



Youth Mental & Sexual Health Research Call for Applications 2022

Key Dates and Deadlines

April 1, 2022	Call for Applications Released
April 21, 2022	Applicant Webinar
May 19, 2022	Letters of Intent Due
July 21, 2022	Full Applications Due
November 10, 2022	Notification of Peer Review Outcome
February 1, 2023	Award Start Date

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.

Award Overview

Reported worsening of youth mental health and rising sexually transmitted infection (STI) rates highlight the need for greater research focus on the intersection of youth mental and sexual health wellness. Recent events like the COVID-19 pandemic have further increased concerns of worsening mental health among youth. LGBTQ+ youth are particularly vulnerable to poorer mental health. Specifically, LGBTQ+ youth have higher risk of substance use, depression, and suicide than their peers and may have associated higher risk for STI and HIV exposure.^{1,2} Further, within California, 18% of new HIV infections are reported in 13-24 year olds and only 13% of Pre-exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) users are within this age group.³ The compounding biological, social, and societal pressures during the transitional phases of adolescences and young adulthood make this an important time for intervention. Through this call for applications, the California HIV/AIDS Research Program (CHRP) aims to fund up to \$3.15 million of research on integrated mental and sexual health wellbeing interventions for LGBTQ+ youth in California.

Recognizing that mental health can affect HIV prevention and treatment behaviors, this funding mechanism aligns to CHRP's strategic directions of: (1) A complexity science approach that appreciates the dynamic, interconnected relationships between biological, personal, social, and structural

¹ Johns MM, Lowry R, Andrzejewski J, et al. Transgender Identity and Experiences of Violence Victimization, Substance Use, Suicide Risk, and Sexual Risk Behaviors Among High School Students — 19 States and Large Urban School Districts, 2017. MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep 2019;68:67–71

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data Summary & Trends Report 2009-2019.

³ AIDSvu. Local Data: California. 2019. Accessed at: <https://aidsvu.org/local-data/united-states/west/california/>

determinants of HIV infection risk and associated morbidity, and (2) Adopts a syndemics approach to health and disease that addresses common HIV-co-morbidities.

Award Specifics

The goal of this funding mechanism is to support investigator-initiated research that assesses implementation strategies for integrated mental and sexual health wellness interventions for LGBTQ+ youth in California. Specific requirements of this mechanism are:

- Proposals should be centered around LGBTQ+ youth, 26 years of age and younger, who live in California
- Proposals must focus on mental health and sexual health
- Proposals must include HIV-specific outcome measures (e.g. changes in HIV risk and/or prevention behaviors, uptake of HIV testing, HIV treatment adherence etc.)
- Development of novel, untested technology applications for the sole purpose of this research study will not be considered eligible
- Refinement of existing technology applications already in use to support sexual health or mental health can be adapted for the integration of the other health focus area or for the youth population, and evaluated under this mechanism
- Proposals will be required to outline sustainability plans following the end of the research period
- Proposals can request up to 3 years of research support
- Budgets may not exceed \$200,000 direct cost per year and \$600,000 direct costs over the entire grant period

Applicants are encouraged to consider:

- A focus on supporting Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) youth populations
- Youth employment on the study team
- Youth representation on any planned advisory boards
- Human centered design approaches
- Partnership with service providers, community based organizations, or technology developers with existing services or products focused on LGBTQ+ youth, mental health or sexual health

Eligibility

Principal Investigators from non-profit research, academic, or community-based institutions located in California are eligible to apply. Principal Investigators must commit at least 1.2 person-months (10% FTE) effort per year to the project. Current recipients of CHRP research funding are eligible to apply for funding under this initiative. US citizenship is not a requirement.

Investigators may submit only one application as principal investigator to this Call for Applications; failure to comply with this requirement will result in the rejection of all of their applications before review. It is allowable for a principal investigator on one application to serve in a different role on

additional applications. Individuals, organizations, and health systems/jurisdictions may participate in more than one application under this mechanism.

Applicants who do not yet hold “principal investigator” status at their institution may apply for this funding mechanism as a principal investigator if they include assurance from their institution that such status would be granted if the application were selected for funding.

In accordance with [UC policy](#), principal investigators who are UC employees and who receive any part of their salary through UC must submit grant proposals through their UC campus Contracts and Grants office. Exceptions must be approved by the UC campus where the principal investigator is employed.

Budget

Award budgets for this mechanism cannot exceed \$200,000 (direct costs) per year for up to 3 years (\$600,000 total direct costs). Proposal budgets may include direct costs to support the proposed research activities only. Institutions are eligible for additional indirect costs of up to 30% of total eligible direct project costs or at the rate established for the institution through a U.S. Department of Health and Human Services negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (or another similarly established rate), whichever is lower. Both University of California (UC) and non-UC institutions are eligible for indirect costs.

How to Apply

A **Letter of Intent (LOI)** will be required for all applications. The LOI will be reviewed by CHRP staff for responsiveness to the Call for Applications and satisfaction of all eligibility criteria.

LOI submissions will be required to include:

- Proposal title (100 characters or less)
- Estimated budget amount and requested award term
- A scientific abstract summarizing the proposed research (2400 characters max)
- Specific aims of the research (2400 characters max)
- Selection of relevant CHRP Research Priority Areas, Focus Area, and Subject Area
- Applicant Electronic Signature and Date

LOIs will be due by **May 19, 2022**. Applicants with an approved LOI will be notified via SmartSimple (<https://ucop.smartsimple.com>) and gain access to the full application materials. No application may move forward without an approved LOI. Applications will be due on **July 21, 2022** by noon, Pacific Time.

Applicants are responsible for following the policies, procedures, and timelines required by their institutions and for confirming that any collaborators have secured institutional approval, if required, in advance of application submission.

Use SmartSimple (<https://ucop.smartsimple.com/>) to submit your LOI and application. Instructions on how to use SmartSimple are available in a separate document, accessible online here: [SmartSimple Submission Instructions](#)

Prospective Applicant Webinar

CHRP will hold a webinar on **April 21, 2022 at noon** to provide an overview of the intent of the award mechanism and the application process. The webinar will also allow prospective applicants the opportunity to ask questions about the application and review process. Information on how to access the applicant webinar will be posted on the CHRP website:

<http://www.californiaaidsresearch.org/funding-opportunities/index.html>.

Application Review Criteria

All submitted full applications will undergo peer review. The criteria to assess the merit of applications will be:

Research Methods and Dissemination (50% scoring weight): Does the proposal build off previous, foundational research in the areas of mental and sexual health? How well integrated is the mental health and sexual health intervention? How robust and feasible are the proposed methods and timeline? Are the outcome measures, including HIV-specific outcomes, appropriate? Is the focus on the research population well justified and does it meet the criteria outlined in the call (LGBTQ+ youth, 26 years of age and younger, who live in California)? How involved is the study population in the design, implementation, and evaluation of the intervention? Does the outlined dissemination plan allow multiple stakeholders, including the study population, to learn from the outcomes and key lessons of the study?

Impact (30% scoring weight): How impactful will this study be on improving mental and sexual health outcomes within this population and for the field of HIV? Will the proposed research have the potential to be sustainable and scalable once the study period ends?

Expertise, Collaboration, and Capacity (20% scoring weight): Are the researchers appropriately trained and suited to conduct the study? Does the research team bring complementary and integrated expertise, with strong potential for successful collaboration? Is there sufficient evidence that the participating institutions can conduct the research and administer the award? Does the study environment contribute to the probability of success? Does the proposed collaboration strengthen the research plan?

Other considerations: Reviewers will evaluate but not score the following items:

- Budget: Appropriateness of the budget request for the project.
- Protection of Human Subjects from Research Risk: If human subjects are involved, appropriateness of protections from research risk relating to human subjects participation in the proposed research.

- Inclusion of Women, Minorities and Children in Research: If human subjects are involved, the adequacy of plans to include subjects of all genders, all racial and ethnic groups (and subgroups) and children as appropriate for the scientific goals of the research will be assessed. Plans for the recruitment and retention of human subjects will be evaluated.

Stipulations

Funding: Awards are contingent upon availability of funding, as well as compliance with all research 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.

Human or animal subjects: Approvals or exemptions for the use of human or animal subjects are not required before the time of LOI submission or review, but will be required before any funded work commences. Principal Investigators are encouraged to apply to the appropriate board or committee as soon as possible after submitting an application to expedite the start of the project.

Grants management procedures and policies: Details concerning the requirements for grant recipients are available in the “RGPO Grant Administration Manual.” The latest version of the Manual is accessible online at: <https://www.ucop.edu/research-grants-program/grant-administration/index.html>

Appeals of review decisions: Final funding decisions are at the discretion of the CHRP Director, and are subject to oversight from the CHRP Advisory Council and the Research Grants Program Office. Decisions may not be appealed, but declined proposals may be submitted to future funding competitions without prejudice.

Open Access

All scientific publications and other products from a RGPO-funded research project must acknowledge the funding support with reference to CHRP 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](#). 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.

Contact Information

For general questions regarding the electronic submission of an LOI or application, please contact our Contracts and Grants personnel at RGPOGrants@ucop.edu.

For questions regarding the suitability or content of an application, please contact Lisa Loeb Stanga (lisa.loeb.stanga@ucop.edu), the Program Officer for these awards.