

**\*\*\*\*\*THIS IS A LIMITED COMPETITION CALL.  
APPLICATIONS ARE BY INVITATION ONLY.\*\*\*\*\***



## **2027 Maternal Smoking Cessation Initiative (MSCI) Award *Request for Applications***

### **Program Timeline**

A letter of intent is required for the MSCI grant type. Visit [Tobacco-Related Disease Research Program](#) for more information.

<b>Call Release</b>	July 1, 2026
<b>MSCI Applicant Webinar</b>	July 21, 2026, 10:00-11:00 a.m. PT
<b>Letter of Intent Deadline</b>	August 20, 2026, 12:00 p.m. (noon) PT
<b>Invitation to Full Application Announced</b>	September 8, 2026
<b>Full Partnered Application Deadline</b>	October 29, 2026, 12:00 p.m. (noon) PT
<b>Notification of Applicants</b>	April 2027
<b>Award Start Date</b>	July 1, 2027

### **Resources and Support for Applicants**

#### **MSCI Webinar**

July 21, 2026, 10:00-11:00 a.m. PT

Review the [Frequently Asked Questions](#).

## Contact Information for Inquiries

For questions related to this RFA, please contact:

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Additional programmatic and grant resources:

[trdrp@ucop.edu](mailto:trdrp@ucop.edu); [RGPOGrants@ucop.edu](mailto:RGPOGrants@ucop.edu)

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## Key Requirements and Recent Updates

- A Letter of Intent (LOI) is required for the MSCI Initiative. The LOI must identify both the Community Co-Principal Investigator and the Academic Co-Principal Investigator, including their respective organizational affiliations.
- All application materials are required to be uploaded in formats accessible to individuals with disabilities, including those using assistive technologies. Applicants are required to prepare and review their application materials for accessibility and ensure all submitted application materials comply with document-relevant Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 Level AA standards. Please contact your institution for information and resources on digital accessibility tools. Additional tips and links to useful accessibility resources may be found on the [UC Office of the President Electronic Accessibility website](#).

## I. MSCI Award: Advancing Equity-Centered, Translational Impact

The **Maternal Smoking Cessation Initiative (MSCI)** supports translational, equity-driven research that addresses persistent health disparities through community-engaged, evidence-based solutions. In alignment with the [2024 Surgeon General's Report](#), MSCI prioritizes interventions that expand access to culturally responsive commercial<sup>1</sup> tobacco product use cessation treatment for pregnant individuals in communities disproportionately burdened by commercial tobacco exposure, structural inequities, and adverse social determinants of health. By centering real-world relevance, collaboration, and sustainability, MSCI-aligned research aims to break cycles of preventable, intergenerational harm and improve maternal and infant health outcomes.

This Request for Applications (RFA) prioritizes research dedicated to developing, implementing, and evaluating culturally-tailored commercial\* tobacco cessation interventions specifically designed to improve health outcomes for pregnant individuals residing in communities disproportionately impacted by tobacco-related illness and adverse maternal outcomes. Such communities are often characterized by high rates of poverty, limited healthcare access, and other structural and social factors impacting community members.

Applicants will present a strong rationale for the selection of their study population, based on prevalence of tobacco-related illnesses, adverse maternal outcomes, or other factors such as those noted above. Applicants will also develop a defined plan for intervention development and implementation with the potential for long-term sustainability. TRDRP strongly encourages inclusion of community members and organizations representing the communities under study throughout all research stages, fostering collaboration from design inception to implementation.

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<sup>1</sup> \*Any reference to tobacco use among communities is specific to regular recreational use of commercial tobacco and not to be confused with ceremonial use of traditionally grown tobacco which is recognized as an important cultural and spiritual ritual within certain communities.

## II. MSCI Objectives

Aligned with the TRDRP strategic goals as described in the [TRDRP Five Year Strategic Plan](#), which are also referenced in the [2025-2026 Tobacco Education and Research Oversight Committee \(TEROC\) plan](#) and the [CA Endgame Initiative](#), which seeks to end the sale and use of all commercial tobacco products in the state, this RFA calls for research that focuses on reducing tobacco-related disease and adverse maternal outcomes among pregnant individuals in communities disproportionately burdened by commercial tobacco exposure. The MSCI advances TRDRP priorities by addressing tobacco-related health disparities, supporting cessation across all forms of commercial tobacco use, and generating policy- and practice-relevant evidence that can be rapidly translated to benefit vulnerable populations.

Consistent with the MSCI Objectives, this RFA prioritizes translational, community-engaged approaches that accelerate the movement of evidence into practice, strengthen research and community capacity, and promote sustainable, real-world impact. Competitive applications will emphasize interdisciplinary collaboration, equity-driven intervention development, and dissemination strategies that support implementation across healthcare and community settings.

### Objectives

- 1. Develop Equity-Centered, Culturally Responsive Cessation Interventions**  
Design and test behavioral cessation interventions that comprehensively address all forms of commercial tobacco use during pregnancy and the immediate post-partum period. Interventions should be grounded in relevant cultural frameworks and evidence-based theories of behavior change, tailored to the unique needs of disproportionately impacted communities.
- 2. Embed Community Engagement Throughout the Research Lifecycle**  
Actively engage pregnant individuals, community leaders, and community-based organizations in proposal development, intervention design, and testing to ensure cultural relevance, trust, and feasibility—advancing MSCI’s emphasis on community-engaged, translational research.
- 3. Enhance Recruitment, Retention, and Research Access for Vulnerable Populations**  
Implement innovative, culturally tailored strategies to engage, enroll, and retain pregnant individuals who face structural barriers to research participation. Clearly address processes for consent (including parental or guardian consent where applicable) and strategies to overcome logistical barriers, such as transportation and access to study clinics.

4. **Leverage Digital and Mobile Technologies for Scalable Cessation Support**

Explore the use of digital and mobile health tools to enhance outreach, engagement, and cessation support, while proactively addressing regulatory considerations, including potential Food and Drug Administration (FDA) review and authorization as appropriate.

5. **Advance Implementation-Focused Research and Sustainability**

Employ research designs that assess both effectiveness and implementation outcomes—such as hybrid effectiveness-implementation designs, pragmatic trials, and mixed-methods approaches. Incorporate implementation science metrics to evaluate feasibility, acceptability, fidelity, and contextual barriers and facilitators.

6. **Promote Long-Term Adoption and Public Health Impact**

Develop a comprehensive plan for dissemination, adoption, and sustainability of the intervention within real-world healthcare and community settings, reducing the time between evidence generation and uptake by practitioners, public health organizations, and pregnant individuals who can directly benefit from effective cessation strategies.

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### III. Applicant Resources

#### Available Data Sets and Surveillance Systems

##### State-Level (California) Data Sources

- California Department of Public Health (CDPH) – *Center for Health Statistics and Informatics (CHSI)*  
[Informatics](#)
- CDPH – *Maternal, Child, and Adolescent Health (MCAH) Division*  
[Resources](#)

##### National Surveillance and Survey Data

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) – *Pregnancy Mortality Surveillance System (PMSS)*  
[Data from the Pregnancy Mortality Surveillance System](#)
- National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH)
- Population Assessment of Tobacco and Health (PATH) Study
- National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES)

##### Community-Level Indices and Contextual Measures

- Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) indicators
- California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool (CalEnviroScreen)
- Area Deprivation Index (ADI)

## IV. Award Mechanism and Structure

This Request for Applications (RFA) will support one award mechanism, the **Partnered Maternal Smoking Cessation Initiative Award (Partnered-MSCI Award)**. The Partnered-MSCI Award is modeled after the [Full Community-Partnered Participatory Research Award \(CPPRA\)](#) and is designed to advance equity-centered, hypothesis-driven research through robust academic–community partnerships.

The Partnered-MSCI Award will support a collaborative research project jointly **led by an Academic Co-PI** and a **Community Co-PI**. Projects must focus on the development, implementation, and evaluation of culturally tailored smoking cessation interventions for pregnant individuals residing in communities disproportionately impacted by commercial tobacco use, tobacco-related illness, and adverse maternal outcomes. Consistent with CPPR principles (see Appendix A), funded projects must demonstrate equitable shared leadership, meaningful engagement of community partners throughout all phases of the research, and **guidance from a Community Advisory Board (CAB)**. Proposed interventions should be grounded in community-informed priorities and designed to promote trust, relevance, and sustainability within real-world settings.

**Table 1. Overview of Partnered MSCI**

<b>Award Mechanism</b>	Partnered Maternal Smoking Cessation Initiative (Partnered-MSCI)
<b>Leadership Structure</b>	Co-Principal Investigators (Co-PIs): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One <b>Academic Co-PI</b></li> <li>• One <b>Community Co-PI</b></li> </ul>
<b>Community Engagement</b>	Required <b>Community Advisory Board (CAB)</b> and <b>Community Engagement Plan</b>
<b>Maximum Award Amount</b>	<b>\$600,000 per year (Direct Costs)</b>
<b>Co-PI Budget Limits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Co-PI: up to <b>\$300,000 per year</b></li> <li>• Academic Co-PI: up to <b>\$300,000 per year</b></li> </ul>

<b>Maximum Award Duration</b>	<b>3 years</b>
<b>Allowable Direct Costs</b>	Salaries; trainee/internship costs; fringe benefits; supplies; participant incentives; subcontracts*; equipment (>\$5,000); travel; publishing costs; dissemination activities
<b>Project-Related Travel</b>	Allowed as needed in each Co-PI budget; must be fully justified
<b>Required Travel</b>	<b>TRDRP Conference (Mandatory):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$750 – Community Co-PI</li> <li>• \$750 – Academic Co-PI</li> </ul>
<b>Scientific Conference Travel</b>	Up to <b>\$2,000 per year</b> for the Community Co-PI Up to <b>\$2,000 per year</b> for the Academic Co-PI
<b>Indirect Costs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full indirect costs allowed for <b>non-UC institutions</b></li> <li>• UC campuses: capped at 40% (on-campus) or 25% (off-campus)</li> </ul>
<b>Partnership Requirements</b>	Formal <b>Collaborative Agreement</b> outlining shared governance and responsibilities
<b>Dissemination</b>	Required dissemination strategy addressing community, practice, and policy audiences

## Partnered Maternal Smoking Cessation Initiative Award (Partnered-MSCI)

The **Partnered Maternal Smoking Cessation Initiative (Partnered-MSCI) Award** provides up to **three years of support** for a community–academic research partnership focused on developing and evaluating **culturally tailored smoking cessation interventions** for pregnant individuals living in communities disproportionately impacted by tobacco-related illness and adverse maternal outcomes.

This award mechanism requires an **equitable partnership** between **two Co-Principal Investigators (Co-PIs)**—one **Community Co-PI** and one **Academic Co-PI**—who share leadership and responsibility across all phases of the research. For more than 20 years, TRDRP has supported community–academic research partnerships based on the principle that integrating rigorous scientific methods with community knowledge leads to more sustainable, relevant, and effective tobacco prevention and cessation interventions that improve health outcomes for Californians.

Applications must demonstrate **proof of principle** for the feasibility of a novel, culturally tailored maternal smoking cessation approach **or** propose a rigorous evaluation of existing tobacco prevention or treatment paradigms within communities of interest. Proposed interventions should be informed by evidence on both **adverse maternal and perinatal health outcomes** associated with smoking and should address the lived realities of the populations described in this RFA. Projects are expected to generate findings suitable for dissemination and to strengthen the partnership’s capacity to secure future funding from TRDRP or other sources.

Applications should clearly build upon previously generated evidence, demonstrating how prior findings inform the continued development, refinement, or expansion of a culturally responsive maternal smoking cessation strategy, or a rigorous further evaluation of existing tobacco prevention or treatment approaches within priority communities. Proposed activities should be grounded in established knowledge of the harmful maternal and perinatal consequences of tobacco use and explicitly incorporate insights gained from prior work, including how interventions align with the lived experiences and contextual realities of the populations served. Projects are expected to yield actionable findings that can be disseminated broadly and to further strengthen the partnership’s readiness and competitiveness for subsequent funding opportunities through TRDRP or other funding sources.

## Illustrative Research Questions

Research questions of interest include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. How can culturally tailored behavioral cessation interventions be adapted to address the unique risk factors faced by pregnant individuals in communities disproportionately impacted by tobacco-related illness, poverty, and limited access to health care?
2. Which evidence-based theories of behavior change are most effective in promoting smoking cessation during pregnancy in the populations under study?
3. How can cessation interventions be designed to meaningfully include pregnant individuals experiencing housing instability, food insecurity, intergenerational poverty, or residence in medically underserved areas?
4. How can social determinants of health, and intergenerational disadvantage inform and shape intervention settings and delivery strategies?
5. In what ways do cultural beliefs, practices, and norms influence smoking behavior during pregnancy, and how can these factors be harnessed to promote cessation?
6. What strategies are most effective for incorporating community-identified values, practices, and communication approaches into sustainable cessation interventions?

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## Additional Budget Considerations for Partnered-MSCI Awards

- Subcontracts are allowed for each Co-PI organization and must be fully justified. All out-of-state subcontracts and collaborations must be well-justified; *please note that funding for out-of-state expenses is extremely limited and TRDRP does not encourage such expenses.*
- [SmartSimple](#), TRDRP's grant management system, **treats funded Partnered-MSCI grants as one project with two budgets. TRDRP will issue a split-budget award, if funded.** One budget will be prepared by and awarded to the Community Co-PI's organization or institution and a second budget will be prepared by and awarded to the Academic Co-PI's organization or institution.
- **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's or Academic Co-PI's institution will officially submit the grant application.

## Eligibility Qualifications and Supplements

Applications to the Partnered Maternal Smoking Cessation Initiative (Partnered-MSCI) Award must be led by a community–academic partnership that includes two Co-Principal Investigators (Co-PIs): one Community Co-PI and one Academic Co-PI. Only one individual may serve in each Co-PI role per application. Additional contributors may be designated as Co-Investigators or Consultants, as appropriate.

Both Co-PIs must demonstrate a shared commitment to equitable leadership, community-partnered participatory research, and the goals of the proposed project. U.S. citizenship is not required for either Co-PI role.

**Table 2. Co-Principal Investigator Qualifications**

Requirement	Community Co-PI	Academic Co-PI
<b>Location</b>	Based in California	Based at a California academic or nonprofit research institution
<b>Affiliation</b>	Affiliated with a California-based community-serving organization or tribal organization/tribe	Faculty appointment or research scientist designation at a university, nonprofit research organization, or community-based research institution
<b>Role &amp; Authority</b>	Holds a managerial or executive-level decision-making role within the community organization	Holds PI-eligible status with access to institutional research infrastructure
<b>Expertise</b>	Deep knowledge of and commitment to representing the community of interest	Research expertise and publications relevant to the proposed study

<b>Commitment</b>	Committed to equitable partnership and community representation	Committed to community-partnered participatory research and accurate representation of the state of the science
<b>Educational Degree</b>	Not required	As required by institutional PI policies
<b>Fiscal Responsibility</b>	Manages community budget; CBO serves as fiscal administrator	Manages academic budget; institution serves as fiscal administrator

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## Academic and Community Co-Principal Investigators

The **Academic Co-PI** must demonstrate research expertise directly relevant to the proposed research questions and a sustained commitment to community-partnered participatory research and/or community science frameworks. The Academic Co-PI is responsible for managing their portion of the project budget, while their California-based university or nonprofit research institution will serve as the fiscal administrator for academic research funds. An eligible academic institution must be named in the application.

## Community Co-PI and Partnering Community-Based Organization

The Community Co-PI represents the partnering community-based organization (CBO) or tribal organization and serves as the lead community researcher. The Community Co-PI must hold a managerial or executive-level decision-making role within the organization and is responsible for managing community-side project activities and budgeted expenses. The California-based CBO will serve as the fiscal administrator for the community research budget.

A lead individual from the CBO must be formally designated as the Community Co-PI and approved by the organization. Applications must include a letter of collaboration from the CBO Executive Director, Board of Directors, or equivalent authority confirming organizational support, approval of the Co-PI role, and agreement with the Collaborative Agreement.

Community partnerships may include, but are not limited to, community-based and tribal organizations, faith-based organizations, school districts, educational support agencies, and other nonprofit service providers. Given their unique position in promoting community health, for-profit community-based organizations are also eligible to serve as community partners in CPPRAs. Applications involving large or hierarchical entities (e.g., county or state agencies, schools, or school districts) should describe strategies to ensure equitable partnership, shared decision-making, and sustained engagement, given potential structural constraints.

## Supplemental Funding Opportunities

Supplemental funding may be available to support California residents and trainees on funded Partnered-MSCI projects. Cornelius Hopper Disparities Supplements (CHDS) are available to support California community members and student trainees who wish to pursue research training focused on tobacco priority populations. Detailed information is available on the [TRDRP website](#).

Newly funded Partnered-MSCI Award teams may apply for supplements during the pre-funding period. If an application is selected for funding, eligible teams will receive supplement application instructions and required forms as part of the pre-funding process.

Supplement funds are in addition to the Co-PI prime budgets and may *not* be included within the designated direct cost caps. Budget details related to supplements will be addressed after funding decisions are issued.

## Partnered MSCI Review Criteria

This section outlines the review criteria that each submitted MSCI application review will be based on. MSCI partnered awards will be scored on three weighted criteria sets: research, partnership, and resources.

### ***Criteria Set 1 - Research (40% of total score)***

#### **A. Goals, Research Questions, and Specific Aims**

*Reviewers will assess whether:*

- Goals and aims clearly build on pilot findings and are feasible within the RFA scope.
- Work advances or refines culturally responsive cessation strategies with potential for broader application in impacted communities.
- The target population is appropriate and supported by prior pilot engagement or data.
- Research questions and hypothesis are clearly defined, grounded in earlier findings, and achievable within three years.
- Aims extend prior work and contribute to long-term research, scalability, and public health impact goals.

#### **B. Background and Significance**

*Reviewers will consider:*

- The extent to which the project addresses culturally tailored maternal and fetal smoking cessation strategies.
- Whether the rationale and research questions are well supported by the literature and appropriately contextualized within social and structural determinants of health.
- Evidence that the Community Co-PI and community members or community-based organizations were meaningfully involved in identifying, shaping, or conceptualizing the proposed approach.

### **C. Research Design, Framework, and Analysis Plan**

*Reviewers will evaluate whether:*

- The research plan builds on prior pilot findings and demonstrates how earlier data strengthen the potential for valid, reliable, and meaningful outcomes.
- Recruitment strategies and the study population are justified by prior experience and are feasible for expansion.
- Implementation challenges are anticipated based on prior work, with realistic mitigation strategies in place.
- Sample size and analytic methods are appropriate for addressing next-phase research questions.
- For intervention studies, key variables and relationships are clearly defined and refined based on prior results.
- Milestones are specific, measurable, and aligned with progress beyond the pilot phase.

### ***Criteria Set 2 - Partnership (40% of total score)***

#### **A. Partnership Quality, Community Engagement, and Impact**

Reviewers will assess:

- The clarity and strength of the Collaborative Agreement and shared governance structure.
- Whether decision-making processes are transparent and equitable.
- The adequacy of communication plans for engaging the Community Advisory Board (CAB) and community partners.
- Clarity and strength of definitions for decision-making authority, conflict resolution processes, and data ownership and sharing.
- Plans to monitor, reflect on, and strengthen the health of the community–academic partnership over time.

#### **B. Community Benefit and Intervention Potential**

Reviewers will consider:

- Demonstrates strong potential to further reduce tobacco-related disparities and advance health equity, building on prior pilot findings.
- Likely to provide expanded benefits to community residents, organizations, and academic partners.
- Shows clear potential to advance scalable, actionable smoking cessation interventions for pregnant persons.

### **C. Community Engagement and Capacity Building**

Reviewers will evaluate:

- The composition of the Community Advisory Board (CAB) and whether defined member roles build on prior engagement and are sufficient to support sustained community engagement and capacity building.
- Whether plans clearly demonstrate ongoing integration of community feedback, informed by prior project phases.
- Does the project show strong potential to build on existing community capacity, enhance service delivery or clinical practice, and strengthen sustainable tobacco control efforts?
- Whether opportunities for training and skill development expand on prior efforts and are accessible to students and community members across educational levels.

### **D. Dissemination and Sustainability**

Reviewers will assess:

- Whether the dissemination plan builds on prior pilot efforts and uses accessible, trusted channels to effectively share findings with the community.
- Does the applicant team have a demonstrated track record of effectively disseminating information to community audiences?
- Are Community Co-PI and/or CAB meaningfully engaged in interpreting findings and guiding dissemination strategies.
- Are there clear strategies in place to inform communities about resources enhanced or developed through the project?
- Does the project include well-defined plans to sustain and expand the community–academic partnership beyond the current funding period?
- Do the dissemination efforts reflect plans to reach relevant audiences, including clinicians, public health practitioners, educators, advocates, policymakers, funders, and community members?

## ***Criteria Set 3 - Resources (20% of total score)***

### **A. Investigative Team**

Reviewers will evaluate:

- The appropriateness of the project personnel’s training and experience for community-partnered participatory research.
- Clarity of roles and responsibilities across the team.
- Opportunities for reciprocal learning between academic researchers and community partners.

## **B. Environment and Resource Capacity**

Reviewers will consider:

- Whether community and institutional settings support project success.
- Access to the study population and community of interest.
- Effective use of community and institutional assets and collaborative arrangements.
- Preparedness to address social and structural determinants that may affect implementation.
- Evidence of organizational and institutional support from both academic and community partners.

## **C. Community Assets and Strengths**

Reviewers will assess:

- The identification and integration of community assets, strengths, and access points into the study design.
- The project's potential to strengthen existing community tobacco control capacity related to maternal and fetal health.
- Evidence of the community-based organization's credibility, leadership, and service record within the priority population.

## **Additional Review Criteria (Unscored)**

The following criteria will be considered in the overall evaluation of scientific and technical merit but will not receive separate scores:

- **Budget:** Is the proposed budget appropriate for the scope of work? Are there concerns regarding scientific or budgetary overlap? Are any proposed out-of-state collaborations justified and essential to the project?
- **Protection of Human Subjects:** If human subjects are involved, are appropriate protections in place to minimize risk and ensure ethical treatment, including adequate safeguards against potential harms related to study participation?
- **Inclusion of Women, Minorities, and Children:** If applicable, are plans for the inclusion, recruitment, and retention of women, individuals from diverse racial and ethnic groups, and children appropriate and aligned with the scientific goals of the study?
- **Care and Use of Vertebrate Animals:** If vertebrate animals are involved, are plans for their care and use appropriate and compliant with applicable standards and regulations?

## V. Application Procedures

Applicants who wish to apply for a Partnered-MSCI grant must use the University of California Office of the President (UCOP) Research Grants Program Office (RGPO) SmartSimple grants management system (<https://rgpogrants.ucop.edu>). Please review the “[SmartSimple TRDRP Application Submission Instructions](#)” for the technical instructions to submit a LOI and Full Application. All required fields in SmartSimple must be completed prior to submission of the LOI and Full Application. The sections noted below provide supplemental programmatic instruction to guide the content of your submission. All application materials are required to be uploaded in formats accessible to individuals with disabilities, including those using assistive technologies. Applicants are required to prepare and review their application materials for accessibility, and ensure all submitted application materials comply with document-relevant Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 Level AA standards. Please contact your institution for information and resources on digital accessibility tools. Additional tips and links to useful accessibility resources may be found on the [UC Office of the President Electronic Accessibility website](#).

### Application Submission Process

Only one organization may serve as the official submitting institution in SmartSimple. The applicant team may determine whether the Community Co-PI’s organization or the Academic Co-PI’s institution will submit the Letter of Intent (LOI) and Full Application.

The individual who initiates the LOI in SmartSimple will be designated as the Applicant PI in the system. If invited to submit a Full Application, the Applicant PI is responsible for adding the other Co-PI to the application in SmartSimple.

Both the Community Co-PI and Academic Co-PI, along with their organizational affiliations, must be identified at the time of LOI submission. If necessary, a Co-PI may be replaced at the Full Application stage, provided the substitution is from the same institution.

*Please adhere to the application instructions below to guide your submission process in SmartSimple.*

### Formatting Requirements

Templates for the application (such as the Research Plan) can be downloaded from the Documentation tab of your Full Application in SmartSimple, after your LOI is approved. Please follow all formatting instructions listed at the top of each template. Deviations from the page format, font size, specifications, and page limitations, especially the page limit for the *Research Plan*, will be grounds for the TRDRP to reject and return the entire application without peer review.

## Submission Requirements

- SmartSimple Registration: Both the Community Co-PI and Academic Co-PI must be registered in and affiliated with an institution that has a valid tax ID (EIN).
- Required Reference Documents: Applicants should review the [TRDRP Call for Applications](#), which applies to all award types, prior to submission.

## Letter of Intent Instructions

A letter of intent (LOI) is required for the Partnered-MSCI grant types. It will be used to assess the application eligibility requirements for this grant type as well as alignment of the project and TRDRP goals. The Community Co-PI or the Academic Co-PI can initiate the LOI process in [SmartSimple](#). The Community Co-PI and the Academic Co-PI must be identified and named with organization affiliation at time of LOI submission.

### Lay Abstract

The Lay Abstract is reviewed primarily for programmatic relevance and must also be entered verbatim into the “Abstracts” section of the Proposal in SmartSimple. Do **not** use symbols or special formatting, as these will not transfer correctly.

The **Lay Abstract** should be written in **clear, non-technical language** and include:

- Brief description of the community-academic partnership;
- A brief, plain-language introduction to the research topic
- The primary research question(s) or central hypothesis, described for a general audience
- An overview of the proposed methods in non-technical terms
- A description of the project’s innovative elements and potential public health impact

The abstract should be written in clear, plain language suitable for a general audience, at a level comparable to a local newspaper or magazine article. Avoid acronyms, technical terminology, and jargon, and minimize emphasis on technical background, methods, and analytic detail. Include the name of the partner and organization. The abstract for the Full Application should be jointly developed and reviewed by both the Academic and Community Co-PIs.

## Full Application Instructions

Responses entered at the LOI stage will be automatically entered in the Full Application stage in SmartSimple. Please review all of the pre-populated information, make updates or changes as necessary, and save the form(s).

### Project Information

Please use the following guidelines to differentiate the Scientific Abstract, which will be evaluated during the peer review, from the Lay Abstract (described in “Letter of Intent Instructions” section above). Do not use symbols or other special text, as these will not transfer to the “abstracts” box.

The **Scientific Abstract** should include:

- A short introductory paragraph indicating the **background** and how the intended project will address the **MSCI RFP**
- The **central hypothesis** or **questions to be addressed** as outlined in the MSCI RFP
- A listing of the **objectives or specific aims** in the research plan.
- The major research **methods and approaches** used to address the specific aims.
- A brief statement of the **impact** that the project will have on maternal smoking cessation.

Provide the critical information that will integrate the research topic, its relevance to maternal smoking cessation, the specific aims, the methodology, and the direction of the research in a manner that will allow a scientist to extract the maximum level of information. The abstract must clearly reflect the proposed research without a need to reference the detailed research plan.

### Research Demographics

Applicants must provide an estimated demographics count detailing the anticipated number of participants and their key characteristics to demonstrate alignment with the proposed study population.

### Milestones and Timetable

Applicants must provide a timeline of major project milestones with expected completion dates.

### Project Contacts

Provide contact information and percent effort for all Project Personnel, including the Applicant Co-Principal Investigator, Co-Principal Investigator, Co-Investigator(s), Trainee(s), Consultant(s), and support staff. The

submitting PI must be listed as “Applicant Principal Investigator,” and the partnered PI must be listed as “Co-Principal Investigator.” Upload a biosketch for each Key Project Personnel member in this section, following the [SmartSimple](#) instructions.

## **Budget**

Funded Partnered-MSCI (CPPRA-modeled) projects are treated as **one integrated project with two coordinated budgets**. TRDRP will issue a **split-budget award**, with one budget prepared by and awarded to the **Community Co-PI’s organization** and a second budget prepared by and awarded to the **Academic Co-PI’s organization**. Applicant teams must ensure that both budgets are equitable and accurately reflect each partner’s roles and level of effort. Co-PI percent effort should be appropriate to the proposed work; no minimum effort level is required for Partnered-MSCI awards.

If a collaborative partner on the project has a subcontract, then that subcontracting organization can complete a budget, or the prime partner can complete the budget for the subcontracting organization. Applicants should ensure that the direct costs on the *Budget* tab do not exceed the cap for each Co-PI on the award type. Any proposed out-of-state expenses in the budget must be well justified and will undergo programmatic review. Additional budget guidelines can be found in **Appendix B** of this document.

## **Documentation**

All required uploads are listed in the table below, and templates must be downloaded from the *Documentation* tab of [SmartSimple](#). Templates must be completed, converted to PDF, and uploaded to your application, unless otherwise instructed.

**Table 3. Summary of Template Requirements**

Upload Item (Template/Form)	Page limit	Required or optional
Collaborative Agreements	3	Required
Community Advisory Board	2	Required
Community Engagement Plan	1	Required
Biosketches (All Personnel listed on Key Personnel form)	5 (each biosketch)	Required
Facilities	1 per institution	Required
Resubmission Statement	2	Required (for resubmissions only)
Research Plan	15 + references	Required
Human Subjects	No limit	Required
Vertebrate Animals	No limit	Optional
Appendix list and uploads	30	Optional

## ***Detailed Description of Proposal Templates***

### **1.1 Collaborative Agreements (3-page limit)**

The Collaborative Agreement represents the **shared ownership and partnership of the work, resources, and project implementation** that will result from this Partnered MSCI award. This agreement **must be developed by both the Community and Academic Partners** and must detail the following.

**Data Ownership, Access, and Stewardship.** Applicants must describe the agreed-upon approach to data ownership and access for the proposed project. This section should clearly specify:

- Which partner(s) will own the project data
- Timelines and processes for data sharing between partners
- Permitted uses of the data and any related intellectual property considerations

- How decisions regarding data ownership and use were made (e.g., values, equity considerations, institutional requirements)

Applications must address both identified and de-identified data, including how data access will be maintained for all partners during and after the funding period. Teams should describe how Institutional Review Board (IRB) requirements and ethical protections for participant data will be upheld.

**Communication and Coordination Plan.** If data ownership is assigned to a single partner, applicants must explain how ongoing access to the data will be ensured for the other partner beyond the grant period, recognizing the long-term nature of community–academic partnerships. The data stewardship plan should reflect principles of equity, transparency, and shared benefit, and be consistent with the Collaborative Agreement.

Applicants must describe the communication plan that will support effective coordination among project partners. The plan should specify:

- The frequency and modes of communication used to keep the Co-Principal Investigators informed of project progress and to address challenges as they arise.
- How the Community Co-PI and partnering community organization will communicate to support meaningful input, shared decision-making, and implementation.
- How the Academic Co-PI and their institution will communicate to ensure institutional support, compliance with research policies, and adherence to best practices.

The communication plan should reflect principles of transparency, shared leadership, and responsiveness consistent with a community-partnered research approach.

**Decision-Making Framework.** Applicants must describe a clear and equitable decision-making framework for the proposed community-partnered research project. This section should explain how the Community Co-PI, Academic Co-PI, and other key team members—including co-investigators, consultants, and the Community Advisory Board—will contribute to project-related decisions. The plan should specify how diverse perspectives will be considered and how decisions will be finalized, whether through consensus, majority vote, or another mutually agreed-upon process.

Applicants should describe the rationale for the selected decision-making approach and explain why it is appropriate for the structure, partners, and goals of the project. The proposed framework should support shared leadership, transparency, and timely resolution of issues, and demonstrate how the decision-making process will contribute to effective collaboration and overall project success.

**Conflict Resolution.** Applicants must describe a clear process for resolving disagreements that may arise during or after the project. The plan should address how issues related to research conduct, data ownership and use, inclusion criteria, community priorities, cultural humility, dissemination and publication, and administrative or budget matters will be handled. The conflict resolution process should align with the project’s decision-making framework and demonstrate how it will support equitable collaboration, timely resolution, and the long-term success of the community–academic partnership.

**Broader Community Engagement Plan.** Applicants must describe how community members and organizations beyond the formal research team will be engaged across all phases of the project, including planning, implementation, evaluation, and dissemination. This may include individuals from the community of interest, staff or leadership from community agencies, or other relevant stakeholders not serving as project investigators. The application should explain how this broader community input will be solicited, incorporated, and managed by the Co-Principal Investigators and research team, and how community engagement will support relevance, equity, and effective dissemination of study findings.

**Personnel Continuity and Transition Plan.** Applicants must describe plans to address temporary or permanent personnel turnover at either the community or academic site to ensure continuity of project activities. This section should explain how the Community Co-PI and Academic Co-PI will coordinate with their respective organizations to manage transitions and, if necessary, identify and propose qualified replacements. Applications should acknowledge that any replacement of a Co-PI, community-based organization, or academic institution requires **prior approval from TRDRP**, in accordance with the [Grants Administration Manual](#). Applicants should also note that TRDRP and the Research Grants Program Office do not oversee employment or hiring decisions for project staff.

**Partnership Evaluation and Strengthening Plan.** Applicants must describe a strategy for assessing and strengthening the community–academic research partnership over time. This section should explain how the team will evaluate partnership functioning, including approaches to communication frequency and methods, meeting locations, and information sharing. The evaluation plan should include appropriate qualitative, quantitative, or technology-enabled methods to assess changes in collaboration, trust, and shared understanding, and demonstrate how ongoing assessment will support effective partnership development, project implementation, and long-term sustainability.

**Dissemination Plan for Study Findings.** Applicants must describe agreed-upon plans for disseminating research findings to both the **community of interest** and the **scientific community**, including the anticipated timing of dissemination. This section should explain how dissemination activities will balance the needs of community audiences and scientific rigor, recognizing that scientific publication timelines may differ from community information needs. Applicants should describe how dissemination approaches for community

settings will be appropriately scaled to the strength of the evidence generated and reflect shared agreements between community and academic partners.

**Partnership Sustainability Plan.** Applicants must describe plans to sustain the community–academic research partnership beyond the period of MSCI funding. This section should outline how the partnership may continue to engage, share findings, and support community benefit regardless of whether additional funding is secured. Applicants should address how study results will be returned to the community of interest and applied to inform programs, practices, or policies, recognizing the historical harms caused when communities contribute to research without receiving meaningful benefit or feedback. The sustainability plan should demonstrate the team’s commitment to long-term accountability, relationship-building, and responsible community-engaged research.

**Community Co-PI Responsibilities.** The Community Co-PI must confirm that the decision-making process described in this form has been formally reviewed and approved by the governing body of their Community-Based Organization (e.g., Board of Directors or equivalent authority). This confirmation should attest that the organization authorizes participation in, and adherence to, the terms of the Collaborative Agreement. Supporting documentation—such as a Community Agency Resolution or official meeting minutes reflecting this review and approval—is strongly encouraged and may be included in the Appendix.

**Academic Co-PI Responsibilities.** The Academic Co-PI is responsible for ensuring that the decision-making process described in this form is consistent with, and enforceable under, the policies and requirements of their home institution. The Academic Co-PI must also verify that the institution is committed to upholding the terms of the Collaborative Agreement. A formal letter of commitment from a Department Chair, Dean, or Research Director documenting institutional support and agreement with the processes outlined in this Collaborative Agreement is strongly encouraged and may be included in the Appendix.

## 1.2 Community Advisory Board (CAB) (2-page limit)

Applicants must describe the composition, roles, and engagement of the Community Advisory Board (CAB). The CAB should include individuals who reflect the community of interest and bring relevant lived experience, professional expertise, or organizational perspective. This section should explain the CAB’s role in advising the project across key phases, such as study design, implementation, interpretation of findings, and dissemination, and describe how CAB input will be meaningfully incorporated into decision-making. Applicants should also outline the frequency and methods of CAB engagement and how the Co-Principal Investigators will support sustained, equitable participation consistent with MSCI’s community-partnered research principles.

***The Community Advisory Board (CAB) from should have the following details:***

**CAB Composition.** Applicants must describe the current and planned composition of the Community Advisory Board (CAB). For recruited members, include names, organizational affiliations, relevant experience or expertise, and anticipated contributions to the project. For positions not yet filled, use a “**TBD**” designation and describe the desired expertise or perspective. Applicants may also summarize eligibility criteria and recruitment strategies used to ensure the CAB reflects the community of interest and project needs.

**CAB Roles and Responsibilities.** Applicants must describe how the Community Advisory Board (CAB) will inform and support the project, including:

- Advising on **research questions and study priorities**
- Providing input on **recruitment strategies** and participant engagement
- Reviewing **data collection methods**, including surveys or other instruments
- Identifying and addressing **ethical considerations**
- Contributing to **data analysis and interpretation**
- Guiding **dissemination strategies**, including non-traditional or community-based approaches
- Supporting other key research activities, as appropriate

*CAB roles should be clearly linked to the project’s **aims, activities, and milestones.***

**CAB Engagement and Evaluation.** Applicants must describe plans for ongoing CAB engagement, including communication methods, meeting frequency, and any compensation or incentives provided for participation. The application should also outline how CAB engagement will be assessed and strengthened over time, such as through feedback surveys or structured check-ins. Plans should demonstrate how communication between the CAB and Co-Principal Investigators will be monitored and adapted as needed to support sustained, equitable participation and effective collaboration throughout the project.

### **1.3 Community Engagement Plan (1 page limit)**

TRDRP’s vision is to eliminate commercial tobacco use and tobacco-related diseases and improve the health and well-being of all Californians. One important step toward achieving this vision is for TRDRP-funded researchers to communicate with communities most impacted by commercial tobacco use, so that members of those communities are themselves empowered to influence decisions and policies that promote health equity and reduce negative impacts of tobacco in their communities.

Examples of community engagement activities include:

1. Educate the public about the health consequences of tobacco product use, tobacco related disease, and/or the social determinants of health
2. Participate and foster the participation of research team members in programs focused on
  - a. Supporting trainees from backgrounds that are underrepresented in Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM);
  - b. Supporting the reduction of tobacco-related health disparities for all Californians;
  - c. Supporting state and local efforts to end the tobacco epidemic for all;
3. Seek, create and distribute materials, based on your research interests, for use by California public health, educational, or community organizations.

Describe how the research team will employ their scientific and research expertise to engage with groups and individuals in the public (i.e., non-experts in your field) throughout the period of the award. Do not limit your community engagement activities to disseminating the results of completed TRDRP-funded research. Funds to support these activities may be included in the project budget.

#### **1.4 Biographical Sketch (5-page limit/person)**

Submit a biographical sketch for each individual listed in the Project Personnel section, beginning with the Co-Principal Investigators. Biosketches must use the “Biosketch Template” provided in SmartSimple and be uploaded within the Project Personnel section. **Do not include reprints or manuscripts.**

#### **1.5 Facilities (1-page limit/institution)**

Briefly describe the facilities and resources (e.g., core facilities, access to populations, statistical resources, and administrative space and equipment) that are needed and are available for successfully carrying out the proposed research. Make sure all of the research needs described in the research plan are addressed in this section. Describe resources to be supplied by subcontractors and those that are external to the institution.

#### **Resubmission Statement**

Resubmission applications must include a two-page Resubmission Statement at the beginning of the Research Plan describing how prior reviewer comments were addressed. The statement should summarize substantive changes to the application, including major additions, deletions, or revisions. Changes must be clearly indicated within the Research Plan text (e.g., by bracketing, indentation, typographic change, or color). Applicants may update the Preliminary Studies section to reflect relevant work completed since the previous submission.

The total Research Plan length **may not exceed 15 pages**, regardless of the length of the Resubmission Statement.

## 1.6 Research Plan (15-page limit)

Both Co-principal investigators' names (last name, first name) must be listed in upper right-hand corner of every page.

We ask that applicants describe the proposed research project in sufficient detail for reviewers to evaluate its collaboration elements, as described below. If you don't use all the pages to describe your research plan, it might be best to review what you have written and explain in more detail anything not fully explained.

**However, note that a concise, focused research plan of less than the maximum number of pages is preferable to one less concise and made longer by overly elaborate or unimportant details.**

Supporting materials (such as sample survey items, consent forms, interview or focus group questions, letters of collaboration) that are directly relevant to the proposal may be included in the **Appendix. The research plan must be self-contained and understandable without having to refer extensively to supporting materials.**

**Special Note:** The content below is included to guide your thinking process when preparing the Research Plan. There is no requirement to address each topic or question, but rather it should inform the collaborative discussion among research team members. Addressing each topic does not guarantee your application will be funded. Applicant teams should focus on topics most relevant to their research question(s) and approach(es).

### 1. Statement of Goals, Research Questions, and Specific Aims.

For **Partnered-MSCI** applications: In a brief paragraph, describe the goals and research question(s) that will be addressed over the project timeline that will directly address the objectives of the Partnered-MSCI RFA. The applicant team must clearly describe how the proposed goals, research questions, and specific aims are informed by and build upon findings, insights, and lessons learned from prior pilot work, including how pilot results shaped the current study design and rationale.

State the research question(s) for the project. Follow with the Specific Aims—the specific tasks and research-related activities that will be undertaken to address each research question. These should have a logical connection, and clear linkages to the MSCI RFA which clearly reflect lessons learned from pilot research.

### 2. Background and Significance.

In this section, applicants should describe the public health significance of the proposed research **within the context of the Partnered-Maternal Smoking Cessation Initiative (MSCI)**. The narrative should situate the project within existing evidence and clearly articulate how the proposed work advances translational, equity-driven, and community-engaged research to reduce tobacco-related disparities among pregnant individuals.

Applications should address the disproportionate burden of commercial tobacco exposure, tobacco-related illness, and adverse maternal and infant outcomes in communities affected by structural inequities and adverse social determinants of health, consistent with the 2024 Surgeon General’s Report. Applicants should justify the need for culturally responsive, evidence-based smoking cessation interventions by explicitly drawing on data, findings, and lessons learned from prior pilot work. This should include a clear explanation of how pilot results illuminate the lived realities of the population of interest, including barriers related to poverty, limited access to health care, and targeted tobacco industry practices, and how these insights shape the rationale for the proposed intervention.

The Background and Significance section should clearly describe the goals, research question(s), and hypothesis(es) and how the pilot data directly inform the proposed goals, research questions, and approach—such as refining intervention components, identifying priority populations, or addressing implementation challenges. Applicants should also explain how the proposed research—through the development, implementation, or evaluation of culturally tailored cessation strategies—has the potential to improve maternal and infant health outcomes, inform real-world practice or policy, and contribute to sustainable, community-centered solutions that interrupt preventable, intergenerational harm.

### **3. Preliminary Data.**

It is the expectation that applicants present preliminary/pilot data or supporting information that informs the proposed research and demonstrates readiness to expand on further investigation of the proposed work. This section must describe in detail the work conducted during prior MSCI funded projects or other relevant pilot or preparatory studies. If no prior MSCI funded project was completed, applicants should present other data, analyses, or contextual evidence that substantively support the proposed approach for a Full Partnered Award.

This section should describe the approaches used, the results obtained, and how these findings informed the proposed hypotheses, assumptions, and study design. Applicants must explain how data was collected and analyzed, note whether findings were disseminated (e.g., publications, presentations, or community reports), and describe how results were shared with the community of interest. Any methodological challenges or barriers encountered should be acknowledged, along with strategies used to address them.

Preliminary data should provide clear justification for the proposed research by demonstrating: (1) the rationale for the study hypotheses and design; (2) feasibility of the community-partnered approach; and (3) the potential for the project to generate meaningful, actionable knowledge or products consistent with the goals of the MSCI Award.

#### 4. Research Plan: Conceptual Framework, Research Design, Approach, and Data Analysis

**Conceptual Framework.** Provide a theoretical or conceptual framework that informs the study design and research activities.

**Design.** Applicants must describe a research design that is feasible, culturally appropriate, and aligned with the capacity and expectations of maternal pregnant persons. The design should account for social and structural determinants of health that may affect implementation and describe strategies to mitigate potential barriers for this study population. Applicants should explain how the selected design aligns with community norms and values, including the appropriateness of specific methodological approaches (e.g., randomized designs).

For **Partnered-MSCI applications**, applicants must clearly describe the maternal tobacco prevention or treatment intervention to be developed, tested, evaluated, and/or implemented. This should include the core intervention components (e.g., content, activities, delivery mode, dose/frequency, setting, and personnel). If intervention elements will be refined in collaboration with community partners, applicants should describe the proposed development process and potential approaches. The section should also address recruitment and enrollment strategies, training of intervention staff, and procedures to ensure intervention fidelity.

**Approach.** Describe the methodology to be employed; how feasibility will be determined (i.e., what measures will be used to assess feasibility); if appropriate, the methodological approach (or possible approaches that seem at present most appropriate to be used).

For **Partnered-MSCI**s, explain how pregnant persons will be surveyed; provide rationale supporting sample size(s); how pregnant persons will be recruited; why you believe you will be able to reach and recruit the estimated number of expected pregnant persons; what questions you will ask them; whether you will use face-to-face, social media, or telephone interviews, or written surveys and why you will use the method chosen; and, how the data will be collected and analyzed. Be as detailed and rigorous as possible. Each rationale must be reflective of prior knowledge that has informed your current approach to the study design. Provide this information for each specific research activity.

**Pitfalls.** Discuss potential pitfalls and how you will overcome them if they occur, or alternative methods that you will use if the intended methods are not fully realized.

**Analysis.** Clearly state a collaborative data analysis plan that will adequately address the Specific Aims.

**Milestones.** Applicants must specify the tasks required to achieve the project's goals, research questions, and specific aims, and identify anticipated milestones with quantifiable measures.

**Community-Academic Partnership and Collaboration Plan.** Applicants must describe the structure and strength of the community–academic partnership supporting the proposed research. This section should explain the relationship between the Community Co-PI, their community-based organization, and the community of interest (maternal pregnant persons), including how community perspectives are represented on the research team and the Community Advisory Board (CAB). Applicants should also describe how organizational leadership (e.g., Executive Director, Board of Directors, or equivalent) supports and sustains the organization’s commitment to the project.

Applicants must outline a clear plan for implementing the partnership, including how and when partners will interact; the roles and responsibilities of each partner across all phases of the research; and how community and academic partners will participate in study design, data analysis, and project-related decision-making. The application should briefly summarize how key elements of the *Collaborative Agreement*—such as data ownership, conflict resolution, and decision-making processes—will support equitable collaboration, successful completion of the study aims, and achievement of overall project goals.

**5. Advancing Community Benefit Through Intervention Development.** Describe how the research partnership and findings will be broadly distributed and applicable to communities in California impacted by high rates of maternal and perinatal tobacco-related illnesses and how the community will be involved in interpreting study outcomes. Describe efforts that will ensure the partnership activity will likely continue after the current phase of funding. Finally, describe dissemination approaches that will build capacity at the academic institution and among academic investigators (e.g., demonstrating the value of community-partnered participatory research for faculty development, increasing faculty interest in a program of research focused on community-partnered participatory scholarly work), as well as inform future policy efforts among maternal smoking cessation strategies.

**6. Dissemination Efforts.** Describe how project findings and lessons learned will be disseminated to the community of interest, the scientific community, and key audiences (e.g., clinicians, public health practitioners, educators, advocates, policymakers, funders, and the general public). Include plans for ongoing communication with the community, such as regular debriefs (in-person or virtual) led by Co-PIs and accessible project briefs for community and policy use. Additionally, describe how findings may be applied to other communities in California and outline a strategy for broader dissemination beyond the immediate project population.

**7. Investigative Team.** Describe how the experience, knowledge, and skills of the research team can contribute to the success of the overall project. Provide evidence that the Co-PIs and other key personnel are appropriately trained and well-suited to carry out the research. Be clear about the roles and responsibilities of the research partners. Highlight experience and successes working with the community of interest, maternal persons. Describe what is expected to be learned by the collaborative research team during the study.

**8. Environment, Facilities, and Resource Availability.** Applicants must describe how community-based settings will support successful project implementation, including the **specific resources, access, and infrastructure** provided by the Community Co-PI and partnering community-based organizations. The application should demonstrate access to the priority research population, maternal persons, and explain how community connections will facilitate recruitment, engagement, and implementation.

Applicants must describe awareness of relevant social and structural determinants of health that may affect the research environment and outline strategies to address or mitigate these factors. The application should also demonstrate preparedness to adapt research activities if community facilities or resources become temporarily unavailable.

Finally, applicants should describe resources and support available through the Academic Co-PI's institution that will uniquely contribute to project success, including research infrastructure, expertise, or administrative capacity.

**9. Community Assets.** Describe community-level assets, strengths, and access channels the applicant team proposes to utilize over the course of the study or during the dissemination phase. Describe how the project will contribute to building capacity in the community of interest for future research, tobacco control policy change, or programming activities. Provide evidence of credibility of the partnering community-based organization within the community of interest, a track record of success in delivering services or programs in the community, and representation by the community or priority population(s) of interest within the organization.

**10. Statement of Future Goals.** Begin with a brief discussion of the long-term partnership goals and research goals, as well as a description of the work the team would like to pursue in the future. Describe plans to improve maternal tobacco cessation-related services or programming, or build from where the study ends for community benefit.

For **Partnered MSCI Awards**, include a sustainability plan for promising practices derived from the research activity. Describe future plans to continually update and improve the efficacy or effectiveness of the tobacco prevention or treatment intervention developed during the Partnered MSCI funding phase. Be as specific as possible about future research plans.

**11. Literature Cited** (No Page Limit for this Section)

List relevant references. Each reference must include the title, names of all authors, book or journal, volume number, page numbers, and year of publication. The references should be limited to relevant and current literature. Be concise and select only those literature references pertinent to the proposed research.

## Human Subjects (No page limit)

**This form is required for all applications but must be completed only if the proposed study involves human subjects.** If no human subjects are involved, applicants should simply check the box to acknowledge receipt of the form.

**Special Note:** If you are planning on data from your studies with individual identifiers being accessible and possibly even maintained by both the Community Research Partner and the Academic Research Partner, please address this issue in your *Human Subjects approval* application. If you received *Human Subjects approval* through one partner's IRB, and you did not include in the IRB application that the other partner will receive a copy of the identified data during or after the study, you may be precluded from sharing the data.

Provide sufficient information in response to item (1) below to confirm there has been a determination that the designated exemptions are appropriate. Determination of exemption from DHHS regulations must be made by an approved Institutional Review Board (IRB). Documentation of IRB review must be provided before an award is made. Research designated exempt is discussed in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service Grant Application #398 Part II Supplemental Instructions for Preparing the Human Subjects Section of the Research Plan, Pages 4-5. Although a grant application is *exempt* from these regulations, it must, nevertheless, address the issues of racial/ethnic composition of the subject population, as instructed in item (2) below.

If your proposal will involve human subjects, and you have not applied for or received an exemption, you must address the seven points below. In addition, when research involving human subjects will take place at collaborating site(s) or other performance site(s) provide this information before discussing the seven points. Although no specific page limitation applies to this section, be succinct.

1. Provide a detailed description of the proposed involvement of human subjects in the work outlined in the Research Plan.
2. Describe the characteristics of the subject population, including its anticipated number, age range, and health status. It is the policy of the State of California, the University of California, and TRDRP that research involving human subjects must include males, females, and members of minority groups in study populations. Applicants must describe how racial/ethnic minorities will be included as research participants and identify the criteria for inclusion or exclusion of any sub-population. If this requirement is not satisfied, the rationale must be clearly explained and justified. For example, adequate inclusion of minorities as subjects in research studies may be impossible or inappropriate with respect to the purpose of the research, due to the health of the subjects, or for other legitimate scientific reasons. Also explain the rationale for the involvement of special classes of subjects, if any, such as fetuses, pregnant women, children, prisoners, other institutionalized individuals, or others who are likely to be from vulnerable communities. Applications without such documentation are ineligible for funding and will not be evaluated. It is not necessary in this application to document inclusion of women.

3. Identify the sources of research material obtained from individually identifiable living human subjects in the form of specimens, records, or data. Indicate whether the material or data will be obtained specifically for research purposes or whether use will be made of existing records, or data.
4. Describe the plans for recruiting subjects and the consent procedures to be followed, including: the circumstances under which consent will be sought and obtained and who will seek it, the nature of the information to be provided to the prospective subjects, and the method of documenting consent. State if the IRB has authorized a modification or waiver of the elements of consent or the requirement for documentation of consent.
5. Describe any potential risks (physical, psychological, social, legal, or other) and assess their likelihood and seriousness. Where appropriate, describe alternative treatments and procedures that might be advantageous to the subjects.
6. Describe the procedures for protecting against, or minimizing, any potential risks (including risks to confidentiality), and assess their likely effectiveness. Where appropriate, discuss provisions for ensuring necessary medical or professional intervention in the event of adverse effects on the subjects. Also, where appropriate, describe the provision for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of subjects.
7. Discuss why the risks are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits to subjects and in relation to the importance of knowledge that may be reasonably expected to result.

**Documentation of Assurances for Human Subjects.** IRB approval is not required at the time of application submission; however, please indicate whether IRB is pending. If available at the time of submission, applicants should include official Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval documentation for all participating institutions in the Appendix. Documentation should list the project title, Principal Investigator(s), and approval period. Do not include IRB protocols or supporting materials.

### ***Vertebrate Animals***

This form is required ONLY for applications involving vertebrate animals. Please refer to the TRDRP 2027 Core Call for Applications Appendix E if you require additional information on Vertebrate Animals.

### **Appendix Cover Sheet**

**All APPENDICES** must be submitted through SmartSimple as **ONE PDF**, with the Appendix Cover Sheet as **PAGE ONE**. If you plan to include print materials such as brochures, handbooks, flyers, or other supporting resources, items should be in an uploadable PDF format in advance of the application deadline. All appendix materials must be itemized on the Appendix Cover Sheet. The Research Plan must also remain fully self-contained and understandable *without reference to the Appendix*.

***The Appendix may not be used to circumvent page limitations and only materials necessary to facilitate review should be included.***

**Letters of Support and Collaboration** may be included to demonstrate endorsement of active community partnerships in the proposed research project. Letters should be as specific as possible, clearly describing the role of individual and/or organization in the design, implementation, community engagement, recruitment, evaluation, or dissemination activities of the project. Letters that outline specific are more valuable than general statements of support. All letters must be combined into **one single PDF document** for upload; please do not submit individual letters as separate files.

**Supporting Documents.** Supporting materials that are directly relevant to the proposal may be included in the Appendix to assist reviewers in evaluating the research plan. Examples include questionnaires, consent forms, interview or focus group guides, survey instruments, recruitment materials, and other essential study documents previously used in prior maternal smoking cessation efforts.

## Appendix A: Resources to Understand Community-Partnered Participatory Research

The literature references in this section are included to provide examples of the types of successful Community Partnered Research (CPPR) conducted in the United States, which the Partnered-MSCI RFP is modeled after. Materials listed below do not comprise the totality of issues to consider when conducting partnered research through authentic community-academic partnership. This is included to provide examples of equitable power sharing across the research process, how community benefit from research can be described in a publication, evaluation approaches of community-academic partnerships, and to convey the spirit of this type of research.

- A. The National Academy of Medicine (NAM) has supported the development of a conceptual model to inform community-engaged scholarship. The concepts in this model are responsive to TRDRP's conceptualization of CPPR and include helpful concepts for consideration by CPPRA applicant teams. Applicants for this grant mechanism are encouraged to review [NAM's Conceptual Model](#).
- B. More information about the community-partnered participatory research (CPPR) model can be found in this journal supplement on "CPPR Research: Strategies and Tactics for Improving Community Health" ([Volume 19 \(2009\), Supplement 6](#)) as well as in this special issue in the NLM in the Chapter titled "[The Vision, Valley, and Victory of Community Engagement](#)."
- C. This academic journal also has multiple examples of CPPR reported in publications in [Volume 28 \(2018\), Supplement 2](#) and [Volume 31 \(2021\), Supplement 1](#).
- D. The [2024 Surgeon General's report](#) on "Eliminating Tobacco-Related Disease and Death: Addressing Disparities" provides a review of the evidence on promising interventions and a vision for eliminating tobacco-related health disparities.

The articles found at the above links are not exhaustive for CPPR-based scholarships or frameworks to advance community science. Other readings relevant to collaborative research partnerships also pertain to this award type and should be considered in a thoughtfully designed research plan.

## Appendix B: Cost and Expense Guidelines

### 1) Personnel

- The Budget Summary line item for Personnel should reflect the total cost of all individuals identified as supported by the grant and their level of effort. In the personnel section of the application, be sure to name all individuals to be supported by the grant and provide their percent effort (months devoted to the project). All paid individuals must also be listed on the budget.
- Follow the NIH Guidelines and Calculation scheme for determining Months Devoted to Project, available at the links below:
  - NIH Guidelines:
  - [http://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/person\\_months\\_faqs.htm](http://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/person_months_faqs.htm)
  - NIH Calculation Scheme:  
[http://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/person\\_months\\_conversion\\_chart.xls](http://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/person_months_conversion_chart.xls)
- Provide a justification for all budgeted personnel, identifying each individual by name, role on the project, and proposed effort. When computing salary for key personnel, use only the base salary at the applicant organization, excluding any supplementary income (e.g., clinical or consulting incomes). The program does not enforce a salary cap, as long as the overall budget adheres to the costs & expenses guidelines and the amount requested stays within the allowable costs.
- TRDRP does not reimburse for the University of California Retirement Plan (UCRP) interest assessment (RPNI) costs. These charges are not allowable and should not be included under Personnel or any other budget category.

### 2) Student Tuition Fees, Graduate Student Stipends

- For non-fellowship awards: Graduate students may be paid as personnel and may also receive tuition remission and compensation in line with the relevant collective bargaining agreement. Stipends may not exceed \$60,000 per student per project year, and applies to any graduate student paid hourly or as salary. Stipend may be budgeted as salary (and included in the MTDC cost calculation) if the institution pays these expenses through a personnel line item. Tuition remission will be considered compensation and should not offset other financial aid. Undergraduate stipends and tuition and fee remission will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

- Please provide documentation of current institution rates and/or scales for requested tuition & fees and stipends.

### 3) Other Project Expenses

- Include expected costs for supplies and other research expenses not itemized elsewhere. Please pay special attention to expenses that include or exclude associated indirect costs by selecting from options in the drop-down menus in the “Included in IDC” and “Not Included in IDC” sub-categories. Cost should be broken out by year, include overall cost by category, an itemized sub-category list, and description of costs.

*Examples of justifications that meet these requirements are as follows:*

- General lab supplies, chemicals, and biochemicals and chemicals (Year 1: \$16,123; Year 2: 15,884; and Year 3: 12,810) – This cost includes purchasing routine lab supplies such as plasticware and glassware for various preparations and disposable items, including pipettes, filter units, conical tubes, gloves, etc. Research cigarettes will be needed for the studies. The use of biochemicals, proteins, extracellular matrix substances, and molecular biology enzymes, markers for various protein and nucleic acid studies will be needed throughout the study. Materials to run various agarose and polyacrylamide gels are required. CO<sub>2</sub>, dry ice, liquid nitrogen, oxygen, and various small instruments are necessary for the daily procedures performed in a molecular biology laboratory. Chemicals used throughout the various studies will be required to produce various solutions.
- Cell isolation and culture (Year 1-3: \$3000/year) - The project will employ the culture of cardiac myocytes from the various mouse models. This cost will cover collagenase, Liberase™, trypsin, serum, antibiotics, media, and other various chemicals and supplies related to these studies.
- Office Supplies / Computer (Year 1-3: \$5,000/year) - Costs are required to purchase office supplies and computer software for statistical analysis.
- Stakeholder Consultation Sessions (Year 1–2: \$3,000/year) – Local stakeholders will participate in biannual consultation sessions to inform implementation and dissemination strategies. Each participant will receive an \$75 honorarium per session.  
(20 stakeholders) × (\$75 per session) × (2 sessions per year) = \$3,000 per year
- Community Partner Engagement Stipends (Year 1–2: \$2,000/year) – Representatives of partner organizations will participate in quarterly planning meetings and contribute to project activities. Stipends will be provided to recognize time spent outside regular organizational duties.  
(5 partners) × (\$100 stipend per meeting) × (4 meetings per year) = \$2,000 per year

- Peer Facilitator Compensation (Year 1: \$1,600) – Community members will be trained to co-facilitate workshops. Facilitators will receive \$80 per session for preparation and delivery. (5 facilitators) × (\$80 per session) × (4 sessions) = \$1,600
- Pooled expenses (e.g. insurance surcharges such as GAEL, system wide networking surcharges, and other pooled training and facilities expenses) may be allowed as a direct cost at the discretion of the Program with certification of the following: 1) the project will be directly supported by the pooled expenses, 2) the pooled expenses have been specifically excluded from the indirect cost rate negotiation, and 3) the pooled expenses have been allocated consistently over time within the organization. Please explain any requested pooled expense requests in the budget justification.
- Participant Support Costs are direct costs for items such as stipends for subsistence allowances, travel allowances, and registration fees paid to or on behalf of study participants or trainees (but not employees) in connection with conferences, or training projects. If allowable, these costs are excluded from Modified Total Direct Costs (MTDC). Participant Incentives encourage an individual to participate as a research subject and may include payments, gift cards, dependent care costs, parking fees and transportation reimbursement. These costs are allowable and included in MTDC. Please ensure any Participant Incentives are described clearly in the budget justification.

#### 4) Equipment (Unit Cost Over \$5,000)

- For all Awards, each requested equipment item must be >\$5,000 and explained in the budget justification. A quote may be requested during the pre-funding period prior to the issuance of an award.

#### 5) Travel

- Please provide itemized details as to the number of travelers and mode of travel for each travel category relevant to your project.
- **Travel – TRDRP Meeting:** TRDRP may organize an event requiring your travel to the Oakland area within the funded grant period. Funds up to \$750 should be set aside for attending the Research Grants Program Office (RGPO) Meeting during the first year of the grant. All applicants, including fellowship applicants, should budget a one-time \$750 expense under year 1 in a travel budget line labeled: "Travel - TRDRP Meeting".
- **Travel - Project Related:** Project-related travel expenses are allowable only for travel directly related to the execution of the proposed research activities. Label such expenses as "Travel – Project Related." These expenses must be fully justified in the budget justification.

- **Travel - Scientific Meetings:** Scientific conference travel is limited to \$2,000 per year (excluding a mandatory allocation of \$750 in one year of the project for travel to the TRDRP Conference under Travel-TRDRP Meeting). The same limit applies to Fellowship recipients. Label such expenses as “Travel-Scientific Meetings” and explain in budget justification.

## 6) Service Contracts and Consultants

- Both categories require additional description (Budget Justification). Provide hours/rate for consultant effort on the project if applicable.

## 7) Subcontracts

- Detailed contractual budgets must be included as a subcontractor budget in the database, and letters of collaboration from each subcontract must be included in the Appendix. A subcontract is not allowed to have another subcontract.
- In the case of University of California applicants, subcontracts need to be categorized and broken out as one of two types, University of California-to-University of California (UC to UC) sub agreements or transfers; or, Other. A subcontract is not allowed to have another subcontract. Requires additional description (Budget Justification).

## 8) Indirect (F&A) Costs

- **Indirect cost policy:** Indirect costs are NOT allowed for Postdoctoral Fellowship Awards, Predoctoral Fellowship Awards, Student Research Supplement Awards, Cornelius Hopper Diversity Award Supplements, Dissemination Projects, or Scientific Conference Awards. For other awards, Non-UC institutions are entitled to full F&A of the Modified Total Direct Cost base (MTDC); UC institutional F&A is capped at 40% MTDC (25% for off-campus projects).
- **Modified Total Direct Costs (MTDC)** include salaries and wages, fringe benefits, materials and supplies, services, travel, and up to the first \$25,000 of each subgrant or subcontract (regardless of the period covered by the subgrant or subcontract) to an outside institution. MTDC does not include (indirect costs are not allowed on): capital expenditures, charges for patient care, scholarships and fellowships (including postdoctoral stipends), tuition remission and graduate student stipends, participant support costs, rental costs of space, equipment purchases more than \$5,000 per item, the portion of each sub grant and subcontract in excess of the first \$25,000, and the total cost of any subcontract from one UC

to another UC campus. On a non-fellowship award, you may apply indirect costs to graduate student salary (under salary only, not as stipend) but not to tuition & fees.

- For all eligible projects that allow grantees to recover the full amount of their federally negotiated indirect cost rate agreement, grantees must also accept the full federally recognized F&A rate for all award subcontractors (except for subcontracts to another UC institution, where F&A is capped by the statewide rate agreement as described in the RFP). If a grantee or subcontractor does not have a federally negotiated F&A rate at the time of the proposal submission, the grantee and/or subcontractor may estimate what the federally negotiated rate will be at the time of award and include this rate in the proposed budget, or may request a “De Minimis” F&A rate of 25% MTDC. A higher indirect rate that has been accepted for state or local government contract may be approved at the discretion of the Program Director and the Research Grants Program Office Executive Director.
  
- **Indirect Costs on Subcontracts**
  - The award recipient institution will pay indirect costs to the subcontractor.
  - For non-UC subcontracted partners, TRDRP will allow full F&A of the Modified Total Direct Cost (MTDC), as defined above.
  - F&A costs are not allowed for one UC institution's management of a subcontract to another UC institution.
  - The amount of the subcontracted partner’s F&A costs can be added to the direct costs cap of any award type. Thus, the direct costs portion of the grant to the recipient institution may exceed the award type cap by the amount of the F&A costs to the subcontracted partner’s institution.

## Appendix C: MSCI Other Application-Related Policies, Pre & Post Award Requirements

### *TRDRP Funding Policies and Application Procedures*

#### **Submission Process**

Submission of a Letter of Intent (LOI) is required to apply for all award mechanisms. The LOI must be submitted electronically. LOI submission instructions should be strictly followed as stated. LOIs will be programmatically reviewed for eligibility and alignment with TRDRP goals after the published deadline and applicants will be notified whether they are invited to submit a full application (see Key Dates for details). \*See sections “Scientific Eligibility Criteria” and “Letter of Intent” (LOI) process for updates to this process. \* All applicants should review the Call for Applications and [SmartSimple Submission Instructions](#) in their entirety and must complete all necessary materials using the appropriate templates and forms. Failure to comply with provided instructions or submission of incomplete forms may result in administrative rejection of the application.

#### **Review Process and Funding Decisions**

Applications will be grouped by priority area and undergo peer-review by experts from outside of California. The criteria for evaluating applications are described under each specific award mechanism section. TRDRP and its Scientific Advisory Committee will prioritize funding scientifically meritorious applications that are well-aligned with the priority areas described in this Call for Applications, which provide a balance across these priorities, and that are within the extent of funding that is available.

For more information about the funding process visit the [TRDRP website](#).

#### **Resubmission Policy**

A resubmission is an unfunded application that was submitted to TRDRP as a new application in the previous cycle (i.e. 2026) and resubmitted under the current Call for Applications (i.e. 2027). Resubmitted applications are allowed to include a 2-page resubmission statement immediately preceding the Research Plan. TRDRP will accept only a single resubmission of the same or very similar project. Any additional submissions of the same or similar topic are considered new applications and may not include a revision statement.

Applicants are still required to inform TRDRP of their intent to resubmit through an LOI submission and must note it as a resubmission (please refer to the LOI/Application instructions for the specific award type). All other applications are considered new applications.

## **Multiple Submissions Policy**

Applicants may submit LOIs for no more than two projects as Principal Investigator or Co-Principal Investigator, provided that the proposed research topics and aims are significantly different for each project. No changes to PI or Co-PI may be made after LOI submission. In the event that more than 2 LOIs are submitted, the program reserves the right to decide which, if any, LOIs to consider for invitation to FA. Predoctoral and Postdoctoral applicants may submit an LOI for only one project.

## **TRDRP Eligibility Criteria**

Investigators from California not-for-profit organizations are eligible for TRDRP funding, including but not limited to colleges, universities, hospitals, laboratories, research institutions, local health departments, community-based organizations, voluntary health agencies, health maintenance organizations and tobacco control organizations. Given their unique position in promoting health equity, for-profit community-based organizations are eligible to serve as Co-PIs on TRDRP partnered awards. The sponsoring institution, in accordance with its own policies and procedures, should designate the principal investigator (PI). The PI must supervise the research project and any trainees directly and in person. U.S. citizenship is not a requirement for eligibility.

## **California-based Community Organizations**

TRDRP will accept applications from PIs at non-profit organizations or institutions, and, on a case-by-case basis, for-profit organizations and institutions provided that the organization can manage the grant and demonstrate sound financial stewardship. The organization must also meet our liability insurance requirements. If the application is recommended for funding, the centralized business units within the Research Grants Program Office (RGPO) 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.

## **Condition of Award for UC Faculty on payroll at a non-UC entity**

In accord with University of California policy, investigators who are University employees and who receive any part of their salary through the University must submit grant proposals through their campus contracts and grants office (“Policy on the Requirement to Submit Proposals and to Receive Awards for Grants and Contracts through the University”, Office of the President, December 15, 1994). Exceptions must be approved by the UC campus where the investigator is employed.

## **Human Material and Animal Subjects**

Approvals for use of human material and animal research subjects are not required at the time of application. Applicants are encouraged to apply to the appropriate board or committee as soon as possible in order to expedite the start of the project. If all reasonable efforts are not made to obtain appropriate approvals in a timely fashion, funds may be reallocated to other potential grantees' proposed research projects.

## **Appeals of Funding Decisions:**

RGPO strives to resolve issues raised throughout the grantmaking lifecycle from funding decisions to project closeout. Before submitting an appeal or grievance, applicants are encouraged to discuss their concerns with the appropriate program officer or program director.

The only basis on which an appeal regarding the funding decision of a grant application will be considered is in the case of an alleged error in, or violation of the peer review procedures and/or process. Appeals based on substantive disagreement with the peer review evaluation will not be considered. In such cases, applicants may resubmit applications in a subsequent grant cycle. Applicant appeals must be made to the program within 30 days of funding notification. If discussions with the program do not satisfactorily resolve an applicant's issue, either the applicant or the program may contact the RGPO Executive Director for resolution. If resolution is not achieved, or if the applicant believes that a violation has occurred that has not been adequately addressed through these efforts, a formal appeal may be filed with the Vice President of Research and Innovation.

## **Pre-Funding Requirements**

Upon request, awardees must supply the following information or documents:

1. Supply approved indirect (F&A) rate agreements as of the grant's start date and any derived budget calculations.
2. Supply any missing application forms or materials, including detailed budgets and justifications for any subcontract(s).
3. IRB or IACUC applications, approvals, and/or certification of institutional monitoring of required research compliance assurance statements pertaining to the award.
4. Resolution of any scientific overlap issues with other grants or pending applications.
5. Resolution of any Review Committee and Program recommendations, including specific aims, award budget, or duration.
6. Modify the title and lay abstract, if requested.

## **Publications Acknowledgement and Open Access**

All scientific publications and other products from a RGPO-funded research project must acknowledge the funding support from UC Office of the President, with reference to TRDRP and the assigned grant ID number.

RGPO is committed to disseminating research as widely as possible to promote the public benefit. All publications based on funding received from RGPO are subject to the University's Open Access Policy which went into effect on April 22, 2014. To assist the RGPO in disseminating and archiving the articles, the grantee institution and all researchers on the grant will deposit an electronic copy of all publications in the [UC Publication Management System](#), UC's open access repository promptly after publication. Notwithstanding the above, this policy does not in any way prescribe or limit the venue of publication. The full policy is available here: <https://www.ucop.edu/research-grants-program/grant-administration/rgpo-open-access-policy.html>

## **Grant Management Procedures and Policies**

All TRDRP grant recipients must abide by other pre- and post-award requirements pertaining to Cost Share, Indirect Cost Rates, Monitoring & Payment of Subcontracts, Conflict of Interest, Disclosure of Violations, Return of Interest, Equipment and Residual Supplies, Records Retention, Open Access, and Reporting as outlined in the Grants Administration Manual (GAM) available at the link below: [https://www.ucop.edu/research-grants-program/\\_files/documents/srp\\_forms/grant\\_administration\\_manual.pdf](https://www.ucop.edu/research-grants-program/_files/documents/srp_forms/grant_administration_manual.pdf)

## **Accessibility Requirements**

All application materials are required to be uploaded in formats accessible to individuals with disabilities, including those using assistive technologies. Applicants are required to prepare and review their application materials for accessibility, and ensure all submitted application materials comply with document-relevant Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 Level AA standards. Please contact your institution for information and resources on digital accessibility tools. Additional tips and links to useful accessibility resources may be found on the [UC Office of the President Electronic Accessibility website](#).