

2021 Veteran Marijuana Research (VMR) Grant Program

Briefing and Award Recommendations

August 6, 2021

Introduction

On June 1, 2021 the Marijuana Regulatory Agency (MRA) issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for Veteran Marijuana Research (VMR) grants. The Michigan Regulation and Taxation of Marihuana Act (Initiated Law 1 of 2018) was passed by the voters of the state of Michigan in November 2018 and, among other things, creates the Marihuana Regulation Fund in the state treasury and requires the Marijuana Regulatory Agency to expend money in the fund until 2022 or for at least two years, to provide \$20 million annually to one or more clinical trials that are approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration and sponsored by a non-profit organization or researcher within an academic institution researching the efficacy of marijuana in treating the medical conditions of United States armed services veterans and preventing veteran suicide.

The purpose of this Request for Proposals (RFP) is to obtain proposals from non-profit organizations or academic institutions that will outline plans to coordinate and manage research into the efficacy of marijuana in treating the medical conditions of United States armed services veterans and preventing veteran suicide.

The grant period is expected to begin August 16, 2021 and end when the clinical trials are complete. The amount available for this Veteran Marijuana Research Grant is \$20,000,000, consisting entirely of funds from the Marihuana Regulation Fund.

The MRA received responsive proposals in response to the RFP from the following two (2) organizations totaling \$24,604,944.

One proposal was received after the due date of 12:00 PM noon on July 16, 2021 and was not considered. One proposal was received timely, but deemed not responsive as it was not certified/signed and was determined to not meet the mandatory minimum requirement of demonstrating a history of garnering FDA approval for clinical trials and administering grant funding to researchers for clinical trials and was not considered.

The review team recommends that 2 of the 2 considered applicants receive grant awards. When determining the amount to be awarded to each organization the review team took into consideration several factors, including: 1) experience and financial stability of the organization; 2) the applicant's work plan; 3) applicant's management summary, and 4) applicant's budget and budget narrative. The table below provides the JEC's grant award recommendations.

Organization	Amount Requested	Recommended Award Amount
Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies (MAPS)	\$ 17,583,994	\$ 12,979,050
Wayne State University - Bureau of Community Action & Economic Opportunity	\$ 7,020,950	\$ 7,020,950
University of Michigan	Not Considered	Not Considered
Kairos Cannabis Research Foundation	Not Considered	Not Considered
Total	\$ 24,604,944	\$ 20,000,000

Evaluation Method

Responses to this solicitation were reviewed by Joint Evaluation Committee, which consisted of the following individuals:

Voting	Advisory
Andrew Brisbo, Executive Director LARA - Marijuana Regulatory Agency	David Harns, Public Relations Manager LARA - Marijuana Regulatory Agency
Robert Near, Deputy Director Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency	Leslie Christy, State Administrative Manager LARA – Procurement and Administration Division
Debra Pinals, M.D., Medical Director MDHHS - Behavioral Health and Forensic Programs	

Evaluation Results

Bidder #1: Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies (MAPS)

- Requested Amount: \$ 17,583,994
- JEC Recommended Award: \$ 12,979,050

The Evaluation Team determined that Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies (MAPS) received a fundable score for their RFP response. This determination was accomplished by evaluating their responses to the Evaluation Criteria.

1. Experience and Financial Stability of the Organization:

- The Evaluation Team determined that the bidder demonstrated extensive relevant experience and their responses were satisfactory overall, but the following deficiency was noted:
 - a. The requested financial statements were not included with the original bid submission.

2. Work Plan

- The Evaluation Team determined that the bidder presented a detailed work plan, but the following deficiency was noted:
 - a. Related to objective #7 in the Work Plan requirement of the RFP (“establish research goals, approve projects, exercise financial and management oversight, and document and review results”), the presented timeline was not as clear as desired by the Evaluation Team.

3. Management Summary

- The Evaluation Team determined that overall, the responses were mostly satisfactory, but the following deficiency was noted:
 - a. The roles and responsibilities between MAPS and the Contract Research Organization (CRO) were not clearly defined in the original submission.

4. Budget and Budget Narrative

- The Evaluation Team determined that some parts of the proposed budget had clarity and overall, the responses were satisfactory, but the following deficiency was noted:
 - a. Some areas of the budget were unclear in the original submission, especially indirect and administrative costs.

Total Score: 81/100

Bidder #2: Wayne State University

- Requested Amount: \$ 7,020,950
- JEC Recommended Award: \$ 7,020,950

The Evaluation Team determined that Wayne State University received a fundable score for their RFP response. This determination was accomplished by evaluating their responses to the Technical Evaluation Criteria.

1. Experience and Financial Stability of the Organization

- The Evaluation Team determined that the bidder demonstrated financial stability as well as extensive relevant experience with this type of project, but the following deficiency was noted:
 - a. It was not clear whether the bidder had experience with a project of this magnitude.

2. Work Plan

- The Evaluation Team determined that the bidder presented a detailed work plan, but the following deficiency was noted:
 - b. The plan to obtain FDA approval for this project was not clearly defined.

3. Management Summary

- The Evaluation Team determined that overall, the responses were satisfactory and detailed, but the following deficiency was noted:
 - b. The provided confidentiality agreement was not the necessary type.

4. Budget and Budget Narrative

- The Evaluation Team determined that the proposed budget and budget narrative were detailed and clear.

Total Score: 97/100

Bidder #3: Kairos Cannabis Research Foundation

- Kairos Cannabis Research Foundation has not met the requirements of being responsive due to submission of an unsigned/uncertified proposal as well as not meeting the mandatory minimum requirement of demonstrating a history of garnering FDA approval for clinical trials and administering grant funding to researchers for clinical trials.

Bidder #4: University of Michigan

- University of Michigan has not met the requirements of being responsive due to submission of their proposal after the deadline.

JEC Scoring Summary

	Selection Criteria	Bidder #1	Bidder #2
1	Experience and Financial Stability of the Organization	30	39
2	Work Plan	16	19
3	Management Summary	18	19
4	Budget and Budget Narrative	17	20
	• Total	81	97