



Strengthening California’s Support Systems: Novel Approaches to Support Justice-Involved Persons Living with HIV

Request for Proposals (RFP) 2025

Important Dates

RFP Release Date:	Tuesday, December 3, 2024
Questions Due:	Monday, December 9, 2024, 12:00pm PST
Answers Published:	Friday, December 13, 2024
Applications Due	Thursday, February 6, 2025, 12:00pm PST
Notification of Peer Review Outcome:	Monday, March 24, 2025, 12:00pm PST
Performance Period:	May 1, 2025 – April 30, 2029

Key Points

- The California State Office of AIDS (OA) is funding this project through the HRSA Ryan White program. Funding is contingent upon continued HRSA support.
- HRSA rules mandate a 10% cap on indirect costs.
- This is a single investigator award, but partnering with local agencies is required for successful implementation (see required Collaborative Agreement).

1. CHRP Mission and Programmatic Priorities

To cultivate evidence-based HIV, and HIV syndemic-related, research that advances healthy, stigma-free, and dignity filled California communities free from systemic racism and structural inequalities.

CHRP Programmatic Priorities: *Across every aspect of our work, the California HIV/AIDS Research Program (CHRP) seeks to fund high-risk, high-reward, high-rigor research projects that aim to substantially and rapidly advance HIV epidemic control and/or treatment, and which address research priorities and gaps not supported by other funders. Further, CHRP is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion as a means of increasing the effectiveness of its grantmaking and generating new knowledge that benefits all Californians.*

The California HIV/AIDS Research Program (CHRP) is a publicly funded grantmaking organization, administered through the Research Grants Program Office (RGPO) within the Division of Research and Innovation at the University of California, Office of the President. Since 1983, CHRP has invested more than \$383 million dollars over 2,000 research and capacity building grants to support the development, implementation, evaluation, and dissemination of innovative HIV projects through its stated [mission and strategic directions](#). These priorities align with other Ending the Epidemic(s) strategies developed by the [State of California](#), through the federal government by both the [CDC](#) and [White House Office of AIDS Policy](#), as well as globally by the [WHO](#).

2. Goals of this Funding Initiative

With this Request for Proposals (RFP), CHRP seeks to fund projects that support HRSA outreach and education goals by ensuring that justice-involved people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) receive the Ryan White funded services they are entitled to. Justice-Involved refers to any person who is engaged at any point along the continuum of the criminal justice system as a defendant (including arrest, incarceration, and community supervision).¹ CHRP will fund one single investigator award for an applicant who will work to support such efforts across the state following these aims:

- A. Fund highly innovative ideas to reduce barriers for delivery of HIV care services for underserved, justice-involved PLWHA across the state; and
- B. Conduct formative/exploratory work to assess community needs and build critical partnerships that can be leveraged to support program development; and
- C. Fund the development, implementation, and evaluation of novel demonstration projects that support outreach and education to justice-involved PLWHA across the state to ensure they receive necessary Ryan White funded services; and
- D. Develop a *Compendium of Best Practices* that can be used to operationalize programs for justice-involved PLWHA in California.

3. Background

One of the lead responsibilities of the California Office of AIDS (OA) is to coordinate state programs, services, and activities relating to HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment programs.¹ An important aspect of this is the management of the Ryan White HIV/AIDS programs funded by the Health Resources and

¹ <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DOA/Pages/OAWelcome.aspx>

Services Administration (HRSA).² Ryan White is the payer of last resort for all medical and social services for PLWHA in the United States. Ryan White RWHAP Part B funding supports the Minority AIDS Initiative (MAI), the purpose of which is to provide outreach and education to increase access to and enrollment in medication assistance programs, including the AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP) among PLWH who identify as racial or ethnic minorities.³ To fulfill this mandate, OA will undertake learning and evaluation activities to develop a *Compendium of Best Practices* for providing outreach and education to racial and ethnic minorities using evidence-informed methods.

Justice-involved persons (defined as those having recent contact or interaction with the criminal justice system as a defendant)⁴ who are also living with HIV often face substantial structural and interpersonal barriers to acquiring and maintaining consistent access to eligible Ryan White funded services.^{5 6 7} Such interruptions in HIV medical, pharmaceutical, and social services have been strongly linked to increased HIV-related morbidity and mortality among this vulnerable population and result in medication disruptions that can increase the risk of HIV transmission.^{8 9} Given the importance of supporting this population, a better understanding of best practices in delivery of Ryan White services for this population is needed.

Historically, MAI funding in California has been used to support outreach and educational programs for minority populations through local health departments or community-based organizations.¹⁰ Despite these efforts, little data is available on the impact(s) and reach of these programs. To address this gap, OA has contracted with CHRP to fund novel demonstration projects rooted in capacity building and implementation science, focused on developing and evaluating best-practices for supporting justice-involved PLWH across the state.

The long-term objective(s) are to support and evaluate the impact(s) and reach of MAI projects intended to address the needs of justice-involved PLWHA who qualify for Ryan White services across the state. This will be achieved by developing, evaluating, and documenting novel demonstration

² <https://ryanwhite.hrsa.gov/>

³ <https://ryanwhite.hrsa.gov/about/parts-and-initiatives/part-b-grants-states-territories>

⁴ [Addressing the HIV Care Needs of People With HIV in State Prisons and Local Jails \(hrsa.gov\)](#)

⁵ Moher M, Erickson M, Black P, Price M, Fraser C, Norman WV, Guillemi S, Pick N, Elwood Martin R. Improving Post-Release Care Engagement for People Living with HIV Involved in the Criminal Justice System: A Systematic Review. *AIDS Behav.* 2022 May;26(5):1607-1617. doi: 10.1007/s10461-021-03513-4. Epub 2021 Oct 27. PMID: 34705154.

⁶ Brewer R, Issema R, Moore M, Chrestman S, Mukherjee S, Odlum M, Schneider JA. Correlates of Durable Viral Suppression (DVS) Among Criminal Justice-involved (CJI) Black Men Living with HIV in Louisiana. *AIDS Behav.* 2019 Nov;23(11):2980-2991. doi: 10.1007/s10461-019-02578-6. PMID: 31250229; PMCID: PMC7231526.

⁷ Ibañez GE, Zhou Z, Algarin AB, Ayala DV, Spencer EC, Somboonwit C, Teo GM, Cook RL. Incarceration History and HIV Care Among Individuals Living with HIV in Florida, 2014-2018. *AIDS Behav.* 2021 Oct;25(10):3137-3144. doi: 10.1007/s10461-021-03250-8. Epub 2021 May 6. PMID: 33959828; PMCID: PMC8419071.

⁸ Trickey A, Zhang L, Rentsch CT, Pantazis N, Izquierdo R, Antinori A, Leierer G, Burkholder G, Cavassini M, Palacio-Vieira J, Gill MJ, Teira R, Stephan C, Obel N, Vehreschild JJ, Sterling TR, Van Der Valk M, Bonnet F, Crane HM, Silverberg MJ, Ingle SM, Sterne JAC; Antiretroviral Therapy Cohort Collaboration (ART-CC). Care interruptions and mortality among adults in Europe and North America. *AIDS.* 2024 Aug 1;38(10):1533-1542. doi: 10.1097/QAD.0000000000003924. Epub 2024 May 14. PMID: 38742863; PMCID: PMC11239093.

⁹ Moolla H, Davies MA, Davies C, Euvrard J, Prozesky HW, Fox MP, Orrell C, Von Groote P, Johnson LF; International epidemiology Databases to Evaluate AIDS Southern Africa (IeDEA-SA) Collaboration. The effect of care interruptions on mortality in adults resuming antiretroviral therapy. *AIDS.* 2024 Jul 1;38(8):1198-1205. doi: 10.1097/QAD.0000000000003859. Epub 2024 Feb 7. PMID: 38814712; PMCID: PMC11141523.

¹⁰ https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DOA/Pages/OA_CARE_Minority_AIDS_Initiative_Allocations_2021-2022.aspx

projects grounded in an implementation science framework. Based upon the project results, a *Compendium of Best Practices* and implementation strategies will be developed and delivered to OA officials to improve service delivery at the state and local level and for use in future funding efforts.

4. Objectives to be Addressed by Proposed Work

This funding opportunity will support capacity building, implementation, and evaluation of outreach and education activities designed to enhance awareness of and linkage to needed HIV/AIDS medications and Ryan White services for justice-involved PLWHA living in California. Successful applications will propose a project plan that meets these objectives:

Objective 1: Conduct capacity building to appropriately serve justice-involved PLWHA.

Objective 2: Implement and evaluate demonstration projects supporting service delivery to justice-involved PLWHA across the state.

Objective 3: Develop a *Compendium of Best Practices* to improve engagement in services, improve service delivery, and support program sustainability.

5. Eligibility

CHRP requires that applicant institutions must be non-profit research, academic, or community-based organizations located in California. CHRP will accept applicants from any non-profit organization or institution, provided that the organization can manage the grant and demonstrate financial health. The organization must also meet our liability insurance requirements. Before funding, the University will collect additional information, such as tax ID numbers and financial reports, to review the organization during the pre-funding process, ensuring all financial management and project management eligibility criteria can be met.

The applicant principal investigator (PI) is required to have PI status at a non-profit institution in California, or assurance in writing from their institution that PI status will be granted "just in time" upon an offer to fund this award. In accordance with [UC policy](#), PIs who are UC employees and who receive any part of their salary through UC must submit grant proposals through their UC campus's Contracts and Grants office. Exceptions must be approved by the UC campus where the PI is employed. Neither US citizenship nor permanent residency are requirements for the PI, nor for any personnel, to apply for or receive CHRP funding.

PIs at any stage in their careers are welcome to apply. Applicants who are key personnel on any current CHRP research awards are eligible to apply for funding under this initiative if the required scientific and fiscal reports on their existing grants are up to date. This means that Progress/Final Scientific Reports or Fiscal Reports that are more than one month overdue may subject an application to disqualification unless the issue is either (i) addressed by the PI and Institution within one month of notification, or (ii) the PI and Institution have received written permission from CHRP to allow an extension of any report deadlines.

6. Available Funding, Anticipated Number of Awards

Funding for this initiative is through a contract with the OA and comes directly from the [Health Resources and Service Administration \(HRSA\) Ryan White Part B: Minority AIDS Initiative](#). For this initiative, CHRP expects to fund 1 award, with a total budget of approximately \$4M total (including direct and indirect costs) for 4 years. The number of awards offered is not predetermined but will depend on the number of meritorious applications received. **Award notification and approval are contingent on the availability of funds. Please note that, funding allocations may be adjusted based on multiple factors: including performance, changes in federal allocation(s), and/or federal policy.**

7. Award Duration, Budget, and Requirements

The award will support four years of related activities. Initial budgets may not exceed \$4M in total costs over the entire project period. Monies can be unevenly distributed across the years in the four-year project period to adjust for project lifecycle (e.g., lower annual costs in earlier time periods during start-up and planning, and higher annual costs during implementation). Continued funding beyond year one is contingent on progress toward milestones enumerated in the application.

A full description of allowable direct costs is outlined in Appendix D of the [SmartSimple](#) Application Instructions. In general, allowable direct costs include salaries, fringe benefits, supplies, sub-contracts (out-of-state sub-contracts and collaborations are generally not allowed), equipment (defined as any item costing \$5,000 or more), and limited travel for project-related and scientific conferences. **For this award, HRSA rules require that institutional indirect costs be capped at 10%.** PIs are encouraged to discuss this requirement with their institutions before submitting a full application. Additionally, there is no requirement that non-UC institutions keep monies in an interest-bearing account.

All PIs (and Co-PIs, if applicable) must commit a minimum of 10%, or 1.2 person-months, of effort in their project budget(s) per calendar year. Periods of effort without support are allowable for other key personnel, but not for the PI.

This award is intended to support the development, implementation, and evaluation of novel programming for justice-involved PLWHA. The ultimate goal is to enhance education, outreach, and access to Ryan White services locally. Successful applications will outline their plans to:

- test intervention(s) in multiple highly impacted diverse geographic regions of the state (focusing effort only in urban counties is not sufficient).
- collaborate with one or more local agencies (e.g., CBOs, health departments, advocates) to support successful implementation and execution of programs (see *Collaborative Agreement*).
- demonstrate how program activities are consistent with California's Ending the Epidemic(s) initiatives and strategies.
- develop and disseminate a *Compendium of Best Practices* to support OA in the implementation and evaluation of programs to serve justice involved PLWHA across the state and at the local level.

8. Prospective Applicant Webinar

Due to the quick turnaround nature of this award, there will be no Webinar for this RFP.

9. Applicant Questions

Questions must be submitted in writing via email by the date and time listed on page one of this RFP. CHRP will post written responses to all submitted questions on the date listed on page one of this RFP. Questions or inquiries submitted to CHRP after this date will not be answered unless determined vital by CHRP staff and leadership; in this instance, all applicants will be notified of the question and the Program's response by email.

10. Submitting a Full Application

Full applications must be submitted by the **date and time stated on page one** of this RFP. Documents providing a comprehensive description of all application sections are found on [SmartSimple](#), as are required templates for certain sections. Proposal narratives should be succinct, self-explanatory, and organized in alignment with the sections outlined below and in supplemental attachments. The Full Application will include the following sections:

- Lay Abstract (limit 2,400 characters)
- Scientific Abstract (limit 2,400 characters)
- Specific Aims (limit 2,400 characters)
- Demographics of Anticipated Study Volunteers
- Milestones and Timetable
- Personnel Table
- Biosketches for all Key Personnel
- Budget and Justification
- Assurances (if applicable: Human Subjects; Vertebrate Animals; Biohazards; DEA Controlled Substance use)
- Project Plan (submit in the Research Plan Field)
- Collaborative Agreements (if applicable)
- Facilities

11. Peer Review and Scoring Criteria for Full Applications

All complete applications will be reviewed by a panel which includes (a) persons with lived experience in communities that are highly impacted by HIV in California, and (b) scientists who are experienced subject matter experts and peer reviewers. Reviewers will receive training and a manual of policies and procedures for application scoring and review before access to the applications is allowed. The manual is available to applicants by request. Current [RGPO policies and procedures](#) concerning confidentiality and conflicts of interest will be observed.

The following criteria will be used to assess the **Project Plan** of each proposal. **This section must not exceed 15 pages.** Scoring will reflect applicants' ability to address the following criteria:

1. **Introduction (10% of total score):** Scoring will reflect alignment with CHRP and OA missions and strategic priorities, and with local, regional, and/or national strategies for Ending the Epidemic(s) and applicants demonstrated experience working with and implementing programs for justice involved persons of color living with HIV. Briefly describe the activities you propose during this award period.
2. **Theory and Context (25% of total score):** Scoring will reflect the degree to which the proposed work is grounded in a robust framework(s) and the skillful application of those framework(s) to the methodological question at hand. Successful applications will focus early efforts on capacity building and describe how community-engaged perspectives,¹¹ such as Community Based Participatory Research or Participatory Action Research, will be incorporated into intervention development and implementation. The context in which the work will be conducted includes any agencies that you will partner with to implement the work, as well as specific communities that will be the focus of the proposed work, and the degree to which persons who have lived experience in those communities are involved in the study design and implementation.
3. **Impact and Sustainability (20% of total score):** Scoring will reflect the proposal's potential impact for increasing awareness of and linkage to appropriate Ryan White services. Scoring will also reflect the sustainability and scalability of the intervention(s) long-term, a proposed evaluation framework for ensuring program maturity over time, and the strategies for ensuring that best practices are adopted and expanded by relevant agencies, including development of the *Compendium of Best Practices*.
4. **Overall Project Plan (35% of total score):** Scoring will reflect the appropriateness and scientific rigor of the overall approach(es) used to address stated aims; and the feasibility and rigor proposed to execute all aspects of the investigation. Include what the role of community partners will be in the development and execution of proposed the approach(es).* This section should provide descriptions and justifications for sampling and recruitment strategies, statistical approaches, and project timelines.

*Note partners do not need to be identified at the time of submission.
5. **Management and Dissemination Plans (10% of total score):** The management plan should address the capacity of the team to carry out the work, the environment in which the work will be done, how the project will be managed, and strategies for addressing roadblocks that may impact completion of aims. A Collaboration Agreement is required to detail the plans for communication, data sharing, and conflict resolution with community partners and among multiple PIs, if applicable. The Collaboration Agreement should be uploaded as an appendix, which is excluded from the 15-page limit. The dissemination plan should include details for sharing the results of the work with all relevant stakeholders and the process to develop and disseminate the required *Compendium of Best Practices*.

¹¹ Lightfoot M, et. al, Addressing Health Disparities in HIV: Introduction to the Special Issue. JAIDS 2021;88(1):S1-S5.

Score values correspond to the following descriptors:

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

Reviewers will comment on but not score the following:

- **Budget:** Appropriateness of the budget request for the project. (Reviewers will provide recommendations regarding direct costs, including the relevance of budgeted items in respect to the Project aims and whether the dollars allocated are reasonable. Reviewers may recommend specific increases or reductions. If selected for funding, these items will be discussed with the Program Officer during pre-funding.)
- **Inclusion of women, minorities, and individuals across the lifespan of the Project:** If human subjects are involved, the adequacy of plans to include subjects of all genders, all racial and ethnic groups (and subgroups), as well as individuals across the lifespan (including children and elderly individuals) as appropriate for the scientific goals of the Project will be assessed.
- **(Where Applicable) Protection of Human Subjects:** Appropriate recognition of potential risks to human participants in the Project, and appropriate plans to address those risks.

12. Trainee Supplements

All projects selected for funding under this RFP will be encouraged to apply for an additional \$10,000 in supplemental funds to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in the pipeline of future investigators in the field of HIV. These supplemental funds are intended to partially support the scientific contributions to the funded project by students or trainees (high school, undergraduate, graduate/clinical, post-doctoral) from sociodemographic groups that are underrepresented among health researchers, or with lived experience in a community with elevated HIV incidence in California. PIs should consider all trainees who will promote diversity in HIV research, including trainees from diverse socioeconomic, cultural, ethnic, racial, gender, sexual orientation, ability/disability, linguistic, and geographic backgrounds, who would otherwise not be adequately represented in their field, as well as trainees who are from underserved communities and trainees who have demonstrated commitment to diversity efforts. More details will be provided to PIs with applications that are selected for funding.

13. How to Get Help

For scientific questions regarding application preparation or guidance regarding the suitability of a proposed project, contact Shoshanna Nakelsky at Shoshanna.Nakelsky@ucop.edu.

For general questions regarding the electronic submission of an LOI or application, including using [SmartSimple](#), please contact the Research Grants Program Office, Contracts and Grants Unit at RGPOGrants@ucop.edu, or 510-987-9386.

APPENDIX A: Standard Policies and Procedures for all CHRP RFPs

A. RGPO Award Pre-Funding Requirements Policy

Following notification by RGPO of an offer of funding, the PI and applicant organization must accept and satisfy standard RGPO pre-funding requirements in a timely manner. Common pre-funding requirements include:

- Supplying approved indirect (F&A) rate agreements as of the grant's start date and any derived budget calculations.
- Supplying any missing application forms or materials, including detailed budgets and justifications for any subcontract(s).
- IRB or IACU applications or approvals pertaining to the award.
- Resolution of any scientific overlap issues with other grants or pending applications.
- Resolution of any Review Committee and Program recommendations, including specific aims, award budget, or duration.
- Modify the title and lay abstract, if requested.

B. Stipulations

Funding: Awards are contingent upon availability of funding, as well as compliance with all project and reporting requirements. Grantees will be subject to funding renewal on an annual basis. The number of awards made will depend on the number and quality of applications received.

Eligibility and Award Limits: Please review the RFP for all eligibility requirements.

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 grant office (“Policy on the Requirement to Submit Proposals and to Receive Awards from 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 or animal subjects: Approvals or exemptions for the use of human or animal subjects are not required before the time of LOI or full application submission or review but will be required before any funded work with such subjects commences. Principal Investigators are encouraged to apply to the appropriate board or committee as soon as possible after submitting a proposal to expedite the start of the project.

If a project proposes activities that pose unacceptable potential for human and animal subject risks, then a recommendation either not to fund or to delay funding until the issue is resolved may result.

IRB approval, human subject “exemption” approval, or animal assurance documentation must be provided prior to funding, but is not needed for application review. Applicants are encouraged to apply to the appropriate board or committee as soon as possible to expedite the start of the project, and you must do so before or **within 21 days of notification that an award has been offered**. 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.

Grants management procedures and policies: Details concerning the requirements for grant recipients are available in the latest version of the [Grants Administration Manual](#).

Application and award confidentiality: CHRP maintains confidentiality for all submitted applications with respect to the identity of applicants and applicant organizations, all contents of every application, and the outcome of reviews. For those applications that are funded, CHRP makes public: (i) the project title, Principal Investigator(s), the name of the organization, and award amount; (ii) direct and indirect costs in CHRP's annual report, (iii) the project abstract on the CHRP website. If the Program receives a request for additional information on a funded grant, the Principal Investigator and institution will be notified prior to the Program's response to the request. Any sensitive or proprietary intellectual property in a grant will be redacted and approved by the PI(s) and institution prior to release of the requested information. No information will be released without prior approval from the PI for any application that is not funded.

Award Decisions: Applicants will be notified of their funding status in December. The written application critique from the review committee, the merit score average, component scores, percentile ranking, and programmatic evaluation are provided later. Some applications could be placed on a 'waiting list' for possible later funding.

Publications acknowledgement: 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 the CHRP and the assigned grant ID number.

Open access: 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 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>

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 the 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.

Grant Management Procedures and Policies

All 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. Details concerning the requirements for grant recipients are available in a separate publication, the University of California, Office of the President, "[RGPO Grant Administration Manual](#)." The latest version of the Manual and programmatic updates can be obtained from the Program's office or viewed on our website.

