



## Measuring the Impact of Racism on the HIV Epidemic in California

### Request for Proposals 2023

#### Important Dates

Request for Proposals (RFP) Announced:	Monday, April 3, 2023
Applicant Webinar for All RFPs:	Thursday, April 27, 2023, 10:00-11:30 AM (will be recorded)
Questions Due:	Friday, May 5, 2023, 5:00 PM
<b>Letters of Intent (LOI) Due:</b>	<b>Thursday, May 25, 2023, 12:00 PM</b>
<b>Invited Applications Due:</b>	<b>Thursday, July 27, 2023, 12:00 PM</b>
Notification of Peer Review Outcome:	Friday, December 1, 2023, 12:00 PM
Performance Period:	February 1, 2024 – January 31, 2026

#### New or Notable

- **New:** All questions related to this RFP must be submitted in writing by May 5<sup>th</sup> 2023, with responses being posted to our website within two weeks. No questions will be answered after this date unless determined vital.
- **New: Sex as a Biological Variable:** Both sex and gender and their interactions can influence molecular and cellular processes, clinical characteristics, as well as health and disease outcomes. For this reason, applicants are expected to address how relevant biological variables, such as sex assigned at birth and sex hormone levels, are factored into research designs and analyses for all studies in primary cell lines, vertebrate animals, and humans. See Section 12 (“Peer Review and Scoring Criteria for Full Applications”) for more information.
- Among all LOIs received, only the 25 most meritorious will be accepted and invited to submit a full application. See Section 10 (“Submitting a Letter of Intent”) for more information.

## 1. CHRP Mission and Programmatic Priorities

*Our mission is to support scientists in California to develop, evaluate, and disseminate innovative research for (a) eliminating new HIV infections, (b) optimizing treatment uptake and outcomes for all persons living with HIV, and (c) addressing the comorbidities and social determinants that threaten the health and well-being of persons at risk for or living with HIV.*

**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 over \$383 million dollars through 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 globally by the [WHO](#).

## 2. Goals of this Funding Initiative

We recognize racism as one of the root causes of health inequities and need validated measures of the impact of racism to craft interventions and policies which will move us closer to equity. In California, racism impacts the HIV and sexually transmitted infections (HIV-STI) epidemics in disproportionate incidence, prevalence, and sequelae among our communities of color, through pathways such as access to sexual health services, sexual stigma, and sexual health decision making. With this Request for Proposals (RFP), CHRP seeks to acknowledge and address the historical impacts of racism in our communities, and to fund pilot studies to develop methods of measuring the impact of racism on HIV-STI related outcomes among communities in California that are highly impacted by HIV. Funded projects will contribute to establishing a rigorous methodological base upon which researchers can build evidence-based cases for identifying, understanding, and dismantling systems which have perpetuated racism against people living with or at risk for HIV-STI in California. The research funded by this initiative should yield valid, replicable, and theoretically-derived **measures of the impact of racism** on the HIV-STI epidemics in California. This includes structural, systemic, institutional, and/or interpersonal racism (see the video [Structural Racism Explained](#) by the Othering and Belonging Institute for disambiguation<sup>1</sup>).

CHRP intends to award between \$1,600,000 and \$2,800,000 by February 1, 2024, to fund five to nine **methodologically-focused pilot awards that will address how to measure the impact of racism on the HIV-STI epidemics in California**. Specifically, this research initiative aims to:

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<sup>1</sup> [Structural Racism Explained](#), Structural Racism Teaching Guide. Othering and Belonging Institute, UC Berkeley, 10 January 2023.

- A. Support investigator-initiated pilot studies that will **establish, refine, or strengthen evidence-based methods** of measuring the impact of racism on the HIV-STI epidemics in California;
- B. Create the **first publicly-funded cohort** of methodological pilot studies of the impact of racism on HIV-STI related outcomes in California;
- C. Produce a body of scholarship that will not simply document disparities but **move the field forward** toward challenging and eliminating them;
- D. Establish **rigorous anti-racism research as essential** in California’s Ending the Epidemics efforts;
- E. Position California researchers, especially those who have faced racism themselves, to secure **funding for larger research projects**, and successful careers in anti-racism research in HIV-STI;
- F. Support diversity in the pipeline of future investigators with **additional funding for students** and trainees from diverse and underrepresented communities, from communities that are highly impacted by HIV in California, and/or who have demonstrated commitment to diversity efforts.

### 3. Background

In California, the harms caused by HIV-STI are concentrated among communities of color. About 17% of persons here who are newly diagnosed with HIV are Black/African American, but only 6% of all persons living in California identify this way; in addition, fully half of Californians living with HIV are Latinx, but only 39% of our population identify as Latinx (data from 2019)<sup>2</sup>. Beyond the data are the stories of our people, of how racism and HIV-STI have brought suffering, and how communities of color have shown resilience and thrived. What would the health and HIV-STI-related landscapes of these communities look like today in the absence of racism? How did racism influence the trajectory of the HIV-STI epidemics in California? What proportion of the harms that we see today as caused by HIV-STI among individuals and communities might be attributed more accurately to racism?

We also look to the future: By how much could HIV-STI incidence decrease in the next ten years if we addressed racism? How can we improve measurement scales and methodologies to effectively capture exposure to racism leading to negative HIV-STI outcomes? How can we identify the most effective interventions for reducing the impact of racism on HIV-STI outcomes?

*“Systems, laws, and policies have created racial inequities in health and its determinants; systems, laws, and policies can eliminate those inequities.” Braveman et. al, 2022<sup>1</sup>*

The active process of defining, diagnosing, and deinstitutionalizing racism, hereafter referred to as anti-racism practice, aims to change how our systems perpetuate power imbalances, and to see that power shift to be centered in communities of color. Anti-racism HIV-STI

research seeks to explicitly examine the role that racism has played in the unfolding of the HIV-STI epidemics. Anti-racism practice requires that researchers reflect on the power structures that we create or reify as we construct and conduct our research agendas: community-centered approaches such as Community Based Participatory Research (CBRP), Community Driven Research (CDR), and Participatory Action Research (PAR) can inform equitable, reciprocal, and non-transactional distribution of power<sup>3</sup> while we design, conduct, and disseminate the results of our research.

<sup>2</sup> California Department of Public Health, Office of AIDS. *California HIV Surveillance Report – 2019*. Accessed [here](#).

<sup>3</sup> Maiter S, Simich L, Jacobson N, Wise J. Reciprocity: An Ethic for Community-Based Participatory Action Research. *Action Research* 2008;6(3): 305-325.

It is essential that anti-racism research incorporate a strengths-based lens: Our communities are rich with shared experiences of and adaptations to structural racism (racial discrimination that is fostered by mutually reinforcing systems/policies of housing, education, employment, wealth, health care, and criminal justice, which then reinforce discriminatory beliefs and behaviors, which then shape the distribution of and access to the shared resources in our society<sup>4</sup>). What are the community-based strategies that persons exposed to racism have used to resist, mitigate, or overcome the impact of racism on their lives, and how might they work for persons living with or at risk for HIV-STI in California?

In 2023, the HIV-STI research field is newly empowered to address the impacts of racism on the health of our shared communities: In the past year, both California<sup>5</sup> and the White House<sup>6</sup> officially recognized racism as a serious public health threat that drives HIV-STI outcomes in their formal strategic plans, and both called us to action to address the impact of racism on those outcomes. Before we can create interventions and policies to do this, the field urgently needs “sound empirical characterizations of the nature<sup>7</sup>” of racism, and of its impacts on the HIV-STI epidemics. Our first step will be building an array of theoretically-grounded, validated measures of the impact of each type of racism upon our health.

This research initiative will support innovative pilot projects that seek to define, establish, test, and/or validate measures of the impact of racism on the HIV-STI epidemics in California, consistent with CHRP’s strategic goal of addressing the social determinants that threaten the health and well-being of persons at risk for or living with HIV.

#### 4. Research Objectives to be Addressed by Proposed Work

This funding opportunity will support innovative investigator-initiated **methodologically-focused pilot awards that will address the impact of racism on the HIV-STI epidemics in California**. Successful applications will propose research that meets these objectives:

**Objective 1:** Addresses a significant methodological issue(s) that researchers will face when seeking to measure the impact of racism on the HIV-STI epidemics in California, and frame it as a compelling research question;

**Objective 2:** Is grounded in an anti-racism framework, such as Public Health Critical Race praxis (which considers how racialization, race consciousness, and social location contribute to the interaction of racism and HIV-related health outcomes<sup>8</sup>);

**Objective 3:** Demonstrates commitment to and respect for the community of interest (a racial-ethnic minority population that has been historically marginalized in California due to racism) via a community-engaged perspective<sup>9</sup>, such as Community Based Participatory Research, Community Driven Research, or Participatory Action Research;

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<sup>4</sup> Bailey ZD, Krieger N, Agenor M, Graves J, Linos N, Bassett M. Structural Racism and Health Inequities in the USA: Evidence and Interventions. *Lancet* 2017;398:1453-63.

<sup>5</sup> California Department of Public Health, Office of AIDS. *Ending the Epidemics: Addressing HIV, Hepatitis C, and STIs in California – Integrated Statewide Strategic Plan Overview, 2022 – 2026*. Accessed [here](#).

<sup>6</sup> The White House Office of National AIDS Policy, *National HIV/AIDS Strategy, 2022 – 2025, What You Need to Know*. Accessed [here](#).

<sup>7</sup> Hardeman RR, Homan RA, Chantarat T, Davis BA, Brown TH. Improving the Measurement of Structural Racism to Achieve Antiracist Health Policy. *Health Affairs* 2022;40(2).

<sup>8</sup> Ford CL, Airhihenbuwa CO. The Public Health Critical Race Methodology: Praxis for Antiracism Research. *Social Science and Medicine* 2010: 71;1390-1398.

<sup>9</sup> Lightfoot M, et. al, Addressing Health Disparities in HIV: Introduction to the Special Issue. *JAIDS* 2021;88(1):S1-S5.

**Objective 4:** Proposes a robust approach, including a rigorous study design, methods that are appropriate to answer the research question, and a clear path toward yielding the preliminary data needed to successfully compete for larger research grants from other funders.

Proposals are welcome to address anti-Black racism in particular and are equally welcome to address any aspect of any type of racism that is appropriate for the context and/or community in which the work is centered. Examples of methodological issues that might be addressed include but are not limited to:

- How to measure self-perceived racism without triggering further trauma among persons with intersectional experiences of discrimination and injustice, such as persons who have experienced racism and sexual-orientation-based discrimination; racism and gender-based discrimination (especially transphobia); racism and stigma around injection drug use, and similar intersectional experiences and identities;
- How to measure structural racism at the neighborhood level while accounting for geographic boundaries in communities that are not defined by geographic boundaries, such as persons who work in the sex trade on mobile dating apps;
- Using ethnographic frameworks to develop measures of the impact of structural interventions on racism and HIV-STI acquisition/transmission;
- Developing and/or validating novel scales and indices to assess the downstream effects of racism-related interventions in communities that are highly impacted by HIV;
- Developing new or adapting existing critical path and intermediary pathway models of the impact of racism (and specific policies supporting racism) on HIV-STI-related health outcomes;
- How to measure inequities using the ecological framework instead of asking individuals to report their personal experiences with racism;
- How to effectively operationalize the use of a life-course approach when measuring the cumulative impact of racism on HIV-STI risk over a lifetime <sup>10</sup>;
- Measuring environmental racism and its effects on HIV/STI acquisition/transmission;
- Thought leadership on methodological frameworks/ methods that are needed for future work.

Examples of HIV-STI specific questions that might be addressed by the new methods include:

- How does racism contribute to lower access to HIV-STI treatment for specific communities and leads to poorer HIV-STI related health outcomes?
- How does racism affect/determine relative access to emerging HIV prevention technologies (such as long-acting antiretroviral therapy or prevention)?
- How do discriminatory policies and practices against people of color who are incarcerated impact viral suppression among persons who are currently or were recently incarcerated?
- How does systemic discrimination against transgender persons of color impact their ability to access HIV-STI treatment and/or prevention services in California?
- How have racist housing policies impacted HIV-STI outcomes among affected communities?
- How do disparities in incarceration among Black individuals affect HIV-STI epidemiology in predominantly Black communities?
- How can the measurement of structural racism better incorporate intersectionality experiences (e.g. through the integration of other disciplines/methodological approaches)?

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<sup>10</sup> Hardeman RR, Homan RA, Chantarat T, Davis BA, Brown TH. Improving the Measurement of Structural Racism to Achieve Antiracist Health Policy. *Health Affairs* 2022;40(2).

- How can race be incorporated into statistical or machine learning analyses assessing HIV-STI outcomes?
- How can we prioritize racial inequities when evaluating HIV-STI intervention impact (and cost-effectiveness)?

We expect that projects will:

- Not conflate race with racism<sup>11</sup>;
- Foster the meaningful engagement of stakeholders in the design, conduct, interpretation, and dissemination of the research, using a community-engaged perspective<sup>12</sup>;
- Develop non-transactional relationships with any collaborators; include community members on study team, paid commensurate to their value on the project;
- Report research results with and to the community in creative and accessible ways (e.g., beyond research manuscripts, rather using short-form videos, livestreams, and whatever media is accessible to the community that is centered and served by the work);
- Include partnerships with other disciplines (such as sociology, anthropology, health economics, the arts, and others) in the development stage of their ideas and throughout the project period to build on existing foundational work in anti-racism science;
- Demonstrate a complexity science approach that appreciates the dynamic, intersectional identities of research participants and the biological, personal social, and structural determinants that impact their health;
- Address sex as a biological variable (SABV): CHRP requires all proposals in all areas of study to account for sex as a biological variable in the Research Plan. See Section 11 below.

## 5. Eligibility

PIs at any stage in their careers are welcome to apply.

Applicant **PI may submit only one LOI to this RFP**; failure to comply with this requirement will result in the rejection of all of their applications before review under this RFP. **Multiple principal investigators (Co-PI) are allowed** under this mechanism. PIs may also serve in different roles (e.g., Co-PI, Co-Investigator) on additional applications under this RFP. Individuals, community-based organizations, and health systems/jurisdictions may participate in more than one application under this mechanism.

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.

The applicant 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

<sup>11</sup> Adkins-Jackson PB, Chantarat T, Bailey ZD, Ponce NA. Measuring Structural Racism: A Guide for Epidemiologists and Other Health Researchers. *Am J Epidemiol*. 2022 Mar 24;191(4):539-547.

<sup>12</sup> Lightfoot M. Addressing Health Disparities in HIV: Introduction to the Special Issue. *JAIDS* 2021;88(1):S1-S5.

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 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.

CHRP requires that applicant institutions are non-profit research, academic, or community-based institutions 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 to ensure all financial management and project management eligibility criteria can be met.

## **6. Available Funding, Anticipated Number of Awards**

CHRP receives its funding as part of the University of California's unrestricted general fund revenue from the State of California. For this initiative, CHRP expects to fund five to nine awards, with a total anticipated investment ranging from \$1,687,500 to \$3,037,500. The number of awards to be offered is not predetermined but will depend on the number of meritorious applications received. Awards are contingent on the availability of funds, and funding allocations may be adjusted based on performance (criteria will be provided in the instructions for the Full Application).

## **7. Award Duration, Budget, and Requirements**

Each award will support up to two year(s) of related activities. Initial budgets may not exceed **\$337,500 in total costs (including direct costs up to \$250,000 and indirect costs up to 35%)** over the entire project period. Monies can be unevenly distributed across the years in the two-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).

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 (project-related and/or scientific conference travel). The RGPO [Grants Administration Manual](#) outlines all policies and regulations with respect to allowable indirect costs (IDC), which is **capped at 35%**, and other restrictions on use of funds. Some institutions will not accept awards with IDC capped at 35%; PIs may wish to discuss this requirement with their institutions before submitting a full application. Continued funding beyond year one is contingent on progress toward milestones enumerated in the application.

The PI (and Co-Principal Investigators, if applicable) must commit a minimum of 10%, or 1.2 person-months, of effort in each project year, with support. Periods of effort without support are allowable for other key personnel, but not for the PI (or Co-PIs).

## 8. Prospective Applicant Webinar

CHRP will hold an informational webinar (see date on page one of this RFP) to provide an overview of the intent of the award mechanism(s), the application process(es), and allow prospective applicants and community members to ask questions relevant to their submission. Information on how to access the applicant webinar, and a recording of the webinar, will be posted on the [CHRP website](#). During the webinar potential applicants will have the opportunity to submit questions, or ask for clarifications, through the chat window. We request that questions be submitted by chat so a written record can be retained.

## 9. Applicant Questions that Arise After the Webinar

After the webinar prospective applicants can submit additional questions via email by the date and time listed on page one of this RFP. CHRP will post written responses to all submitted questions on our website within two weeks. Questions or inquires submitted to CHRP after this date will not be answered unless determined vital by CHRP staff and leadership; in this instance all potential applicants who have initiated an LOI in [SmartSimple](#) will be notified of the question and the Program's response by email.

## 10. Submitting a Letter of Intent (LOI)

RGPO uses [SmartSimple](#), an electronic submission portal, for all official correspondence (e.g., LOI and application submission). PIs are required to register and use their accounts. Complete LOIs must be submitted via [SmartSimple](#) no later than on the date and time shown on page one. LOIs received after the deadline will not be accepted. Any partnerships involved are allowed to be in formative stages at the time of LOI submission but must be established by the time of full application submission. Official signatures are not required by CHRP at the LOI stage; however, any differing applicant institutional policies supersede CHRP policy.

Investigators can submit only one LOI as PI to this RFP but can submit as PI to other CHRP RFPs in the current cycle. A complete LOI for this RFP consists of the following, in the order they appear in [SmartSimple](#):

- Project Title (100 characters)
- Project Duration (up to two years), Performance Period (enter dates on page one of this RFP)
- Referral Source(s)
- PI Applicant Profile and Contact Details (including ORCID ID)
- LOI Scientific Abstract** (limit 2,400 characters): Abstracts should be descriptive of the work, with less methodological detail than the Specific Aims section. Include three sections:
  1. **Issue:** Proposals will address significant methodological issue(s) that researchers will face when seeking to measure the impact of racism on the HIV epidemic in California – in your abstract, explain what issue your proposal will address, and restate it framed it as a compelling research question. Explain why the work is significant and innovative.



2. **Framework:** Identify any anti-racism and/or community-engaged perspective(s) that your proposal will be grounded in; describe how they will inform the work.
  3. **Approach:** Provide a high-level description of your research plan; briefly list the project's specific aims and explain in plain language how they serve the larger goals; provide a brief overview of the research design and methods, and why they were chosen; and explain how the work will yield the preliminary data needed to successfully compete for larger grants.
- LOI Specific Aims** (limit 2,400 characters): Specific aims pages are a scientific summary of the application as a whole, in which you convey (but don't describe) the importance of the work proposed, the rigor of the approach, and the skill that you have brought to designing the project. Include three sections:
1. **Context:** Concisely state the problem that the work is addressing, using scientific language rather than descriptive language; name theoretical model(s) that inform the study design, and anti-racism frameworks and/or community-engaged perspectives drawn upon.
  2. **Methods:** Describe any hypotheses to be tested; describe the research design in detail, including data collection and analysis methods; summarize the expected outcome(s); and describe the impact that those outcomes may have on the field.
  3. **Aims:** List the specific aims individually and with high specificity; summarize the expected outcome(s); and describe the impact that those outcomes may have on the field.
- CHRP Research Priority Area; Subject Area; Focus Area (see LOI instructions)
- Suggested Reviewers (optional)
- Total Amount of Funding Requested **per Project Year** (direct costs only)
- Applicant Electronic Signature and Date.

**Competitive Review of Letters of Intent:** After review by CHRP staff to ensure that the applicant and institution(s) meet eligibility criteria (Sections 4 and 5 of this RFP), **merit-based peer-review triage will be conducted at the LOI stage** to invite no more than the 25 most meritorious LOIs to submit full applications; our intention is to engage fewer scientists with the labor-intensive requirements of writing the full proposal, which in turn will increase the proportion of applications we are able to fund. All letters of intent will be reviewed by at least two persons who are subject matter experts. Reviewers will receive a manual of policies and procedures for LOI scoring and review before distribution of any LOI content; the manual is available to applicants by request. Current [RGPO policies and procedures](#) concerning confidentiality and conflicts of interest will be observed. Letters of Intent will be extracted from SmartSimple without investigator or institutional identifiers and these "blinded" files will be sent to the review panel. Reviewers who recognize the identity of and have a potential conflict of interest with an applicant or institution will recuse themselves from all applicable LOIs/applications.

Reviewers will assign three component scores to each LOI, reflecting their relative scientific merit:

- **LOI ONLY: Anti-Racism Framework/Theory and Context (40% of LOI score)**
- **LOI ONLY: Significance of the Research Question and Potential Impact (30% of LOI score)**
- **LOI ONLY: Approach and Feasibility (20% of LOI score)**
- **LOI ONLY: Innovation (10% of LOI score)**

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

Final LOI scores will be ranked, and **the 25 most meritorious LOIs by score will be advanced to the invited full proposal stage**. All final invitation decisions will take into account programmatic priorities such as portfolio equity, distribution of resources, and representativeness of the HIV epidemic in California. CHRP staff will review LOI to ensure that the proposed research is responsive to the research objectives and that the applicant and institution(s) meet eligibility criteria (see section 5 above).

All applicants will be notified of LOI approval/rejection via [SmartSimple](#) at the same time, on or before the date shown on page one of this RFP. PIs with approved LOIs will gain access to the full application materials at time of LOI notification. No application may move forward without an approved LOI.

## 11. 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:

- Scientific Abstract, Lay Abstract, Specific Aims
- Demographics of Anticipated Study Volunteers
- Milestones and Timetable
- Institution Contacts
- Personnel Table
- Biosketches for all Key Personnel
- Budget and Justification
- Assurances Required (if applicable: Human Subjects; Vertebrate Animals; Biohazards; DEA Controlled Substance use)
- Research Plan
- Community Engagement Plan (if applicable)
- Letter of Commitment (if applicable)

- Facilities
- Protection of Human Subjects and/or Care of Vertebrate Animals (if applicable)
- Appendix List and Attachments

## 12. 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 from outside California who are subject matter experts and experienced 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 scoring criteria will be used to review proposals:

1. **Anti-racism Framework/Theory and Context** (30% of total score): Scoring will reflect the degree to which the proposed work is grounded in a robust anti-racism framework (such as Public Health Critical Race praxis<sup>13</sup>) and the skillful application of the framework to the methodological question at hand. If applicable, scoring will also reflect the appropriate and skillful use of a community-engaged perspective<sup>14</sup>, such as Community Based Participatory Research or Participatory Action Research. The context in which the work will be conducted includes any specific communities that will be the subject of the research, and the degree to which persons who have lived experience in those communities are involved in the study design and implementation.
2. **Impact and Innovation** (30% of total score): Scoring will reflect the potential impact that the proposed work might have on a significant aspect of anti-racism research in the context of HIV-STI outcomes, as well as the degree of innovation the work demonstrates (proposing new scales, creating new partnerships). Highly meritorious proposals will seek to establish constructs or measurements of the impact of structural racism and discrimination on HIV-STI related outcomes that extend beyond established foci (the impact of interpersonal interactions and residential segregation) and into uncharted areas.
3. **Approach and Feasibility** (40% of total score):
  - a. **Overall Research Plan and Methodological Rigor:** Scoring will reflect the appropriateness of the overall approach(es) and the scientific rigor of the methods proposed.
  - b. **Implementation Strategy:** Scoring will reflect the appropriateness, completeness, and feasibility of the work plan, including sampling and recruitment strategies (if applicable), statistical approaches, and project timelines.
  - c. **Management Plan:** Scoring will reflect the capacity or the potential of the team/institution to carry out the work, the value of the partnerships brought forward from other disciplines,

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<sup>13</sup> Ford CL, Airhihenbuwa CO. The Public Health Critical Race Methodology: Praxis for Antiracism Research. *Social Science and Medicine* 2010; 71:1390-1398.

<sup>14</sup> Lightfoot M, et. al, Addressing Health Disparities in HIV: Introduction to the Special Issue. *JAIDS* 2021;88(1):S1-S5.

how the project will be managed, the feasibility and completeness of the milestones and timeline, and strategies for addressing roadblocks that may impact study completion.

- d. **Dissemination Plan:** Scoring will be based on the breadth of the dissemination plan and the degree to which it is inclusive of all relevant stakeholders.

Reviewers will comment on but not score the following:

- **Budget:** Appropriateness of the budget request for the project.
- **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.
- **Protection of Human Subjects from Research Risk:** Appropriateness of protections from research risk relating to human subjects participation in the proposed research.
- **Sex as a Biological Variable (SABV):** Both sex and gender and their interactions can influence clinical characteristics, as well as health and disease outcomes. CHRP requires all proposals in all areas of study to account for sex as a biological variable in the Research Plan. CHRP policy is based on current [NIH Policy](#) but goes further, to include exogenous and endogenous sex hormones, and research using cell lines. Applicants are expected to explain how relevant biological variables, such as sex at birth and exogenous sex hormone levels, are factored into research designs and analyses for studies in cell lines, vertebrate animals, and humans. Applicants should demonstrate inclusion of SABV in the literature review, study sample (cells, animals, humans), data collection strategy, data analysis, and reporting plan.

Reviewers will assign component scores for each criteria listed reflecting the relative scientific merit of the proposal sections. RGPO generally adheres to NIH scoring methods. Each criterion will receive a score of between 1 and 9 corresponding to the table in the LOI section above. Final scores will be ranked, and the most meritorious by score will be advanced for review and approval by CHRP's Advisory Council for funding consideration. 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. Final funding decisions may take into account these and other programmatic priorities.

### **13. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion 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 HIV research. These supplemental funds are intended to partially support the scientific contributions of 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, to the funded project. PI 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, 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.

## 14. How to Get Help

For scientific questions regarding application preparation or guidance regarding the suitability of a proposed project, contact the Program Officer for this RFP, Lisa Loeb Stanga, at [lisa.loeb.stanga@ucop.edu](mailto:lisa.loeb.stanga@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](mailto:RGPOGrants@ucop.edu), or 510-987-9386.



## APPENDIX: 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 current “other support” documents for review by the Program Officer to rule out scientific, budgetary, and commitment overlap; and resolving any issues raised.
- 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 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 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.

**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.

**Publications acknowledgement:** All scientific publications and other products from any RGPO-funded research project must acknowledge the funding support from UC Office of the President, with reference to the program (CHRP) and the assigned grant ID number.

**Open access:** The University Office of the President 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 RGPO in dissemination and archiving, the grantee institution 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. This policy does not transfer copyright ownership, which remains with the author(s) or copyright owners.

**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. Declined proposals may be submitted to future competitions without prejudice. An appeal regarding the funding decision of a grant application may be made only on the basis of an alleged error in, or deviation from, a stated procedure (e.g., undeclared reviewer conflict of interest or mishandling of an application). The period open for the appeal process is within 30 days of receipt of the application evaluation from the Program. Before submitting appeals, applicants are encouraged to talk about their concerns informally with the appropriate Program Officer or the Program Director. Final decisions on application funding appeals will be made by the Vice President of Research and Graduate Studies, University of California, Office of the President. The full appeals policy can be found in the [Grants Administration Manual](#).