

RACGWVI: Presentation

VA Office of Research and Development (ORD) Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Initiative



Shakeria Cohen, PhD, MSCR
Co-Chair, DEI Work Group
VA Office of Research and Development



ORD Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee

Shakeria Cohen, PhD, MSCR
Health Science Officer

Co-Chair, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Committee
Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses
August 20, 2024



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VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

ORD DEI Committee (DEIC)

- The DEIC strives to:
 - Promote a culture of inclusion within ORD and among VA researchers
 - Build a training pipeline by exposing students and junior investigators from underrepresented populations to potential careers within the VA
 - Promote equity in scientific activities, including peer review, to ensure they reflect the VA community
 - Enhance the quality of work and increases relevance to Veterans, VA scientific research, and the clinical communities served

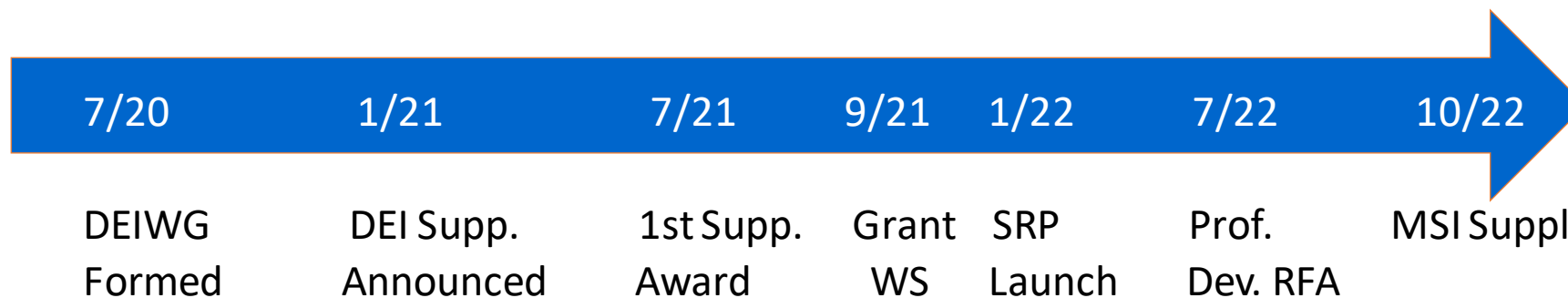
Building a DEI Program

- Develop a Diverse Scientific Workforce

- Stimulate Minority Health Research

- Develop Future Leaders from UR Groups

- Promote a Culture of Inclusion in ORD



ORD DEI Work Group Programs

- Summer Research Program for Undergraduates
- Mentored Research Supplements
- Core Recruiting Site (Atlanta VAMC and Morehouse)
- Minority Serving Institution-CDA program
- Grant Writing Workshop for UR Investigators
- Supplements for VA/MSI collaboration
- Professional/Leadership Development
- Educational funding for DEI topics

ORD DEI Program Impacts

- **Mentored Supplements to Promote Diversity (2021-2024):**
Awarded 37 two-year salary awards to Early Career, Underrepresented VA scientists (since 2021)
- **DEI Training Awards (2022-2024)**
Awarded funding to a total of 11 VAMC R&D Services to provide training in DEI topics to employees
- **Leadership Training (2022-2024)**
Awarded funding for leadership training coursed to 17 field research employees

Summer Research Program Impact

Pilot Program – Summer 2022-Summer
2024
20+ Sites (2022-2024)

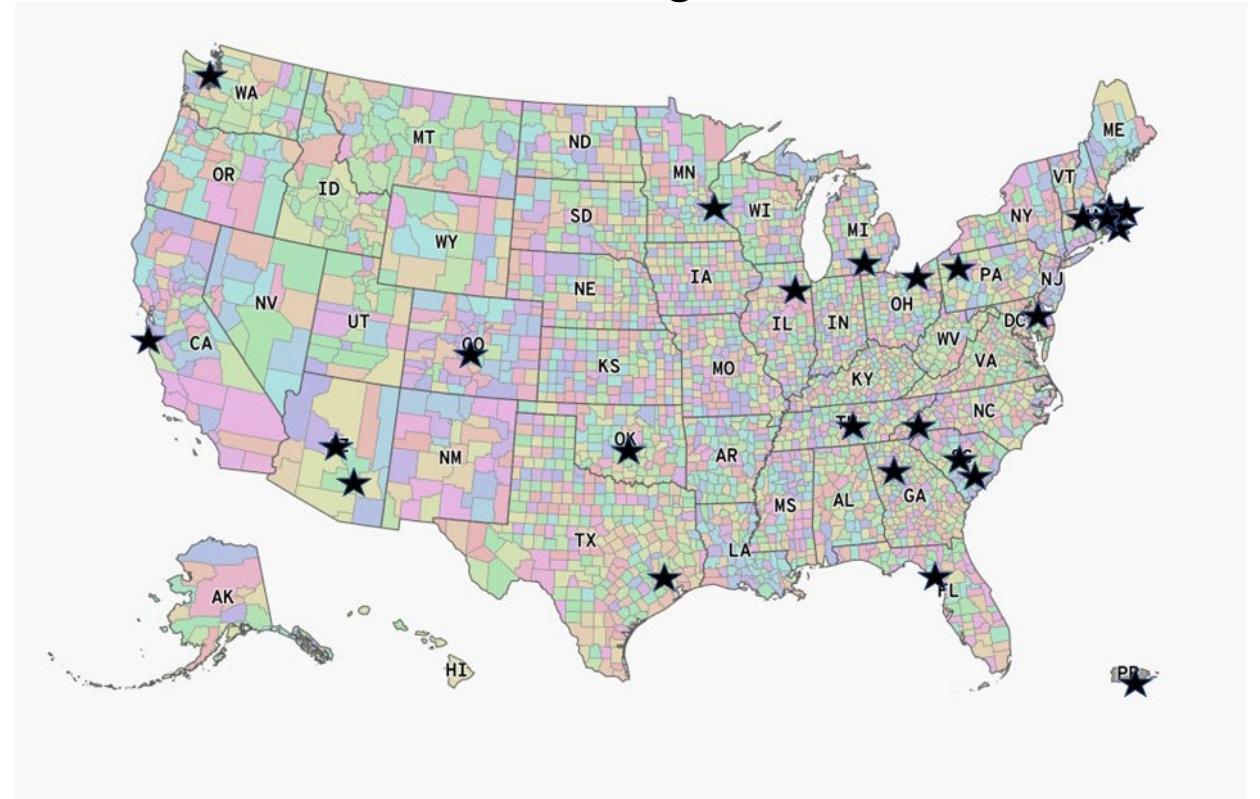
Students Reached:

FY 22: 112

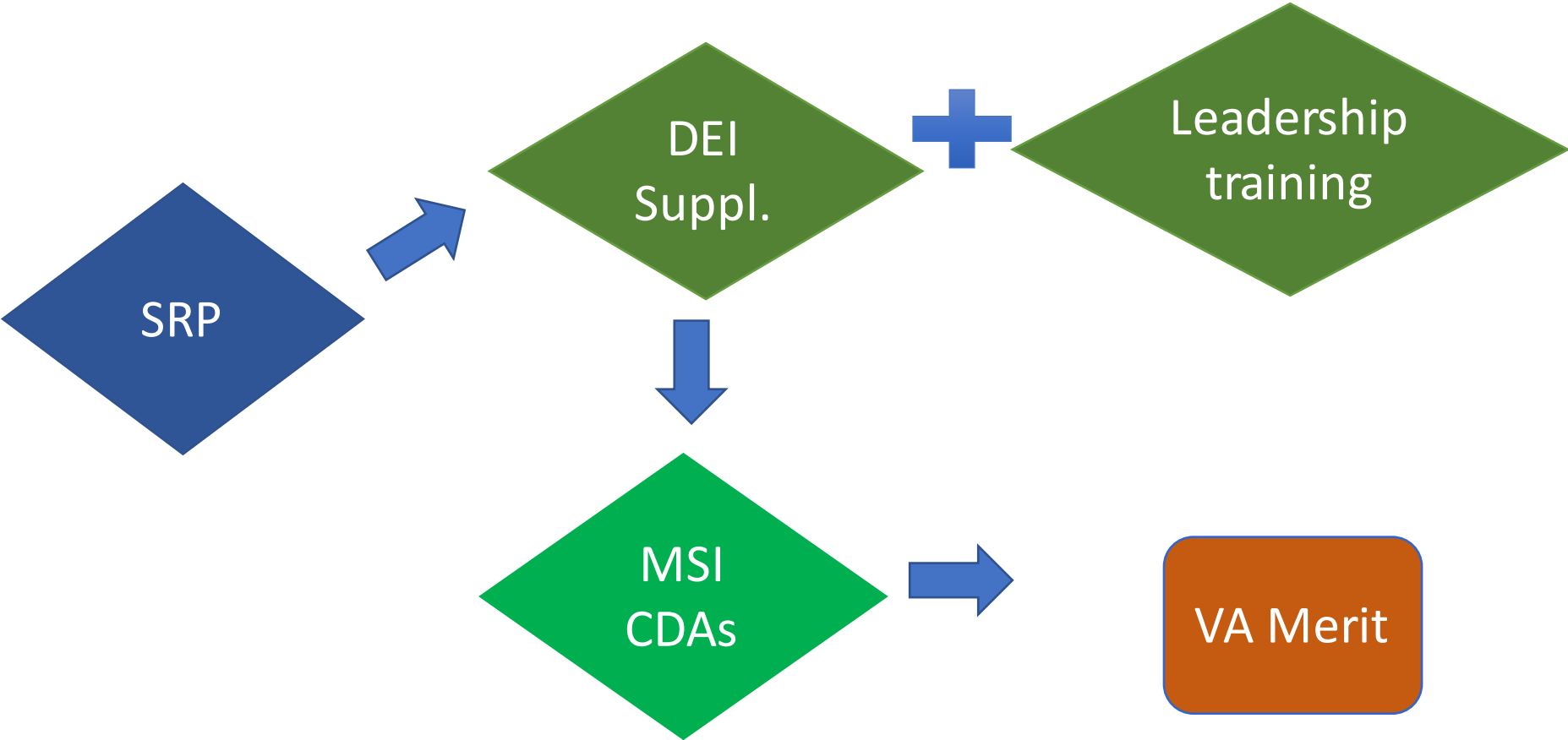
FY 23: 176

FY 24: 150 +

DEI Summer Research Program Sites – FY 2025



ORD Support for Diversification of Workforce



Future Initiatives

- Add five additional summer research program sites
- Implementation of Predoctoral Program
- Community Partnership
- Integrate Diversity Tracking Tool to access merit review panels
- Help in retaining researchers from underrepresented and disadvantaged backgrounds
- Help stimulate research focused on minority health and the reduction of health disparities.

Thank You

Shakeria (Shay) Cohen, PhD
Health Science Officer,
Co-Chair, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
Veterans Health Administration,
Office of Research & Development



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