

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA): A SCIENTIFIC EVALUATION OF THE CALIFORNIA TOBACCO USE AND PREVENTION EDUCATION PROGRAM

Grant Period: July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2019
Cost Limit: \$1,200,000

Funding provided by the California Department of Education (CDE), Coordinated School Health and Safety Office (CSHSO); California Department of Public Health (CDPH), California Tobacco Control Program (CTCP); University of California, Tobacco-Related Disease Research Program (TRDRP)

Schedule and Timeline

October 6, 2014	RFA release date
October 28, 2014	Letter of Intent (LOI) to submit an application is due and must be submitted online to Proposal Central by 12:00 p.m. Pacific Daylight Time (PDT). Late letters will NOT be accepted.
October 28-31, 2014	Staff contact and discuss LOI with applicants (if clarification is needed)
By November 3, 2014	Applicants informed of LOI final status
January 15, 2015	FULL GRANT APPLICATIONS MUST BE SUBMITTED ONLINE TO Proposal Central BY 12:00 P.M. PACIFIC STANDARD TIME (PST). Late applications will NOT be accepted. Paper or fax submissions will NOT be accepted.
January 16 – May 28, 2015	Review Process
No later than May 29, 2015	Evaluator selected and notified
July 1, 2015	Grant begins

Submit questions to:

Norval Hickman, Ph.D., M.P.H.
Social and Behavioral Sciences Program Officer
Tobacco-Related Disease Research Program
University of California, Office of the President
Office number: 510-987-9032
Norval.Hickman@ucop.edu

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PURPOSE

The purpose of this Request for Applications (RFA) is to solicit applications from investigative evaluation teams to conduct a rigorous, scientific evaluation into the impact of the California Tobacco Use and Prevention Education (TUPE) program activities and to elucidate school district level, process-related factors that speak to the success and/ or lack of success of the program and provides actionable recommendations to the California Department of Education (CDE), Coordinated School Health and Safety Office (CSHSO) for program planning and policy revision.

The grant funded through this RFA is anticipated to be collaboratively funded by the California Department of Education (CDE), Coordinated School Health and Safety Office (CSHSO); California Department of Public Health (CDPH), California Tobacco Control Program (CTCP), and the University of California Office of the President (UCOP), Tobacco-Related Disease Research Program (TRDRP)¹. The term for the evaluation work will be 4 years with initiation of the grant on July 1, 2015 and termination on June 30, 2019.

APPLICATION PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION PROCESS

Please review the due dates for required application materials located on the front-page of this RFA. Application submission is a two-step process requiring both 1) a Letter of Intent (LOI) that includes specific aims/objectives, brief statement of the background/significance, brief overview of the approach or methods for the evaluation research, expected outcomes, and checklist of involvement of human participants; and 2) a full-application submission, after LOI approval and any required revisions, submitted through [ProposalCENTRAL](#). LOI instructions and template will be available on ProposalCENTRAL and the LOI should not exceed 3 pages. The funders may contact applicants for clarification of the scope of work described in the LOI. Once an LOI is accepted, applicants will have access to all application materials and instructions that need to be completed for submission. These materials will be posted on [ProposalCENTRAL](#). TRDRP will provide a template for preparing the LOI as well as various sections of the full-application.

BACKGROUND

OVERVIEW OF THE TUPE PROGRAM

The purpose of the [TUPE program](#) is to reduce youth tobacco use by helping young people make healthful tobacco-related decisions through tobacco-specific, research-validated educational instruction and activities that build knowledge as well as social skills and youth development assets. Collaboration with community-based tobacco control programs is an integral part of program planning. The school, parents, and the larger community must be involved in the program so that students will be aware of a cohesive effort and concern for their health and, consequently, their ability to succeed in school.

The TUPE program has 5 major components which TUPE grant recipients are expected to fully implement. These components are:

- Enforce tobacco-free school policy,
- Implement an:
 - Evidence-based prevention program,
 - Evidence-based cessation intervention with community referrals,

¹ The University of California is working to secure funds from the CDE and CDPH. The awarding of any applications selected as a result of this RFP is contingent upon the provision of funds from all three anticipated funders.

- Include positive youth development in prevention and cessation activities,
- Conduct the California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS) every other year
 - This includes an analysis and the dissemination of the results of the analysis to administrators, advisory boards, and the community.

ABOUT THE FUNDING PROGRAMS

In 1988, California voters approved Proposition 99, The Tobacco Tax and Health Protection Act, which instituted a 25¢ per pack cigarette surtax and mandated that the University of California (TRDRP), the Department of Public Health (CTCP), and the California Department of Education (CDE) be allocated the tobacco tax revenue collected to address issues of tobacco consumption and its consequences in the state.

California Department of Education (CDE): The CDE funds the TUPE program through a 3-year grant, which supports tobacco prevention and cessation programs in grades six through twelve through a competitive application process for tobacco-specific student instruction, reinforcement activities, special events, and intervention and cessation programs for students (<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/he/at/tupeoverview.asp>). All California Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) that are certified as having a fully implemented tobacco-free school district board policy are eligible to apply for TUPE funding. TUPE programs are locally developed and vary in delivery of activities, but they are expected to align with the federal Principles of Effectiveness, the recommended California guidelines for tobacco prevention in [Getting Results](#) and the [Health Framework for California Public Schools](#) (PDF; 2MB).

California Tobacco Control Program (CTCP): The Mission of the CTCP is to improve the health of all Californians by reducing illness and premature death attributable to the use of tobacco products. Through leadership, experience, and research, CTCP empowers statewide and local health agencies to promote health and quality of life by advocating social norms that create a tobacco-free environment. CTCP is charged with funding the evaluation of TUPE activities.

Tobacco-Related Disease Research Program (TRDRP): The TRDRP funds research that enhances understanding of tobacco use, prevention and cessation, the social, economic, and policy-related aspects of tobacco use, and tobacco-related diseases in California. TRDRP's mission is to reduce the human and economic costs of tobacco use through innovative research and information dissemination. TRDRP has co-funded grants with CDE on school-focused tobacco prevention and cessation research projects.

BACKGROUND LITERATURE ON YOUTH TOBACCO USE AND PREVENTION

Cigarette smoking prevalence among California high school students has been on the decline since 2000 (CA Tobacco Control Program, 2013) and California youth smoking rates are lower than the overall estimate for U.S. youth (10.5% vs. 15.7%, respectively) ([CDC, 2014](#)). However, U.S. high school students are smoking cigarettes at the lowest rate in 22 years ([CDC, 2014](#)), which suggests youth have switched from cigarettes to Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS) and cigars at an escalating rate ([CDC, 2013](#)). Although cigarette smoking rates are at a historic low currently, the prevalence of cigar smoking among U.S. high school males is 23% ([CDC, 2014](#)) and youth are consuming newer, more technologically advanced nicotine delivery systems. ENDS and cigars are not currently regulated by the Food and Drug Administration ([FDA, 2014](#)). The tobacco control community needs a clearer understanding of the magnitude and trends of non-cigarette tobacco product use and the helpfulness of evidence based tobacco prevention and anti-tobacco education efforts in curtailing this public health risk.

The large reduction in youth cigarette smoking prevalence in the 1990s and up until the early 2000s is laudable and associated with the comprehensive tobacco control efforts statewide. Unfortunately, little is known about the impact that statewide youth tobacco prevention and cessation education programs delivered in school settings had on driving down the prevalence. Little research has been done on the effectiveness of comprehensive anti-tobacco programs on preventing cigarette use and increasing cessation for youth. There was one program evaluation study that examined the long-term efficacy of the *Click City®: Tobacco* program among middle school students in Oregon and found that the program reduced intentions and willingness to smoke cigarettes ([Andrews, Gordon, Hampson, et al., 2014](#)). The effect of the program on reducing willingness to smoke was larger in the 7th grade cohort than in the 6th grade cohort, and the program did not result in reductions on intentions to chew tobacco. One limitation of this study is that it included primarily Caucasian students; therefore, the efficacy demonstrated in Oregon may not generalize to youth of diverse racial/ethnic groups in California.

Cigarette smoking prevalence does not capture the entire picture of youth experiences with tobacco and nicotine. Products such as little flavored cigars, ENDS, and smokeless tobacco (e.g., chewing tobacco) are prevalent among youth and on the rise. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported an increase from 3.3% to 6.8% between 2011 and 2012 in students in grades 6-12 who had tried e-cigarettes (CDC, 2013). Adolescents perceive e-cigarettes to be less harmful than cigarettes ([Ambrose, Rostron, Johnson, et al., 2014](#)). Youth who use nonconventional tobacco products such as e-cigarettes and hookah have lower rates of intentions to quit using tobacco compared to cigarette smoking youth ([Tworek, Schauer, Wu, et al., 2014](#)), and there is evidence that youth tend to be polytobacco users (i.e., they have used multiple types of tobacco products concurrently such as e-cigarettes, cigars, and/or cigarettes) ([Apelberg, Corey, Hoffman et al., 2014](#)).

The overall prevalence of candy-flavored little cigars is 3.3% and more than two fifths of U.S. middle and high school smokers use flavored little cigars, according to findings from the 2011 National Youth Tobacco Survey, a nationally representative school-based survey of U.S. students in grades 6-12 ([King, Tynan, Dube et al., 2013](#)). This study also found higher rates of flavored little cigar use among non-Hispanic Caucasian youth who smoked cigarettes compared to African American and Latino youth who smoked cigarettes. Use was higher among lower income youth compared to youth from higher income households. Together, findings from studies suggest that marketing strategies and price setting by tobacco and ENDS companies are designed to attract a younger generation of alternative tobacco product users.

Researchers in the field have realized the dynamic nature of adolescent tobacco use, their increased sensitivity to tobacco product price and technological advances, and the multi-factorial aspects of successful anti-tobacco programs, which are affected by the larger context of where youth attend school, parental and peer influences, and the concentration of cheaper flavored tobacco products (chief among them menthol) near schools ([Henriksen, Schleicher, Dauphinee, & Fortmann, 2012](#)). School-based anti-tobacco programs are not delivered in a vacuum. Based on our feedback from stakeholders, it became clear that consideration of the school and school district context are important factors to consider in evaluating the impact of the TUPE program. Keeping in mind that grantees of the TUPE program have flexibility in what anti-tobacco programming they select, which is affected by other school district policies and priorities, it is clear that an examination of the school district setting more broadly is critical to understanding the implementation and impact of the TUPE program.

OVERVIEW OF SCOPE OF WORK

The funders are seeking a highly interactive team for the TUPE program evaluation. The evaluation team is expected to engage in regular communication with the funders as needed. While the evaluation work in this RFA occurs, a surveillance team based at the University of California, San Diego will be conducting annual surveillance of youth tobacco-related behaviors and outcomes in TUPE-funded and non-TUPE-funded schools. To reduce overlap and duplication of effort, the recipient of this RFA is expected to coordinate with the San Diego surveillance team to address some of the quantitative research questions. In addition to the CHKS conducted by TUPE grantees, the surveillance team will be conducting the [California Student Tobacco Survey](#) annually. Some of the coordination between the evaluator and surveillance team will involve linking evaluation data to the CSTS survey results. This will allow analysis of some of the quantitative outcomes (e.g., youth smoking and ENDS prevalence).

TUPE Evaluation Approach in Broad Terms

The funders expect the evaluation to be longitudinal, include qualitative and quantitative methods, result in reports that can inform improvements to the TUPE program, identify TUPE implementation and fidelity factors associated with the school district system, and link to youth-related outcomes (e.g., prevalence of tobacco and electronic cigarettes). The funders have a strong commitment to understanding the following broad questions:

- Who are TUPE program activities reaching?
- What impact are TUPE program activities having?
- To what extent are required components of TUPE fully implemented?
- How effective have we been at reaching our goals of preventing youth tobacco prevention and motivating cessation in California?
- How can we improve?

Expectations for Evaluation Team

The funders are committed to supporting efforts to understand and improve youth-focused, school-based tobacco prevention and cessation programs and policies in California. The evaluator is expected to:

- Collaborate with the funders to further develop and revise evaluation questions for TUPE-related programming and policies. For a list of evaluation questions under consideration, please see the following section below.
- Collaborate with the funders to refine the evaluation plan.
- Implement the evaluation plan.
- Modify evaluation plans and activities as requested by the funders.
- Request data and coordinate with the surveillance team at UC San Diego.
- Analyze qualitative and quantitative data collected and obtained from the surveillance team.
- Produce reports on process (e.g., school district system factors) and outcome evaluation questions.
- Produce reports on anti-tobacco policy recommendations for school districts and individual schools.
- Meet regularly with CDE, CTCP, and TRDRP staff to assess progress. See [Collaboration Between Evaluation Team and Funders](#) below.
- Provide technical assistance as requested by funders to individual TUPE programs regarding understanding and interpreting the evaluation findings and process.

- Manage budgets.
- Conduct data analyses upon request by the funders for reports and presentations.

Evaluation Research Questions for the TUPE Program

The California educational setting is diverse in regards to student composition, availability of resources, and school district policies and priorities. These factors add to the complexity of conducting an evaluation of TUPE that accurately represents the context and composition of California school systems.

Research questions were based on external stakeholder feedback, discussions among the funders, and the relevant scientific literature. The following questions have been identified by stakeholders as important for evaluation of the TUPE Program:

- What is the impact of TUPE program activities on youth prevalence of combustible and non-combustible tobacco and nicotine (e.g., electronic cigarettes) products?
- To what extent are the five required components of the TUPE program implemented in California schools? How do school district, socioeconomic, and demographic factors enhance or deter full implementation of the 5 required components of a TUPE grant?
- What is the variability in TUPE implementation and youth engagement at the school district level? How do these differences inform better programs for youth tobacco prevention and cessation?
- How does the implementation of youth tobacco prevention and cessation programs differ in schools with TUPE and non-TUPE funding?
- What are the best practices for implementing TUPE activities and school anti-tobacco policies?
- How does the school district culture, priorities, and initiatives impact implementation of the TUPE program?
- How are school anti-tobacco policies implemented and enforced and what is the variability between TUPE and non-TUPE schools? What types of enforcement mechanisms exist and what is the variability between school districts and individual schools? To what extent are violators of school anti-tobacco policy diverted into programs that promote positive youth development?
- Which TUPE activities provide the most benefit to students and are the most feasible to deliver in school settings?
- What are the best practices for obtaining buy-in from school districts and schools for youth tobacco prevention and cessation programs?
- What is the impact of receiving TUPE program funding for multiple years, being a recent TUPE grant recipient, and the discontinuation of funding? What TUPE activities sustained and discontinued after termination of funding?
- How should the TUPE program be modified to be consistent with standards and priorities for school districts?
- What modifications to TUPE would help with delivery of the program while considering organizational, cultural and logistical aspects of coordination with school districts?
- How sustainable are TUPE activities when considering the demands on teachers and school district climate and culture?
- How do statewide and national anti-tobacco campaigns increase or decrease the impact of TUPE program activities?

Collaboration Between Evaluation Team and Funders

The evaluator is expected to have a close, collaborative working relationship with CDE, CTCP, and TRDRP staff to review and implement the evaluation. The funders should be updated regularly on evaluation planning and progress, such as by sharing draft instruments and discussing issues identified in preliminary data analysis. Applicants should describe a plan for interacting with and maintain close communication with the funders, including, but not limited to in-person meetings, conference calls, or internet-based video conferences.

PROGRAMMATIC REQUIREMENTS AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

ELIGIBILITY

Only public or private not-for-profit organizations in California with the capacity and capability to conduct expert evaluation to the extent identified in this RFA are eligible. The investigative team must have the expertise and capacity to conduct a scientific evaluation of the TUPE program.

Expertise: The evaluation team must have demonstrated experience working in school-related settings. Prior funding to conduct school-based research or prevention activities is preferred but not required.

Capacity: The evaluation team is expected to work in a variety of school districts and school settings that represent urban and rural settings across southern, northern, and central valley regions of California.

COMPONENTS OF THE FULL APPLICATION

Forms and additional instructions will be provided after acceptance of a Letter of Intent and invitation to submit a full proposal. Below is preliminary information.

FUNDING INFORMATION

The maximum period of performance is 4 years. The grant start date is July 1, 2015 and end date is June 30, 2019.

BUDGET

The maximum allowable total costs for the entire period of performance are \$1.2 Million including allowable indirect costs. Evaluation team expenses, contractor fees, and all out-of-pocket expenses are not to exceed \$300,000 per year. Budgets stated in this proposal are based on a 12-month term (July 2015 – June 2016).

Grant funds will be released on an annual basis. A single budget summary and budget justification can be developed that includes all direct, indirect, and subcontractor costs for each year of the grant. For subcontractors, the scope of work and related costs must be described in detail in the budget justification. Budget forms will be made available after acceptance of the Letter of Intent.

Subcontracts

If applicants do not possess the capacity to accomplish the entire Scope of Work in-house, or if they wish to perform in collaboration with another entity, they may subcontract components of

the work (but subcontracting is not required). Applicants that propose subcontracting must identify subcontractor(s) and describe the role each would perform. The subcontractor(s) may be based outside of California only if the work could not be completed by another entity in California. Such proposed non-California subcontractor use must be adequately justified in the proposal. Subcontractors must be used on a temporary basis and subcontracting arrangements must not conflict with California government [Code 19130](#). Approval of subcontracts is contingent upon review by the funders. A modification to the subcontract arrangement would require prior approval to ensure the arrangement aligns with the policies of the funders regarding out-of-state subcontracts.

It is highly recommended that applicants discuss subcontract issues with the TRDRP Program contact listed below before submitting final application materials.

Indirect Cost Rates

The total budget maximum of \$1,200,000 is inclusive of indirect costs. The indirect cost rate is capped at the rate of 25.0% of a Modified Total Direct Costs (MTDC) base for the recipient of this RFA and all subcontracts included in the budget. The primary institution may recover indirect costs for managing subcontracts, but the indirect cost recovery is capped at the first \$25,000 of each subcontract for the duration of the award. For example, if a subcontract total cost is \$50,000, the primary institution can only request indirect costs on \$25,000 of the subcontract.

Reporting Requirements

An annual progress report will be required every year and due on the anniversary date of the award. In addition, a brief, interim progress report covering the first six months of each project year will be required and due at the half year mark. Preliminary and promising findings including identification of components of the TUPE program that should be modified must be reported to the funders in a timely manner through informal communication and written reports. Preliminary findings, interim, and annual reports must be communicated in a clear, compelling, and accurate manner that is accessible and understandable by multiple stakeholder audiences. Findings are expected to directly inform policy decisions that relate to improving the impact of TUPE program activities. Sustainable evaluation metrics are needed to continue to track TUPE activities after the evaluation period described in this RFA ends.

Data Sharing

The recipient of this RFA is expected to coordinate with the surveillance team and the funders to share instruments and data collected at all stages of the project. The recipient is expected to share interim and final raw datasets with the funders for internal analysis to verify reported findings and for analysis that could benefit the state of California or the TUPE Program. Any datasets that include student data must be de-identified. The recipient will maintain ownership of the data and decision-making authority for conducting analyses and preparing manuscripts for scientific publication.

Collaboration

A memorandum of understanding (MOU) describing in detail workflow issues and how the collaboration will work between the evaluation and surveillance teams is required after funding

decisions are finalized. Instructions for the MOU will be provided and discussed during the pre-award process.

Evaluation Advisory Group

To ensure the evaluation's responsiveness to stakeholder groups, an Evaluation Advisory Group (EAG) will be formed to provide guidance to the successful recipient on the evaluation study. The EAG will be created by the recipient of this RFA and must consist of representatives of interested stakeholder groups, such as, but not limited to County Offices of Education Coordinators, Grant District Superintendents, and school educators. It is expected that contract monitors from the CDE, TRDRP, and CTCP will be invited to attend EAG meetings as observers only. Contract monitors would not be members of the EAG nor vote on decisions under consideration by the group. The EAG will have the authority to make decisions and recommendations regarding the evaluation plan and materials.

The EAG is expected to meet at least quarterly either in person or via teleconference/web conference to monitor and discuss the evaluation team's progress and provide constructive feedback regarding overall progress towards achieving specific aims/objectives of the evaluation, materials and instruments that will be implemented in the field, strategies to enhance the relevance of the evaluation to inform policy and practice, interpretation of preliminary findings, modifications to the evaluation plan, and to advise the evaluator and funders on the dissemination of findings. The EAG composition should be described in enough detail in the submitted application for reviewers to assess the feasibility of convening and managing the group.

USE OF HUMAN PARTICIPANTS AND SAMPLES

The application in response to this RFA must include evidence of access, sample size details, and calculations. IRB approval will be required if direct interaction with youth is expected, as well as parental consent and informed assent from youth planning to participate in the evaluation. The use of de-identified collected data is acceptable. An IRB exemption notification is required for secondary data analysis.

COMPONENTS OF THE EVALUATION PLAN, PEER REVIEW PROCESS, AND REVIEW CRITERIA

COMPONENTS OF THE EVALUATION RESEARCH PLAN (UP TO 15 PAGES)

Components of the research plan for the TUPE evaluation proposal are described in detail below.

- 1. Specific Aims/ Evaluation Objectives:** List the short-term and broad, long-term objectives of the evaluation research and what the specific evaluation approach described in this proposal is intended to accomplish. State the research questions and/or hypotheses to be evaluated.
- 2. Background and Significance:** Briefly describe the background leading to the present proposal, critically evaluate existing knowledge, and specifically identify the gaps that the evaluation project is intended to address.

3. Evaluation Research Design, Approach, and Methods: Describe the evaluation research design and the methods to be used to accomplish the specific aims, objectives, and milestones of the project. Include how the data will be collected, analyzed, and interpreted. Describe any new methods and their advantage over existing methodologies. Include a theoretical or conceptual model that supports your approach and guides the reviewer through the logical, sequential steps of the evaluation and intended outcomes. Discuss the potential difficulties and limitations of the proposed procedures and describe alternative approaches to achieve the evaluation aims/objectives if obstacles are encountered over the course of the evaluation. Describe the inclusion of human participants. Point out any procedures, situations, or materials that may be dangerous to personnel and the precautions to be exercised. Approaches to achieve milestones listed in the Milestones Form must be explicitly described here. Any substantial collaboration with individuals not included in the budget should be described and documented with a letter of support from each collaborator uploaded to the Appendix.

Applicants must also describe:

- Proposed survey design and development plans, anticipated time periods for baseline and follow-up assessments, a data analysis plan that includes relevant statistical analyses, and data safety and monitoring procedures.

4. Collaboration: Describe a plan for developing a collaborative working relationship and maintaining close communication with the school districts, individual schools (if appropriate), TUPE surveillance team, and the External Advisory Group.

5. Use of Human Participants and Secondary Data Analysis: Any evaluation approach involving human participants must include evidence of access, sample size details and power analysis calculations (if relevant to study design), IRB approval status or plans including a timeline of expected approval, if needed. IRB approval is not required at time of application submission, but will need to be provided before any award is made. If the evaluation project involves analysis of de-identified secondary data collected from human participants, a review and determination letter from an IRB is still required.

6. External Advisory Group (EAG): Applicants must describe the proposed composition of the EAG, how the body will function, and the anticipated frequency of meetings. Include in as much detail as possible the names of EAG members and their role on the EAG committee. Letters of support from members willing to serve on the EAG committee should be collected and included in the Appendix. Letters of support are not required, but strongly encouraged.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY (UP TO 10 PAGES)

1. Evaluator Description of Qualifications and Experience

Evaluator Strengths and Experience: Describe the strengths and experience of the applicant organization, including accomplishments, evaluation of multiple independent and integrated programs, survey design, policy evaluation, training of program staff to collect evaluation data, data collection and analysis, project management, report production and delivery, and expertise on evaluation trends, changes, and recommendations for enhanced program delivery and effectiveness. **What makes your evaluation team different from other organizations, and why are you the best applicant organization to evaluate the TUPE Program?**

Applicants must also describe:

- Experience relevant to evaluating school-based programs, and/or experience relevant to designing and conducting evaluations of health policy initiatives or health programs. Applicants should describe familiarity in interacting with school districts, individual schools, afterschool programs, or other educational institutions; managing protocols/grants/contracts from the California Department of Education, Tobacco-Related Disease Research Program, California Tobacco Control Program, or similar public institutions.
- Experience adhering to standards for evaluation.
- Their evaluation philosophy, including the philosophy of the applicant organization with respect to evaluation work, as well as to client satisfaction and customer service.

2. Preliminary Evaluation Work: Provide an account of the applicant's preliminary evaluation work pertinent to the proposal and/or any other information that will help to establish the experience and competence of the evaluation researchers to pursue the proposed project.

- Applicants are encouraged to provide a list of evaluation projects completed, which includes evaluation of health policy initiatives or behavior change interventions.

3. Collaboration with CDE, CTCP, and TRDRP Staff: Describe a plan for maintaining close communication with the funding agencies (CDE, CTCP, and TRDRP), including but not limited to in-person meetings, phone, teleconference, or web conference meetings that occur at least monthly.

POTENTIAL FOR THE PROPOSED WORK TO INFORM PRACTICES AND POLICY (UP TO 5 PAGES)

1. Dissemination Plan: Recipients are expected to ensure that novel and promising findings that emerge from the evaluation be shared with the funding agencies in a timely manner. The evaluator and funders would discuss the appropriate time to release early stage findings to stakeholders. Applicants should outline a dissemination plan tailored to the expected processes and outcomes of the project.

Applicants must also describe:

- Their ability to evaluate processes that lead to policy change as well as the outcomes of policy change efforts.
- Plans to develop and disseminate interim and final reports that speak to impact and policy change.

2. Logic Model: Please provide a one-page graphic Logic Model in PDF format, indicating the evaluation components that will be tracked to assess the effectiveness of TUPE Program activities and inform institutional practices and policy. There is an option to link the logic model with the theoretical model or approach underlying the evaluation research. The Logic Model must be placed on the template, which will be available with other application materials in [ProposalCENTRAL](#).

Literature Cited (No Page Limit): List relevant references. Each reference must include the title, names of all authors, book or journal, volume number, page numbers, year of publication, and URL (hyperlink) to the source, if available. The references should include relevant and

current literature, relevant unpublished materials, and relevant presentations or websites. Be concise and select only those literature references pertinent to the proposed evaluation research.

Additional Required Application Materials

Templates for required application materials will become available after approval of the Letter of Intent.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH: The biographical sketch of investigators using the NIH format and should include current research funding. Limit: 4 pages per biographical sketch.

FACILITIES: Each investigator and subcontractor must provide a description of facilities and technologies available to them and the plan to share these with other members of the Evaluation Team and the Surveillance Team. Limit: 4 pages per investigator.

TIMELINE AND SPECIFIC MILESTONES: Include a table and associated narrative which outlines the specific outcomes and milestones expected for each aim separately for each sub-project. Limit: 2 pages.

PEER REVIEW PROCESS

Applications received in response to this RFA will be peer reviewed by a panel of relevant experts. These peer review experts will be drawn from outside of California to mitigate any potential conflicts of interest. The peer review procedures utilized to assess applications are modeled on the process used by the National Institutes of Health, and will be similar to those nominally used by the TRDRP. The peer review panel will assess the **Scientific Merit of the Evaluation Research Plan, the Organizational Capacity to conduct a rigorous program evaluation, and the Potential for the Proposed Work to Inform Practices and Policy.**

Although budget critiques are not part of the scoring criterion, peer reviewers will examine the budget and budget justification, making recommendations about the level of support necessary to carry out the proposed evaluation research work. The CDE, CTCP and TRDRP will determine final funding decisions. Applicants will be notified of the funding decision in May 2015.

In an event that an Exceptional application is not identified in the first peer review meeting, applicants might be invited to submit a revised application at a later date that would undergo peer review; such decisions, however, will be contingent upon availability of funds and other programmatic priorities.

REVIEW CRITERIA

Each submitted application will be assessed using the NIH scoring system described in the table below. Reviewers will assign a score to each domain: **Scientific Merit of the Evaluation Research Plan, the Organizational Capacity to conduct a rigorous program evaluation, and the Potential for the Proposed Work to Inform Practices and Policy.** Each domain will be scored separately and have a different weight (60% scoring weight for Scientific Merit, 20% scoring weight for Organizational Capacity, and 20% scoring weight for Potential to Inform Practices and Policy) that will contribute to a single composite score (range: 1 to 9).

NIH scoring system

SCORE	DESCRIPTOR	Strengths/Weaknesses
1	Exceptional	Extremely strong with essentially no weaknesses
2	Outstanding	Extremely strong with negligible weaknesses
3	Excellent	Very strong with only some minor weaknesses
4	Very Good	Strong but with numerous minor weaknesses
5	Good	Strong with at least one moderate weakness
6	Satisfactory	Some strengths but also some moderate weaknesses
7	Fair	Some strengths but with at least one major weakness
8	Marginal	A few strengths and a few major weaknesses
9	Poor	Very few strengths and a few major weaknesses

Scientific Merit of the Evaluation Research Plan (60% Scoring Weight)

Significance. Does the evaluation approach contribute to the overall scientific goals, objectives, and intent of this RFA? If the aims of the project are achieved, how will school-related tobacco control policy, practices related to the implementation of TUPE, and dissemination of information be improved?

Evaluation Research Strategy and Approach. Are the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses well-reasoned and appropriate to accomplish the specific aims of the evaluation project? Are potential problems, alternative strategies, and benchmarks for success presented? How well are the hypotheses or objectives, aims, experimental design, methods, and analyses developed and integrated? Are the theoretical or conceptual model and logic model appropriately developed and linked to intended outcomes? Does the applicant acknowledge potential problem areas and consider alternative tactics? To what extent are the proposed statistical plan, timeline, and milestones reasonable, measurable, and consistent with the specific aims and the intent of the RFA will be evaluated by reviewers? Are the plans for human subject participation, as well as the inclusion of children, justified in terms of the scientific goals and research strategy proposed?

Innovation. Does the application challenge and seek to shift current policy and practice paradigms by utilizing novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions? Are the concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions novel to one field of evaluation research or novel in a broad sense? Is a refinement, improvement, or new application of theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions proposed? Is innovation expected in approaching the proposed project?

Protections for Human Participants. For research that involves human participants but does not involve one of the six categories of research that are exempt under 45 CFR Part 46, the committee will evaluate the justification for involvement of human participants and the proposed protections from research risk relating to their participation according to the following five review criteria: 1) risk to participants, 2) adequacy of protection against risks, 3) potential benefits to the participants and others, 4) importance of the knowledge to be gained, and 5) data and safety monitoring.

For research that involves human participants and meets the criteria for one or more of the six categories of research that are exempt under 45 CFR Part 46, the committee will evaluate: 1)

the justification for the exemption, 2) human participants involvement and characteristics, and 3) sources of materials.

Inclusion of Women, Minorities, and Children. When the proposed project involves human participants, the committee will evaluate the proposed plans for inclusion of minorities and members of both genders, as well as the inclusion of children.

Organizational Capacity to conduct a Rigorous Program Evaluation of TUPE (20% Scoring Weight)

Investigator(s). Are the PIs, collaborators, evaluation team, and other key personnel well suited to the project? If Early Stage Investigators or New Investigators, do they have appropriate experience and training? If established, have they demonstrated an ongoing record of accomplishments that have advanced their evaluation expertise? How the levels of effort by the investigator(s) are appropriate to ensure success of this project? How the investigator(s) record(s) of accomplishment demonstrates his/her ability to accomplish the proposed evaluation research?

Environment. Will the environment in which the work will be done contribute to the probability of success? Are the organizational/ institutional supports, equipment and other physical resources available to the evaluation team adequate for the project proposed? Will the project benefit from unique features of the environment, participant populations, or collaborative arrangements?

Potential for the Proposed Work to Inform Practices and Policy (20% Scoring Weight)

To what extent can the funders expect the proposed evaluation work to:

- Have an impact on changing school-related policy regarding tobacco prevention and cessation for youth, and enforcement of anti-tobacco policy in school settings?
- Contribute to actionable recommendations that could be implemented by the CDE, state tobacco control program, inform research questions regarding youth tobacco prevention and cessation, or actions that could be taken by school districts or individual schools?
- Elucidate process factors that speak to the helpfulness of TUPE program activities and identify specific program activity strengths and areas for improvement?
- Establish a baseline measurement of school-related and youth-related variables that are associated with effective youth tobacco prevention and cessation activities.
- Lead to the development of metrics that can be used to evaluate TUPE program activities after the evaluation grant has been terminated?
- Connect, via the logic model provided, prevention and education inputs with intermediate and long-term behavioral outcomes (i.e. smoking prevalence, other tobacco product use.)
- Identify tobacco-related health disparities within youth populations, as well as opportunities for increasing health equity within school settings.

Non-scoring Review Criterion

Budget. Reviewers may recommend reductions or deletions, with justification for each, and will request that the applicant address any funding overlap issues. However, reviewers do not consider budget issues when assigning scores.

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR FUNDING AGENCIES

Norval Hickman (**Corresponding Funder**)
Social and Behavioral Sciences Program Officer
Tobacco-Related Disease Research Program
University of California, Office of the President
Ph: 510-987-9032
Norval.Hickman@ucop.edu

Jonathan Isler
Tobacco Control Evaluation Chief
California Tobacco Control Program
California Department of Public Health
Ph: 916-449-5483
Jonathan.Isler@cdph.ca.gov

John Lagomarsino
School Health Education Consultant
Coordinated School Health and Safety Office
California Department of Education
Ph: 916-323-1540
Jlagomarsino@cde.ca.gov