



One Step Ahead Initiative for 2017

Frequently Asked Questions

- 1. I'd like to know more about what you're looking for. Do you have an unstated list of projects or priorities you'd like to fund?**

We are looking for projects that are one step ahead of our current thinking—as such, we are open to any idea that will push HIV science forward. We welcome all ideas that have the potential to meet the stated goals of the Call. Please contact a Program Officer if you would like to discuss your ideas.

- 2. Can I submit my materials by email or postal mail?**

All LOI and full proposal applications must be submitted via our online system, proposalCENTRAL.

- 3. Do you have the full application as a single document?**

Yes. However, the full application materials are released only to those PIs with an LOI that has been selected for full application review. If your LOI was selected and you would like receive the application materials in document form, please email a Program Officer and we will send it to you.

- 4. Do you have an example of a successful LOI or full application? (No.) What would a successful LOI or application look like?**

For the LOI, our multidisciplinary reviewers will look for innovative projects that have potential for high impact on HIV research or the HIV epidemic in California. For the full application, our external peer reviewers will look for a clear statement of the problem, a concise description of your methods or approach, a compelling explanation of why your project is innovative and significant, a linear description of the stages of your project, and a complete and well-justified budget. We suggest a thorough proofreading to ensure that your reviewers will find your application easy to understand.

- 5. Why might my LOI or my application be rejected?**

If your proposal does not conform to CHRP funding guidelines ([here](#)), we cannot approve your letter of intent. Projects that directly duplicate those in our currently funded portfolio ([here](#)) may not be as desirable as projects that are beyond our current work might be. If your project is not innovative, or the results won't make a significant contribution to moving HIV science forward, your review should reflect this.

- 6. I don't have a proposalCENTRAL account.**

Please create one. There are no exceptions to this rule.

- 7. In my profile, section 4 requests personal information that I don't want to provide. Can I decline?**
In the registration process, please skip section 4, "Personal Data for Applications", which requests private information that is neither required nor requested by the California HIV/AIDS Research Program. There are no required entries on this page. You may skip any sections that are not required, as noted by a red star.
- 8. Can I complete a partial LOI or application and then come back later?**
Yes. On each page that you complete you will find a "SAVE" button on the bottom left; please click this often, and you will be able to return to your work at any time by selecting "Edit" under the "Manage Proposals" tab.
- 9. I'm having trouble with the "Institution" field in proposalCentral.**
All prior CHRP applicants and most California research institutions/universities are in the proposalCENTRAL database. If you have trouble locating yours, try the simplest search term possible (e.g. "Davis") or contact proposalCENTRAL customer service (see below). If your institution is truly not in the database, or if you find multiple profiles for your institution, then your Contracts and Grants office must work with proposalCentral to create a single, new Institution Profile.
- 10. I'm having trouble with the "Validation" section in proposalCentral.**
If your application is complete yet you cannot "validate" it, this may have been caused by navigation away from a page before the "save" script was completed (resulting in lost data). Go back to each section, click "save", and wait for a few seconds before clicking "next". If you have further difficulty validating your LOI submission, or any other technical problem, contact proposalCENTRAL customer service using the contact information below.
- 11. For the LOI, where do I sign, or get my institutional signatures?**
No signatures are required at the LOI stage for this Initiative.
- 12. For the LOI, should I include indirect costs in my budget estimate?**
No. The LOI should include only your direct costs. For more information, see the Call for Applications.
- 13. (Added 02Feb2017; Revised 24Feb2017) My project is basic biomedical science, and the results would be applicable to anyone with HIV-1, not just those in the California epidemic. Does my work qualify as "focused on the California epidemic?"**
Most likely yes. To the degree that your work is directly related to HIV-1, basic biomedical science is allowable. It will be up to you to justify in your application the impact that the work would have on the California HIV epidemic, and how it would move the field forward for the California epidemic. Please contact a Program Officer for further clarification.
- 14. (Added 02Feb2017) For the LOI, if I submit early, can I receive early approval?**
Administrative review of LOIs may be completed on a rolling basis. LOIs that fail administrative review will be informed of this as soon as possible, in a rolling fashion; this may occur prior to the LOI deadline but this is not guaranteed. Should you submit your LOI in advance of the LOI deadline, we

will make every effort to complete LOI administrative review as soon as possible, so that any problems may be resolved (via “unsubmitting” and then newly submitting a revised LOI) before the LOI deadline. Approvals resulting from LOI merit review will be provided to all LOI applicants on the same day (April 19, 2017), so that all applicants will have 70 days to complete their submissions.

15. (Added 06Feb2017) I am a post-doc and I don’t have PI status yet, but my institution will grant me PI status if I get this grant. Can I apply?

Yes. “Principal Investigator (PI) status” is determined and designated by the applicant’s home (“sponsoring”) institution, in accordance with its own policies and procedures (not CHRP). Although in principle PI status is generally needed at the time the application (but not LOI) is filed, this is not adjudicated by CHRP. Rather, if the sponsoring institution’s Contracts and Grants Official signs off on the application, this signature indicates that the sponsoring institution considers the applicant a PI with application privileges and will provide the necessary institutional support for the PI to carry out the work. If the applicant does not yet hold PI status at the time the application is filed, but anticipates having that status either before the award is made or at the time of the award (e.g. PI status is contingent upon receiving an award), the applicant must negotiate this with their institution; the institutional signature indicates to CHRP that we can receive the application.

16. (Added 06Feb2017; Revised 24Feb2017) Are you offering any training awards in this funding cycle?

No. Training awards (such as Postdoctoral or Dissertation Awards) will not be funded in the CHRP 2017 grant cycle, but post-docs can apply if they have an idea that is One Step Ahead and could secure PI status at their institution at or before the time of the award, should one be extended. Support for trainees and mentoring are allowable costs in grant budgets in this mechanism, to the extent to which the trainee can contribute to the aims of the project and has the expertise to do so.

17. (Added 24Feb2017) Can I submit more than one proposal under this Initiative?

No. As stated in the Call for Applications, “Applicants may participate as key personnel (including PI, Co-PI, or Co-Investigator) in only ONE proposal under this Initiative.”

18. (Added 24Feb2017) Is there any advantage given to early stage investigators in the scoring?

No. In the past we have given an advantage to new investigators at the scoring stage, in order to provide support for promising new scientists. However, for this Initiative, we seek to fund visionary research, regardless of the career stage of the person who proposes the work.

19. (Added 24Feb2017) Are there any specific demographic groups which would be of particular interest under this Initiative?

No. It is up to the Investigator to justify the research population and the impact of the work on the California HIV epidemic.

20. (Added 24Feb2017) Can a community-based organization (CBO) be the lead or prime institution in a proposal, or must we partner with an academic institution?

CBOs are welcome to submit a proposal as the lead or prime institution, as long as they are not-for-profit and based in California. As the lead, any institution would need to justify their ability to conduct the work proposed. If you don’t have complete capacity at your CBO to do the work, then you may

wish to partner with academics, or clinicians, or a governmental group that does. If you do partner with another organization, you will need to be able to justify both the need for the institution and the ability of that institution to do the work proposed.

21. (Added 24Feb2017) Would a project that has existing data to build upon be seen as eligible and potentially meritorious?

Proposals will be reviewed for the degree to which they could significantly impact the HIV epidemic in California, and move the field “one step ahead.” Whether you are a current or recent grantee of CHRP won’t be taken into account, and won’t be a disallowance.

22. (Added 24Feb2017) Is there any advantage to early submission?

We will conduct administrative review of LOIs for eligibility determination on a rolling basis, as they come in, and those LOIs which are determined to be ineligible purely for administrative or technical reasons (but not merit) may receive notice of this if they are submitted early enough. Revision and resubmission to address a determination of ineligibility would be allowable, if and only if the last and final LOI submission is completed in its entirety before the final LOI deadline. By contrast, no early decisions from merit review will be available; results of all merit determinations for all LOIs will be available on the same day (see our website for details).

23. (Added 24Feb2017) Is formative work allowed, such as focus groups or surveys?

Formative work is not disallowed; you will need to justify the work as being “one step ahead”, and the final determination will be up to the peer reviewers.

What if I have more questions?

- For general questions regarding electronic submission of an LOI or application, please contact our Contracts and Grants personnel at either RGPOGrants@ucop.edu or 510-987-9386.
- For technical support with proposalCENTRAL (the online submission system), please contact pcsupport@altum.com or call 800-875-2562 between 5am and 2pm Pacific Time. You can also access online tutorials and more resources at <https://proposalcentral.altum.com/Help.asp>.
- For guidance on the suitability of a proposed project for this funding opportunity, or for questions regarding the scientific content of your application, please contact either Dr. Tyler Martz (Tyler.Martz@ucop.edu) or Dr. Lisa Loeb Stanga (Lisa.Loeb.Stanga@ucop.edu), the Program Officers for this Initiative.