

Tobacco Policy Research Centers Award

Important Dates

November 6, 2017	Release of Call for Letters of Intent
December 7, 2017	Prospective Applicant Webinar (See TRDRP.org for details)
January 16, 2018	Letters of Intent* due 12:00 noon Pacific Time
January 25, 2018	Notification of Invitations to Submit Application
April 13, 2018	Applications due 12:00 noon Pacific Time
June 2018	Funding notification
July/August 2018	Award start date

***Letter of Intent:** A letter of intent is required to be considered for the Tobacco Policy Research Center Award open competition

General Overview of Award Mechanism

The Tobacco Policy Research Center (TPRC) award is a four-year grant that supports multi-disciplinary teams of researchers working in partnership with advocates, community members, policymakers and other key stakeholders to identify, respond and disseminate policy research that directly address local tobacco policy issues and their potential bi-directional relationship with state and national policy. The research conducted by the Center should focus on informing policies that reduce tobacco health disparities and help build research and community capacity in under-resourced areas of rural and central California.

The initiative will fund collaborative research centers with leadership comprised of at least one experienced academic researcher (e.g. mid to senior level at a California-based research institution with demonstrated expertise in tobacco policy research and dissemination); an experienced community/advocacy organization leader (e.g. an organization with demonstrated organizational tobacco policy priority and/or policy expertise); and at least one emerging academic researcher (e.g. assistant professor level or higher at an academic institution in an under-resourced area of central or rural California with preliminary work or evidence of interest in tobacco policy). Note: only one of the core Center partners (e.g. the emerging researcher) should be from an academic institution in an under-resourced area in central or rural California. TRDRP will also consider an experienced researcher in an under-resourced area of central or rural California, with the other Center leaders in other areas. One of the researchers must have an appointment at an academic institution located in an under-resourced area in rural or central California. Other community based organizations, health voluntaries representing rural and/or central Californian communities as well as other policy and policy-relevant research expertise to respond quickly to tobacco policy questions that both forecast and understand the local impact should also be included in the Centers as affiliated members. The affiliated members should be able to respond to a wide-range of tobacco policy topics (identified through the Center's Rapid Response mechanism) and participate in other Center core activities including community input and dissemination; and training and mentorship.)

The award supports research project-specific costs (for one longer term research project and annual funds for rapid response research) and infrastructure costs that support collaborative administration, training and research capacity building, and community engagement and dissemination efforts. Although the longer term research project should focus, at least in part, on local policy in an under-resourced area of rural and central California, the rapid response mechanism should be able to address the wider-range of policy needs for California.

The TPRC awards are intended to encourage policy research that addresses important and timely research questions and strengthen local level policy and its bi-directional influence on state and national policy. To meet the challenges of a changing tobacco policy environment and the needs of priority populations and under-resourced areas of rural or central California, TRDRP invites applications for the Tobacco Policy Research Center Awards focused on the following TRDRP priority topics (one or more):

- Downstream effects from California’s changing tobacco control policy landscape
- Menthol and flavored tobacco regulation
- Countering tobacco industry marketing and influence
- Reducing tobacco product waste and protecting the environment through policymaking
- Protecting youth from tobacco and cannabis exposure
- Tobacco policy interactions with cannabis policy

This list is not exhaustive and applicants may submit proposals that address other pertinent policy topics for the Center. However, all proposals should focus research on policy that will directly impact the local community level within the geographic catchment area of their Center, especially how it is relevant to priority populations, health disparities and community need in under-resourced areas in rural or central California.

Key Components and Requirements

TRDRP intends to fund up to 3 Tobacco Policy Research Centers that when combined optimally cover in their geographic catchment areas much of California. The geographic balance and distribution of the proposed Centers may be used as a criterion for funding. Although not exclusively, research projects and center activities should be focused on results and policy recommendations at the local community level with the potential to also impact state and national level policies. Funding would be for a four-year period for each Center and each Center must have the following required elements:

Center Mission and Goals. Centers are expected to identify a mission statement reflecting one or more TRDRP priority topics with policy and research goals that are achievable and actionable within the project period (4 years). During the project period, the issue or problem identified within this mission statement should be assessed and refined through Center self-evaluation and quality improvement.

Partnerships Required in the Centers. There must be at least one:

- ‘Experienced’ Tobacco Policy Researcher (e.g. mid to senior level at a California-based research institution with demonstrated expertise in tobacco policy research and dissemination);
- ‘Emerging’ Tobacco Policy Researcher (e.g. assistant professor level or higher at an academic institution in an under-resourced area of central and rural California with preliminary work or evidence of interest in tobacco policy); and
- One community organization experienced in tobacco policy advocacy (e.g. a California-based organization with demonstrated organizational tobacco policy priority and/or policy expertise).

These individuals may all serve as principal investigators for the Center, each with their own grant or one may serve as the prime grantee with sub-awards to each collaborating institution. Regardless of the financial arrangement and infrastructure, the Center partners are expected to develop a shared governance plan that details decision making steps and authority as it relates to all aspects of the Center activities and maintain close communication and engagement. Only one of the Center research partners (e.g. the emerging researcher) should be from an academic institution in an under-resourced area in central or rural California.

Demonstrated Multi-sectoral Expertise. Multi-sectoral collaborations that engage diverse stakeholders which are impacted by tobacco policy and tobacco industry influences will increase the relevance of the research conducted within the Centers and serve as a resource for the larger communities in California. Centers should demonstrate, through core Center leadership, affiliated researchers, advocates and policy strategists, experience with tobacco control policy and research to address emergent tobacco policy needs and requests received through the Rapid Response mechanism. Multidisciplinary and varying research methodologists, community organizations and advocates that represent the entire Center’s geographic catchment area, government relations, health voluntaries and other policy and/or regulatory strategists with knowledge of the tobacco industry tactics, and communications experts that can assist in message development and dissemination should be represented in the Center.

Collaboration between Policy Research Centers. TRDRP will have an active role in this initiative through coordination and participation in cross-Center collaboration. The Centers are expected to participate collaboratively with each other throughout the project period. These opportunities include:

1. The TRPC Initiative Advisory Committee that will include, at minimum, each Center’s leadership, TRDRP staff and other key stakeholder groups. The role of the Advisory Committee will be to provide guidance to the Centers, identify and troubleshoot challenges, alert Centers to changes in California tobacco policies and assist in wide-spread dissemination and publicizing Centers’ achievements.

The Advisory Committee will convene at least two times each year. During the planning phase of the grant the successful awardees will collaborate with TRDRP to identify the membership of the Advisory Committee.

2. TRDRP will allocate approximately an additional \$100,000 in direct costs each year of the 4-year period for targeted Cross-Center Collaborative Projects that address issues that may impact or improve tobacco policy research. Each Center is required to participate in at least one of these projects over the 4-year period. The Advisory Committee, with input from each Center's constituencies, will identify the topics for these targeted cross-center collaborative projects. Sample projects could include focusing on improving data access and sharing or providing support for policy implementation.
3. To increase the probability of sustaining this funding mechanism for future cycles, it will be important to assess progress and barriers in achieving both the initiative and individual Center goals. TRDRP will conduct an independent External Evaluation of the TPRC Initiative to determine if it met its goal and to learn ways it can be enhanced as a sustainable funding mechanism. The evaluation will also help understand how policy research developed through the Centers can impact tobacco control efforts, build research capacity and create more informed communities. Centers will be expected to participate in this evaluation effort by providing their insight and best practices in implementing Center objectives.
4. The Tobacco Policy Research Centers (TPRC) Award supports the development of collaborative centers to conduct and disseminate tobacco policy research that will impact local policy and its bi-directional influence on state and national tobacco policy, through building capacity at the community and academic level in under-resourced areas of rural and/or central California. In order to ensure these Centers will be effective and their methods are feasible, each Center should incorporate a Planning Phase equivalent to the first three months of the project period, where Centers must finalize and implement their Rapid Response mechanism and their stakeholder outreach/input plan.

In addition to these key requirements, all Centers are expected to have the following four cores within its infrastructure:

Administration. The Administrative Core will provide oversight and infrastructure support for research and dissemination activities. The administrative core will coordinate communication; provide logistical support for the Center leadership; and participate in cross-Center activities (including the Advisory Committee). The shared governance of the Center between partners/Principal Investigators should be described in the application.

The assessment of progress of each funded Center's mission and goals is expected. As such, each Center will be expected to develop its own quality improvement and self-assessment strategies to understand how the Center was able to achieve its goals and what barriers challenged this achievement.

Project Support/Implementation. The Project Support/Implementation Core should manage the implementation of the policy research studies conducted within the Center including providing statistical and other research design support, if needed. The two main policy research studies for each Center are:

1. *Longer-Term Policy Research Studies:* The Center leadership (including the experienced and emerging researcher and community/advocacy organization) will develop and submit at the time of the application, one high impact project in support of the Center's mission that allows for necessary guidance and mentorship for the emerging researcher, while ensuring successful completion of research to lead to publication of results, dissemination of results to stakeholders, and impact on tobacco policy. Project duration and level of support should be no more than \$200,000 direct costs per year and should be strongly justified based on scientific literature and policy relevance. The proposed research project should achieve or advance work towards achieving high impact within one or more stated TRDRP research priorities. Proposals should include sound background information, hypotheses and substantial and promising preliminary or supporting data. The longer term research project should have relevance to local policy in an under-resourced area of rural and/or central California.

2. *Rapid Response Research:* A rapid response mechanism to receive and disseminate important and time-sensitive policy research is a critical component of the TPRC award. Applicants are required to propose a mechanism that will support rapid response research to emerging tobacco policy questions continuously each year during the four-year grant period. A rapid response mechanism should be responsive to policy questions that require analysis in a two-week to six-month window. The identification and formulation of emerging policy research questions should be conducted in collaboration with the Center's community partners and with larger community input. Although the longer term research project should focus on local policy in an under-resourced area of rural or central California, the rapid response mechanism is expected to address the wider-range of policy needs throughout California.

Investigators or teams that apply should demonstrate their commitment to the following:

- Applying a transdisciplinary approach to issues such that the tools, methods and conceptual frameworks of different fields are leveraged to achieve new knowledge
- Working with community groups to develop effective translation and dissemination plans for the data generated in the research project
- Completing the research at a rapid pace, recognizing that there are decision-making cycles (such as the legislative cycle) that the research needs to be responsive to
- Sharing findings with community members and in lay documents before and possibly in lieu of publishing in peer-reviewed journals
- Being flexible in determining how to answer the research needs and work cooperatively with stakeholders to ensure that the methodology will result in findings that meet the needs of the community

The budgetary expectation for the Rapid Response mechanism is approximately \$150,000 direct costs (divided into several projects) each year over the entire project period.

Community Input/Dissemination. It is expected and required that the Center will integrate partners from academic institutions, community and advocacy organizations and health voluntaries through its Community Input/Dissemination core. Close collaborative partnerships between Center members are essential for the success and impact of policy research at the local level as well as state and national tobacco policy. It is also expected that the Centers will extend their reach past the member organizations and personnel by engaging in mechanisms to solicit input from the larger communities within the Center's geographic catchment area on policy issues and disseminating results of research pertinent to them. The Center must also describe its expertise, access to communities or catchment areas, reach to priority populations and to under-resourced areas of rural and/or central California.

Applicants must propose strategies and activities for the timely input on research topics and when research is done, dissemination among Center stakeholders and others throughout California. The extent of community input and dissemination should take into account the specific needs and relevant delivery mechanisms for engagement for the Center's stakeholders and consultants. At minimum, there should be a process to collect input from Center members, participating organizations, other key community/advocacy organizations within the catchment area, and local community members for input on policy priorities that may be addressed through the Rapid Response mechanism as well as to disseminate existing information about tobacco-related policies and other issues affecting their communities.

Funded Centers will be expected and responsible for disseminating findings and policy recommendations in a timely manner to their catchment communities, policymakers, Advisory Committee, TRDRP, and other key stakeholders (i.e. Tobacco Education and Research Oversight Committee, California Departments of Public Health and Education, local education agencies and local incentive awardees) with customized messaging through appropriate communication and dissemination methods. Communication methods include, but are not limited to, policy briefs, hearings and white papers, webinars, public forums, websites and traditional and social media including policy blogs. Policy findings and recommendations should be disseminated with appropriate caveats and practical applications for the various stakeholder group needs and uses for the results.

Training and Capacity Building. Tackling the complex issues that will lead to tobacco policy requires a diverse, well-trained scientific workforce. Training and mentoring opportunities for emerging researchers are required in these Centers. Centers are also encouraged to find opportunities for post-doctoral fellows and mid- and senior-level researchers new to tobacco control policy research science that are complementary to the overall mission and goals of the Center. The Center may offer opportunities to community members/advocates who may want to participate in research or learn research fundamentals to assess the needs in their communities or measure impact of their own tobacco-related programs. Opportunities may include seminars, workshops, and/or other activities that promote the recruitment, advancement, and retention of investigators and advocates in tobacco-related policy research.

Tobacco Policy Research Award Details

Anticipated start date: August 1, 2018

Maximum award amount: \$3,000,000 (total direct cost cap) or \$750,000 (total direct cost cap per year)

Maximum duration: 4 years

Allowable direct costs: Salaries, fringe benefits, supplies, equipment, travel.

Project-related travel: As needed (must be fully justified).

Advisory Committee meetings: Travel and related meeting expenses (at least two annual meetings are mandatory)

Cross-Center Collaborative Projects. There will be approximately an additional \$100,000/year (direct cost cap) for targeted collaborative projects. Each Center will be required to participate in at least one cross-center project.

Indirect Costs. Non-UC institutions are entitled to full F&A of the Modified Total Direct Cost base (MTDC); UC institutional F&A is capped at 25% MTDC. Allowable expenditures in the MTDC base calculation include salaries, fringe benefits, materials and supplies, services, travel, and up to the first \$25,000 of each sub-grant or subcontract (regardless of the period covered by the sub-grant or subcontract). Equipment, capital expenditures, charges for patient care and tuition remission, rental costs, scholarships, and fellowships as well as the portion of each sub-grant and subcontract in excess of \$25,000 shall be excluded from the modified total direct cost base calculation. See below for additional discussion on indirect on subcontracts.

For indirect costs for award subcontracts

- Subcontracts to UC Campuses are capped at 25% Modified Total Direct Costs (MTDC).
- Subcontracts to Non-UC institutions may utilize their institution's federally approved (DHHS) F&A rate on a MTDC cost basis. In the absence of a federally negotiated rate agreement, a de minimus rate of 10% should be utilized, unless an equivalently documented F&A rate for the institution is provided and approved by the UCOP Research Grants Program Office.
- For subcontracts awards to UC-managed National Labs (LBNL, LANL, LLNL), please contact the TRDRP Program Officer.

Budgetary Expectations. Awards for TRDRP Tobacco Policy Research Centers are up to \$750,000 per year in direct costs for up to four years. Applicants must allocate a minimum of \$150,000 direct costs per year for rapid response research studies. One longer-term research project must be planned and is expected to be a minimum of \$200,000 in direct costs per year.

Eligibility

Principal Investigators. The submitted application must identify at least one lead academic investigator with tobacco policy experience or expertise; at least one lead emerging academic investigator and at least one lead community/advocacy organization with experience in tobacco policy. The lead 'experienced' academic investigator should have research and policy expertise

and publications related to the stated Center mission and goals and have an appointment at a California-based academic institution. The lead ‘experienced’ California-based community/advocacy organization should have demonstrated work in tobacco control policy through their programs and other organizational efforts. Each Center should have at least one ‘emerging’ investigator from an academic institution in an under-resourced area of central or rural California. This emerging investigator should have demonstrated interest and/or preliminary work in tobacco policy research and must have an assistant professor or higher appointment at the academic institution. TRDRP will also consider an experienced researcher in an under-resourced area of central or rural California, with the other Center leaders in other areas. One of the researchers must have an appointment at an academic institution located in an under-resourced area in rural or central California.

Combined all three investigators must demonstrate the extent of their ‘reach’ including specific rural and/or central regions of California and be able to describe how they represent and have access to these geographic catchment areas. Each academic investigator must have an appointment and principal investigator status at a California research institution with the emerging investigator appointed to an institution in rural or central California. The community/advocacy organization investigator must have a leadership or Director-level appointment and the institution must be based in California.

If funded, each of the three key collaborating partners (experienced and emerging researchers and community/advocacy organization) may elect to separately receive grants from TRDRP. If appropriate, other experts or institution(s) may participate through subcontract(s). Principal investigators from each of the participating organizations must commit to the TRDRP project a minimum of 1.2 person-months of effort for a 12-month appointment or equivalent effort for each of the project years.

Review Criteria

This is an open competition and grant applications will be peer-reviewed according to the following criteria:

Criteria-1 (30% scoring weight)

Responsiveness to intent of the award type: Does the application identify at least one clear policy focus and goal? Does the application propose activities aimed at forming a collaborative center with multi-disciplinary teams of researchers working in partnership with advocates, community members, policymakers and other key stakeholders to identify, respond and disseminate policy research that address local tobacco policy issues and their potential bi-directional relationship with state and national policy? Does the application include in its focus, the local policy needs in the under-resourced areas of rural or central California? Is the signature research project fully developed rather than pilot or exploratory? Does the application propose a community engagement plan that allows for equitable input by the Center’s constituencies? Does the applicant describe how the Rapid Response mechanism will lead to the Center’s ability to inform California tobacco policy? Is the functional capacity of the Center’s cores clearly described?

Potential for the proposed work to inform policy: The potential for achieving a clear, short-term and long-term impact on the tobacco policy focus at the local, state or national level. To what extent can the funders expect the proposed Center’s mission and goals are actionable and achievable within the project period to produce short-term and long-term impact on the specific local tobacco policy focus in rural or central California? To what extent can the proposed Center be expected to contribute to actionable policy recommendations that reduce tobacco health disparities and help build research and community capacity in under-resourced areas, especially rural and/or central California?

Criteria-2 (30% scoring weight)

Longer Range Research Project: To what extent is the proposed research project directly related to and conceptually integrated with the policy focus of the Center? Are the conceptual framework, design (including composition of study population and strength of recruitment plan), methods, and analyses adequately developed, well integrated, well-reasoned, and appropriate to the mission, goals and aims of the project? Does the applicant acknowledge potential problem areas and consider alternative strategies? Are the sample sizes identified adequate to answer proposed research question(s)? Is there a power analysis and is it appropriate to the study design? Are the variables clearly identified and testable? Will the Project Support/Implementation Core provide adequate infrastructure to support all research activities? Will the Community Input/Dissemination Core provide appropriate communications of research findings to Center constituencies?

Criteria-3 (40% Scoring weight)

Collaboration: Are procedures identified to establish or strengthen collaborative partnerships? How feasible and effective will the shared governance plan be to implement Center cores and the Center’s proposed mission and goals? Are researchers, advocates, and other stakeholders prepared to work together for an extended period of time?

Expertise: Are the investigators well-suited and meet the eligibility criteria to carry out this work? Is the work proposed appropriate to the experience levels of the Center leadership and other affiliated members? Does the investigative team bring complementary and integrated expertise to the project (if applicable)? Do the investigators demonstrate access to the population within their catchment areas including rural or central California?

Community Input and Dissemination Plan: Does the applicant propose a sound approach to engaging communities affected by tobacco use in either a collaborative partnership or by proactively informing groups about the nature and significance of the research and research outcomes within their Center’s catchment area? To what extent does the dissemination of relevant results of funded research include channels and tools targeting tobacco control advocates, policymakers, and the general public? Will the proposed collaborative relationship and communication pathways empower advocates and community members to be engaged in the identification of policy topics and offering suggestions for dissemination avenues?

Rapid Response: Has the team included additional affiliated investigators, advocates and policy strategists in the Center to address diverse policy topics that may be provided through Rapid Response? Does the team have a feasible plan in place to respond quickly to research topics in their area? Is their proposed plan feasible? Does the team have the facilities and resources (e.g., demonstrated immediate access to relevant datasets and sufficient research personnel to be allocated in a timely way) available to carry out their response plan? Will the plan produce rigorous research quickly (at least 6 months or less) from the project start to dissemination of the findings?

Additional Review Criteria

Reviewers will evaluate the following additional items while determining scientific and technical merit, and in providing an overall impact score, but will not give separate scores for these items.

Protection of Human Subjects from Research Risk: If human subjects are involved, protections from research risk relating to their participation in the proposed research will be assessed.

Inclusion of Women, Minorities and Children in Research: If human subjects are involved, the adequacy of plans to include subjects of all genders, all racial and ethnic groups (and subgroups), and children as appropriate for the scientific goals of the research will be assessed. Plans for the recruitment and retention of subjects will also be evaluated.

Relevance of the proposed research to a tobacco-related area: Assess whether the projects' relationship with tobacco-related diseases or tobacco control is high, somewhat related, or not related.

NOTE: In addition to the merit of the proposals, the geographic balance and distribution of the proposed Centers may be used as a criterion for the selection of Centers to be funded.

Contact Information for Inquiries

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