accessed from the link on Paralyzed Veterans of America's web site at [www.pva.org](http://www.pva.org). Go to Research Foundation and click on [Submit a grant application here.](#)

**Paper copy applications will be returned *without review* and will not satisfy the submission deadline.**

In addition to web fields, the application templates are in Word format and will need to be converted into PDFs upon submission.

For technical assistance with the online application submission process, contact Customer Service at [pva@aibs.org](mailto:pva@aibs.org) Monday through Friday 9am-5pm, EDT.

## **SUBMISSION CONTENT**

The online application includes the following components:

- Title Page (title, abstract, keywords)
- Person Records for Key Personnel (address, email, etc.)
- Eligibility Information
- Proposal Narrative (15-page maximum, not including references)
- Budget / Budget Justification
- Facilities and Resources
- Biosketches
- Listing of Other Support
- Letters of Reference (required for fellowships; optional for others)
- Organizational Assurances (e.g. IRB assurance #)

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- Supporting Documents (e.g. Letters of Collaboration)
- Electronic Institutional Approval

All components of the application must be completed and submitted electronically. All submissions are considered confidential. Specific instructions for completing each component are in the General Instructions document. Applicants should adhere to templates and instructions to ensure uniformity of presentation for reviewers. Some of the components are web fields that are completed online. Others are Microsoft Word templates that you may download to your computer. You may complete these templates with any standard word processing software (e.g., MS Word or other), but you must convert completed documents to Adobe PDF format to be uploaded to the website.

Please note that upon completing a submission, a notification email will be generated by the system to your Institutional Official (the Official signing for the applicant institution whom you identified in the online applicant registration process). This Institutional Official must approve your application before it is fully submitted to the system. This must be completed before July 1, 2020, 11:59 pm EDT.

## **ORGANIZATION ASSURANCES**

The Foundation supports research in a wide variety of areas that may use animal models, human tissue, and human subjects. All applicants must comply with rules and regulations published by the National Institutes of Health on certifications and assurances regarding use of animals in research, human tissue, and human subjects. In each case, approval documents from the appropriate Institutional Review Board (IRB) or Committee must be specific to the proposed investigation, including the time period for which the grant is requested. If application for such approval has been made but has not been acted upon at the time of submission, a letter from the IRB chair or safeguard committee acknowledging the pending status, with a scheduled date for board or committee action, must accompany the application. **Official approval by the relevant board or committee must be received in the Foundation office before awarded funds will be disbursed.**

### **Animal Research**

The Foundation requires that all individuals and institutions that conduct research with Foundation funds using animals must adhere to all federal, state, and local laws pertaining to the humane care and use of animals for research purposes, including IRB

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procedures and approvals. At a minimum, the Foundation requires investigators to adhere to the following laws that provide guidelines for such research:

- The Health Research Extension Act of 1985 (Public Law 99-158, November 20, 1985), an amendment to the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. § 289d).
- The Animal Welfare Act (Public Law 89-544, August 24, 1966) and all subsequent amendments through 2013.
- The Public Health Service Policy (7 U.S.C. 2131 et seq.) on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals (revised and reprinted 2015).
- The *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals* (Institute of Laboratory Animal Resources, National Academy of Sciences, updated 1996).

**Human Tissue**

The Foundation requires that all individuals and institutions that conduct research using human tissue, including stem cells, with Foundation funds adhere to all federal, state, and local laws pertaining to the use of this tissue, including IRB procedures and approvals.

**Human Subjects**

Studies that involve human subjects must ensure that informed consent is obtained from the participants. A copy of the final Subject consent form must accompany the proposal (see Supporting Documents). A letter from the applicant's IRB stating that adequate protection of human subjects' rights will be provided must be submitted with the proposal.

**AGREEMENTS WITH COOPERATING INSTITUTIONS OR AGENCIES**

Proposals for projects involving institutions or agencies in addition to the grantee (e.g., affiliated clinical facilities, laboratories conducting work under a contract, etc.) must include a letter signed by a responsible official of the cooperating facility acknowledging its role in the project and supplying such assurances as may cover any aspect of the research to be conducted in the facility. Such letters must be submitted online under the "Supporting Documents" section of the application. Copies of contracts are not required.

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## **REVIEW PROCESS**

Grant applications undergo a stringent, independent peer review for scientific merit and relevance to spinal cord dysfunction. Peer review reports are an integral part of the grant selection process. A panel of reviewers, assigned by the Peer Review Contractor, will evaluate each eligible application.

Reviewers will utilize the following criteria to evaluate the applications:

- Impact on veterans and others living with SCI/D, MS, or ALS
- Innovation and Significance
- Approach
- Feasibility
- Investigators
- Facilities
- Budget

The PVA Research Foundation Board of Directors, composed entirely of Paralyzed Veterans of America members, makes final funding decisions based on a variety of factors, including the peer review reports. Final funding decisions rest solely with the Directors.

Upon notification of grant awards, all applicants will receive copies of their grant reviews.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF AWARD**

When a project is approved for funding, the applicant will be notified in writing.

This written notification will include:

- Instructions for submitting the Grant Acknowledgment Form
- List of required documents
- Copy of the FY21 PVA Research Foundation Policies and Procedures.

Manual or electronic signatures of both the Principal Investigator and the Grant Administrator are required on the Grant Acknowledgment Form. Signing this form acknowledges your acceptance of and agreement to comply with the PVA Research Foundation Policies and Procedures.

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The Grant Acknowledgment Form must be accompanied by a photo of the Principal Investigator and by any other supporting documents requested in the grant award letter.

**REPORTING AND PAYMENT SCHEDULE**

All progress and expenditure reports, as well as any supplemental documents, must be uploaded to [pva.aibs-scores.org](http://pva.aibs-scores.org).

<b>Reporting Schedule</b>	
<b>Grant Acknowledgment</b>	The grantee must return the original signed Grant Acknowledgment Form before any funds can be disbursed to the project. Upon the Foundation's receipt of the signed Grant Acknowledgment Form, the 1 <sup>st</sup> payment on the grant will be made.
<b>Interim Expenditure and Progress Reports</b>	The Interim Expenditure and Progress Reports are due from the grantee within 30 days of completion of the first 6 months for a one-year project or first 12 months for a two-year project. Upon the Foundation's receipt, review and approval of these reports, the 2 <sup>nd</sup> payment on the grant will be made, as outlined above.
<b>Final Expenditure and Progress Reports</b>	The Final Expenditure and Progress Reports are due within 30 days of the completion of the project. Upon the Foundation's receipt, review and approval of the Final Report, the 10% Retainer, initially withheld from the grant award will be sent to the grantee.

Payments are made to the grantee institution in three installments according to the following schedule:

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Payment Schedule	
Retainer	10% of the total award is retained by the Foundation until a grant successfully completes all requirements and final reports are received.
1 <sup>st</sup> Payment	45% of the total award is paid to the grantee upon the Foundation's receipt of the original signed Grant Acknowledgement Form.
2 <sup>nd</sup> Payment	45% of the total award is paid to the grantee upon the Foundation's receipt and approval of the grantee's Interim Expenditure and Progress Reports.
Final Payment	The final payment will be based on the final expenditure report. The 10% retainer will be paid upon the Foundation's receipt and approval of the Final Expenditure and Progress Reports. If funds remain at the end of the grant period, this amount will be remitted by the recipient or will be decreased on the final payment, depending upon the amount remaining.

Reports and documents are required at the beginning, midpoint and end of the grant period. Progress reports should be thorough, concise and provide detailed descriptions of accomplishment of the project goals and objectives. The reports should reflect actual progress and achievement of milestones and goals. The report should also reflect changes in personnel and barriers to progress. Supporting documents should be compiled with the report form into a single PDF document for submission.

Expenditure reports should reflect **actual**, not budgeted, expenditures for the designated reporting period. After 1<sup>st</sup> payment, all payments will be based on the expenditure reports.

The Principal Investigator and Grant Administrator must sign the reports. The reports should follow the templates available at [pva-aibs-scores.org](http://pva-aibs-scores.org)

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## AMENDMENTS

**Proposed changes** to the terms of the grant agreed upon in the Grant Acknowledgment Form, including but not limited to grant period, personnel, budget, and location, must be **made in writing, at least one month** in advance of the proposed change. **This includes requests for No Cost Extensions (see following page).**

Such written requests must be signed by both the Principal Investigator and the Grant Administrator, and should detail the reason for and other relevant information about the change. Approval of any extension or amendment request must be acknowledged in writing by the Foundation to be considered binding.

### Personnel Changes

Replacement of the Principal Investigator, Grant Administrator, or any other key personnel must be approved by the Foundation. The request must detail why the change is being made, the name of the replacement, and include biosketch and contact information for that person. **Funded fellows cannot be replaced and grants must be relinquished.** Requests for change should be submitted to the PVA Director of Research and Education.

### Budget Changes

The project budget should be constructed carefully, as you will be expected to adhere to the approved budget in making expenditures from grant funds. The total amount of the grant cannot be increased; however, you may make minor changes within categories of your approved budget. Changes of 15% of total grant or less, **that do not change personnel costs**, may be made without approval, but should be reported. These changes must remain within PVA budgetary guidelines. **Budget changes greater than 15% of total grant amount and all personnel line item changes must be approved by Foundation staff in advance of making the change.** A detailed description of the reasons for change should be submitted, in writing to the PVA Director of Research and Education.

### Location Changes

The Foundation must be notified if the Principal Investigator or Fellow intends to move from the grantee institution at any time during a funded project period. A written request must be submitted to the PVA Director of Research and Education at least 30 days in advance of the move. The request should state why the move is taking place, the date of

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transfer and new location.

The request letter must be accompanied by:

- Letter from your current institution acknowledging the move, “closing out” any fiscal responsibilities, and returning any unexpended funds to PVA.
- An interim expenditure report, reflecting expenditures made on the grant by the current institution through the date of transfer.
- Letter from the new institution agreeing to accept the grant and fiscal responsibility
- A new Grant Acknowledgement form for the remaining period, signed by the PI and the new Grant Administrator.
- If this is a Fellowship, a letter from the Mentor must be included stating how supervision of the fellowship will take place. If this results in a change in mentor, a letter from the new Mentor (with brief CV or biosketch) accepting the role.

A detailed description of the reasons for change should be submitted to the PVA Director of Research and Education.

Failure to notify the Foundation of the move and/or complete these documents in a timely manner may result in a delay in funding and or relinquishment of the grant.

## EXTENSIONS

### No Cost Time Extensions (NCE)

The Foundation will consider NCEs from grantees who determine that they will be unable to complete the project during the established grant cycle. **Requests for additional time must be submitted, in a letter signed by the PI, to the PVA Director of Research and Education at least one month in advance of the project deadline.** The request must detail the progress on the grant to date, the particular circumstances or reasons requiring additional time, an updated timeline for completion, and the length of extension requested.

**The maximum NCE is one 6-month period.** Extensions beyond 6 months of the original grant period will not be approved, except in extraordinary circumstances. Only one NCE request per grant will be approved. All NCE requests must be submitted to PVA at least 30 days prior to the project deadline.

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## COMPLETION OF GRANT

Upon completion of the grant:

- The grantee will have 60 days to liquidate all commitments against the grant account and submit written Final Progress and Expenditure Reports
- The grantee is required to prepare and submit a lay article (250-500 words) describing the results or outcomes of the project, with an accompanying photo. This article will be considered for publication in *PN* (our monthly magazine) and/or for other publicity purposes to promote PVA Research Foundation.
- Unexpended funds must be returned to the Foundation within 30 days of submission of the Final Reports. PVA does not allow any unexpended funds to be used for any purpose after grant completion.

When appropriate, photos taken in the course of your project, particularly photos that illustrate the nature of your work (for example, you working in your laboratory, demonstrating your equipment, talking with a patient or teaching a class, or a photo of materials you are developing under the grant) are requested with your final grant report. You may submit more than one photo if you like. Photos may be used in our Annual Report, as part of an article in *PN* or other publication. They must be high resolution, color photos, 300 dpi or better.

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**COPYRIGHTS, DISCOVERIES, AND PATENTS ON GRANT-SUPPORTED PRODUCTS**

The Foundation does not accept applications for funds to be used exclusively for publication, market testing, or patenting of project results.

Unless otherwise specified in the terms of an individual grant award, the grantee is free to retain copyright of such materials, which for this purpose are defined as writings, sound recordings, pictorial reproductions, drawings, graphic representations, procedural manuals, forms, diagrams, computer programs or applications. However, the Foundation reserves the rights to reproduce, publish, or otherwise use such materials, royalty-free, for distribution to individuals, groups, or institutions that would benefit from their use. Furthermore, the packaging of the product should clearly indicate that it was supported, in whole or in part, by funding from the PVA Research Foundation.

The Foundation reserves the right to participate in the patenting of the materials, devices or any products resulting from the research funded (or partially funded) by the grant agreement. Any party intending to seek such a patent shall notify the Foundation at least 90 days prior to filing for patent protection, so as to permit the Foundation to evaluate the research and determine if the Foundation wishes to participate in the patenting of the materials, devices, or products resulting from the research. Such notice shall contain a description of the patent sought and shall identify the Foundation grant-sponsored research which forms the basis for the patent protection sought. The Foundation agrees to respond to such notice, in writing, within sixty (60) days of receipt of the notice. The decision to participate or not to participate in the filing for patent protection of the research shall be at the sole discretion of the Foundation. In the event that the Foundation declines to participate in the filing for patent protection, that decision shall be final and binding on the Foundation unless, pursuant to a subsequent agreement, the parties mutually agree otherwise.

The Foundation shall have the first option to participate in the filing for patent protection of the research in the event such protection is considered to be necessary by the Foundation and upon the Foundation agreeing to pay for the cost of filing for such protection. Upon the Foundation agreeing to file for such protection, the Foundation shall have the first option to negotiate an exclusive license as to the research, subject to the license rights of other sponsors of the research, including the United States government, and negotiated diligence terms related to licensing and development.

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All parties originating the research who agree to such exclusive license also thereby agree to cooperate in the obtaining of the patent protection of the research and further agree to sign all documents necessary to obtain such protection as may reasonably be deemed necessary for such protection.

## **OWNERSHIP OF EQUIPMENT**

All allowable purchases of apparatus, equipment and materials with PVA Research Foundation grant funds will become the property of the grantee institution. These should be retained for use in further activities focusing on SCI/D research.

## **PUBLICITY AND SUPPORT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

Following award of a grant, grantees are required to submit a photograph of themselves (and other relevant photos) to the Foundation together with their Grant Acknowledgment Form. Other photos may be submitted during the course of or at completion of the project. These photos may be used for publicity in Paralyzed Veterans of America's monthly magazine, *PN*, in our Annual Report, or in other publications as deemed necessary to let our readers and donors know how grant funds are being used.

The grantee institutions will cooperate with the Foundation in making announcements through the news media of the grant award. We will provide you with a sample press release about your grant that you may use to seek publicity within your host institution and peer community. Principal Investigators are encouraged to publicize the results of their projects using available avenues for dissemination (e.g., press releases, journals, conference presentations, etc.).

All awarded projects are required to prominently acknowledge Foundation support in every appropriate way (e.g., press releases, articles, posters, platform presentations).

In crediting PVA Research Foundation as a funding source, the following acknowledgment language must be used with all publicity concerning the grant:

**Supported [*in part or in full, whichever is appropriate*] by Grant #\_\_\_\_\_ from the Paralyzed Veterans of America Research Foundation.** In addition, any co-funding sources must be given credit in a similar statement.

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**AMENDMENT OF POLICIES**

The PVA Research Foundation reserves the right to amend these policies. By returning to the Foundation a signed Grant Acknowledgment Form, the grantee agrees to abide by any changes or to terminate the grant at such time that new policies become effective.