

## **Rapid Response Research to Accelerate Policy Award**

### **General Overview of Award Mechanism**

Although California is a leader in local efforts to advance tobacco control, some communities are much further ahead in the adoption of tobacco policies. Often communities benefit from local coalitions that are active in advancing policy. This award mechanism is designed to encourage communities to examine ways they can reduce tobacco use, under-age access, and tobacco product exposure through local policy actions.

The Rapid Response Research to Accelerate Policy Award will support research and community teams to work together on common tobacco-policy aims. The research conducted under this award mechanism can be descriptive, analytical, or address causal relationships among new or existing policies and tobacco-related outcomes. A particular emphasis should be placed on informing policies that reduce tobacco-related health disparities.

Applicants should consider both using existing data and collecting new information to help inform policy research questions. For example, a community considering tobacco flavor restrictions will benefit from examining existing data on similar policies in local areas and from primary data collection within the community in question.

### **Award Purpose**

This award supports a two-year, pilot research grant to build partnerships in order to plan and conduct meaningful research intended to reduce community-level tobacco use. This grant type has multiple requirements, including a collaborative research partnership comprised of a Community co-PI and an Research Organization co-PI to gather preliminary data on tobacco policy research questions of importance to the community of interest. There must be a clearly stated intention and plan to sustain the community-research partnership, and an intention to apply for follow-on funding after the pilot phase grant expires.

Applicants will be required to create research questions from one of the following tobacco policy areas: 1. Tobacco product flavor bans and restrictions, 2. Restricting tobacco product availability in retail locations, 3. Protecting nonsmokers from secondhand nicotine or cannabis smoke or aerosol, 4. Evaluation of strategies to prevent the deposition of and incentivize the removal of tobacco product waste from the California environment.

Applicants should describe a mechanism to evaluate time-sensitive policy research questions that can be examined in a short turn around. A research policy question evaluated in 1 to 6 months is considered a rapid response.

Applicants should describe how the research findings would support local policy actions. Applicants should describe plans for use and dissemination of findings in preparation of policy

recommendations to communities, policymakers, and other key stakeholders. Communication methods and deliverables may include fact sheets, policy briefs, community presentations, white papers, webinars, websites, policy blogs, news stories and social media. Policy findings and recommendations should include appropriate caveats and practical applications for the various stakeholder group needs and uses for the results. All applicants are encouraged to include and budget for team members that will facilitate policy creation. Inclusion of personnel on the research team or letters of support from individuals directly engaged with informing or creating policy is strongly encouraged.

## **Key Components and Requirements**

For this award type, there will be two separate budgets: one budget for the Research Organization co-PI managed by their university or institution and a separate budget for the Community co-PI managed by their institution or organization.

One organization will be responsible for officially submitting grant materials. It is up to the applicant research team to decide if the community co-PI or research organization co-PI institution will officially submit the grant application.

**Eligibility:** The following criteria apply to any grant awarded by TRDRP. Please review our website for the most current information about TRDRP's eligibility criteria for grant awards, located here: <http://trdrp.org/funding-opportunities/index.html#trdrp>. Investigators from California not-for-profit organizations are eligible for TRDRP funding, including but not limited to community-based organizations, colleges, universities, hospitals, laboratories, research institutions, local health departments, voluntary health agencies, health maintenance organizations and other tobacco control groups. The sponsoring institution, in accordance with its own policies and procedures, should designate each co-principal investigator (co-PI). The co-PIs must supervise the research project and any trainees directly and in person. U.S. citizenship is not a requirement for eligibility. Please note: TRDRP does not award grants to for-profit organizations.

In accordance with UC policy, academic co-PIs who are UC employees and who receive any part of their salary through UC must submit grant proposals through their UC campus contracts and grants office. Exceptions must be approved by the UC campus where the PI is employed. Applicants at California-based Nonprofit Institutions: TRDRP will accept applications from PIs at non-profit organizations or institutions, if the organization can manage the grant and demonstrate financial health. The organization must also meet our liability insurance requirements. If the application is recommended for funding the University will collect additional information, such as tax ID numbers and financial reports, to review the organization during the pre-funding process to ensure all financial management and project management eligibility criteria can be met.

**Research Partnership:** Equitable research partnerships can include community-based organizations (CBOs), nonprofit organizations, universities, and private research institutions. **Community Partner:** For this award type, a California CBO must be named and will be

responsible for the fiscal management of the community partner budget. The CBO is required to appoint or approve a community co-principal investigator (co-PI) for this award type. The community co-PI represents the community organization and acts as the lead community researcher. **Research Partner:** A research partner can be university faculty or a community-oriented research scientist with an appointment at a private research institution. For this award, a California academic or research institution must be named and will be responsible for the fiscal management of the research partner budget. The research co-PI must have an appointment and PI status at a university or research organization. Research scientists and community-oriented researchers working at a non-university research organization can serve in this role. PI status permits the research applicant access to their institution's infrastructure support for managing research grants.

### Award Details

- **Maximum award amount per year:** \$200,000 (direct costs)
- **Maximum duration:** 2 years
- **Allowable direct costs:** Salaries, fringe benefits, supplies, sub-contracts,\* equipment,\*\*
- **Travel:**
  - **Project-related travel:** As needed (must be fully justified)
  - **Travel to TRDRP conference:** \$750 (mandatory)
  - **Scientific conference travel:** \$2,000 per year (excluding a mandatory allocation of \$750 in one year of the project for travel to the TRDRP conference)
- **Indirect costs:** Full indirect costs are permitted for non-UC institutions. Indirect costs to UC campuses are set at 30 percent.

\*All out-of-state sub-contracts and collaborations must be well justified; please note that funding for out-of-state expenses are extremely limited and TRDRP does not encourage such expenses.

\*\*Any item costing \$5,000 or more

Award requirements:

- Applicants must have a PI-status at the sponsoring institution
- Awardees are required to commit at least 10 percent of their effort each year to activities supported by this award
- U.S. citizenship is not a requirement

**Future mechanism:** Although the current funding opportunity focuses on pilot phase research questions and allows for the building and strengthening of rapid policy research partnerships, TRDRP plans to offer a future funding opportunity that allows for fully developed partnerships and research plans (including hypotheses, based on preliminary data, and complex study designs) in future TRDRP grant cycles. The pilot research should demonstrate proof-of-concept that the rapid policy research team can identify a broader range of tobacco policy issues of importance within the local community, adequately address those issues through rigorous yet timely research, and disseminate findings to key stakeholders that can use them to inform local tobacco policies..

## Review Criteria

### Criteria Set-1 (40 percent scoring weight) Policy Research Objectives

- **Policy Objective:** Is the Policy objective clearly stated and achievable? Will the Pilot research activity prepare the collaborative team to pursue further policy issues and to apply for future funding? Are the research questions clear and appropriate for a Rapid Policy Research Pilot award?
- **Background, Significance, and Relevance to a Tobacco-Related Area:** Does this study address one policy focus area and is there evidence that the problem is of concern in the community of interest? Does the relevant literature summarize, synthesize, and support the proposed research activity? Is the rationale underlying the proposed research question(s) well supported and appropriately contextualized?
- **Policy Research Plan:** Does the applicant clearly describe the Policy area to be examined? Does the applicant describe a mechanism to evaluate policy research questions of interest? Does the applicant acknowledge potential problem areas and consider alternative strategies? Is there a potential to achieve a short-term impact on tobacco policy at the local level? Is there a direct connection with individuals that inform or create policy?
- **Milestones:** Are project milestones well defined and are measures appropriate for assessing the success of the pilot phase award? Is the proposed work feasible?

### Criteria Set-2 (40% scoring weight) Collaboration and Dissemination

- **Collaboration:** Is the collaboration clear and likely to lead to project success? Is the communication plan adequate to keep the community-based organization involved in the research? Are there plans to seek input and guidance from the community? Is there a clear decision-making process for important project activities?
- **Potential for the Proposed Work to Benefit the Community:** Does the pilot research activity have potential to lead to development of a policy implementation or policy change even if additional funding is necessary?
- **Community Engagement:** Does the applicant propose a sound approach to engaging communities affected by tobacco use? Will the team obtain feedback from the community or community-oriented researchers about the project and its findings? Does the dissemination of findings include channels and tools targeting clinicians, public health practitioners, educators, advocates, policymakers, or the public?

- **Dissemination Approaches and Sustainability Plan:** Is there a robust plan to ensure research results are used to inform local policy? Are there plans to disseminate findings from the project to the community of interest? Will the community co-PI be involved in interpreting research findings or comprehending what findings mean for the community?
- **Statement of Future Goals:** Are the future research goals clear, reasonable, and do they consider perspectives from the community of interest? Are there plans to apply for follow-on grant funding?

### **Criteria Set-3 (20% scoring weight) Resources**

- **Investigative Team:** Are the co-principal investigators and other key personnel listed in the grant proposal appropriately trained and well-suited to carry out community-based research? Are the roles and responsibilities of the partners clearly defined? Is the work proposed appropriate to the experience level of the co-principal investigators and other co-investigators (if any)? Do the investigators demonstrate access to the research population of interest? Does the team include the breadth of expertise needed to ensure that critical policy issues are identified and that the research findings will be directly translated to policy development or recommendations?
- **Environment, Facilities, and Resource Availability:** How will the community locations in which the research will occur contribute to the probability of success? Does the proposed pilot project utilize unique features of the community, institutions, or organizations involved in the research and/or utilize useful collaborative arrangements to resource the project? Is there evidence of research institutional support and community-based organizational support?

### **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:** Rapid response policy research can be a challenge when a timely IRB review is required. If appropriate, applicants should describe how they would seek human subject approval.
- **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.