Funding Opportunity Announcement
University of California Firearm Violence Research Center (UCFC)
Firearm Research Small Grants Program

Opportunity Summary

The University of California Firearms Research Center is seeking applications for small grants for research on the causes, consequences, and prevention of firearm violence in California and evaluations of strategies and interventions to reduce firearm violence.

Award amount: up to $10,000
Proposals Due: October 31, 2018
Notice of award: November 30, 2018
Period of performance: January 1, 2019 – December 31, 2019

Overview

In 2016, the State of California authorized the creation of a research center focused on firearm violence and allocated funding for a five-year period. The Violence Prevention Research Program at UC Davis is designated as home of the new research center.

The mission of the University of California Firearm Violence Research Center (UCFC) is to conduct basic, translational and transformative research that provides sound scientific evidence on the nature, causes, consequences and prevention of firearm violence; to disseminate that evidence and promote the adoption of evidence-based firearm violence prevention measures; and to expand and extend such efforts through education and training in firearm violence research and its applications.

As one of its strategies for meeting program objectives, UCFC has a created a small grant program to catalyze firearm research at organizations and institutions throughout California. This is the first call for proposals; it is anticipated that annual calls for proposals will be made in the future.

Background Information

Firearm violence is a significant health and social problem in California, as it is across the United States and around the world. In recent years, California’s death rates from firearm violence have nearly equaled those from motor vehicle crashes. In the 10 years 2006-2016, 34,150 Californians died from firearm violence: 15,054 from homicide and 14,825 from suicide. Just in 2016, there were 3,184 firearm-related deaths in California, including 1,595 suicides, 1,467 homicides, 74 deaths by legal intervention, and 36 unintentional or undetermined deaths.

Firearm violence is very costly in strictly financial terms, with estimated annual costs nationwide estimated at $229 billion in 2012. According to California’s Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development, most of the costs of acute-care hospitalizations related to firearm violence are supported by government-sponsored insurance programs.
The intangible costs, though difficult to quantify, are far larger than the strictly financial costs. Firearm violence disproportionately affects members of under-represented minorities and marginalized populations. In heavily-impacted communities, the basic rhythms of daily life are contorted as residents seek to minimize their risk of victimization. Mass shootings, which are occurring more frequently, threaten to alter the character of American public life. California has been the site of some of the most notorious mass shootings, including those at a McDonald’s in San Ysidro, at Cleveland Elementary School in Stockton, near UC Santa Barbara in Isla Vista, and at the Inland Regional Center in San Bernardino.

Basic information on the epidemiology and prevention of firearm violence is often not available. This has led to widespread misunderstanding and has impeded prevention efforts. There is also far too little evidence on the effectiveness of the state’s policies and programs to prevent firearm violence.

UCFC was founded to support interdisciplinary research efforts that address the following:

1) Prevention of firearm violence at the individual, community, and societal levels
2) Social and environmental determinants of risk for involvement in firearm violence, as a victim or a perpetrator or in a community
3) Opportunities to reverse trends in violence at the individual, community, and societal levels

The center emphasizes applied, actionable research and focuses on those aspects of firearm violence that create the largest burden of ill health (taking “health” in its broad sense) for the population at large, as well as those with particularly disproportionate effects on subsets of the population. Emphasis is also be given to the social determinants of violence, structural as well as individual risk factors for violence, inequities and disparities in risk for violence and the consequences of violence, and interventions addressing both high risk groups and the general population. We encourage collaborative research to examine policy, systems, and environmental change.

Because there has been very little financial support for research, only a small number of trained investigators work in this field. An ancillary goal of this grant program is to inspire new investigators to gain expertise in this area of inquiry.

Eligibility and Exclusions

All grant applicants and grant activities must be based in California. Institutions of higher education, tribal entities, hospitals, laboratories, nonprofit research institutions, local agencies and departments (such as health and law enforcement agencies), and community-based nonprofit organizations are eligible to apply. Multiple applications from the same organization are eligible for funding, provided that the proposed research topics and aims are substantially different for each application. If an application from a PI at a non-profit is recommended for funding, UC Davis 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.

Eligible investigators and collaborators: The sponsoring institution, in accordance with its own policies and procedures, should designate the principal investigator (PI). The PI must supervise
the research project and any trainees directly and in person. U.S. citizenship is not a requirement for eligibility.

UC employees unaffiliated with UCFC are eligible to apply. UC employees currently funded to conduct research that is paid for by UCFC are not eligible.

Allowable Costs and Budget Restrictions

1. Allowable Costs and Budget Justification: Proposal budgets may include expenditures that are incurred to directly support the proposed collaborative research activities only. Funding requests must be judicious and well-justified, and conform to the budget guidelines below and further detailed in the application instructions and templates. Funds may be used to support salary and benefit costs for project personnel. Indirect (overhead) costs are limited to 25% of modified total direct costs.

2. Existing Support and New Activities: The intent of this opportunity is to fund new research projects and collaborations that will expand the knowledge of causes, consequences, and prevention of firearm violence, and inspire new investigators to pursue inquiry in this field. Therefore, funds may not be used to continue existing research efforts or supplant current sources of funding.

3. Non-Allowable Costs and Budget Restrictions: Funding provided by this opportunity may not be used to cover patient care costs, clinical trials, patent execution costs, fundraising costs, travel to conferences, or sub awards to non-UC-affiliated entities (except as may be required to support community engagement or participation). Funding may not be requested to provide core institutional support, or to supplement funding for existing projects already supported by other sources of funding.

4. Sub awards: This small grant program does not allow subawards, although consultants may be contracted to perform distinct elements of the research project.

5. Cost-sharing/matching: not required

Overview of Application and Review Process

Full proposal submission: Full proposals should adhere to formatting guidelines. Proposals that are not compliant with guidelines will not be considered. All proposals must be received by 11:59 PST on October 31, 2018. Late proposals will not be considered and will not be held for consideration in subsequent annual cycles.

Proposal review and selection: Reviewers will have subject matter expertise in violence research, medicine, epidemiology, the social and public health sciences, and biostatistics. Only very brief critiques of reviewed proposals will be provided.

Final funding decisions and selection are at the discretion of UCFC. Decisions may not be appealed but unfunded proposals may be submitted to future funding competitions without prejudice.

All recipients of grants shall provide copies of their research publications to the Legislature and to agencies supplying data used in the conduct of that research as soon as is practicable
following publication. These submissions shall be submitted in compliance with Section 9795 of the Government Code.

Proposal Components:

1. Purpose Statement (400 characters) A brief statement describing the aims of your project.

2. Abstract/Project Summary (textbox in online application; 2500 characters): Summarize the key activities and contributions of the proposed collaboration. The abstract should be appropriate for a general scholarly audience and avoid disciplinary jargon or technical language specific to a single field.

3. Proposed Research Plan (5 page maximum, including tables and figures): Identify the specific aims and related hypothesis; project significance and innovation; research activities including the specifics of the study design, data to be used, and analysis plan; outcomes and scholarly contributions; strengths and limitations; and the project’s potential as preliminary work for future research on firearm violence,

4. Research Team (~1 page): Justify the composition of the team and articulate how the collaboration and shared leadership opportunities will be integrated into the proposed project and activities to achieve the programmatic goals. Describe ways in which students or post-graduate researchers will be involved in the project.

5. Itemized Budget and Justification: Provide a detailed budget and a budget justification, not to exceed two pages, describing the significant project expenditures. The total budget requested in the budget template must match the total budget requested in proposal cover sheet. If these figures do not match, the lower figure will be used to determine the maximum award.

6. Timeframe, Milestones and Evaluation Metrics (~1/2 page): Identify the research timeline, benchmarks, and milestones, and justify how the proposed time period and requested budget will accomplish the research plan. Identify proposed evaluation approaches and outcome metrics, and include a description of the methods that will be used to evaluate the research and plan future research directions.

7. Attachments: Additional attachments must include the following applicable materials:
   a) Literature cited (2-page limit; not counted toward page limit).
   b) Curriculum Vitae (CV) for the PI and other investigators (anyone expected to appear as a co-author on study publication).
   c) Letter(s) of commitment assuring availability of data or other resources that will be required to complete the proposed research (no more than 3 total pages).
   d) Identification of any human subjects (IRB), animal use, or toxic substance matters and the approach to compliance (1 page template). Note: There is no required CV format (NIH biosketch, NSF, and other formats are acceptable). A final IRB determination that the project is approved or exempt from review will be required before funding can be provided.

Review Criteria:

Awards are contingent on the availability of funding and compliance with all research and reporting requirements. Funded proposals must provide a progress report and fiscal expenditure report, due 45 days after the end of the program year.
Overall Impact

Based on the following review criteria, reviewers will submit an overall impact score for each project. Project impact scores represent the project’s potential to substantially contribute to the field of gun violence research.

Scored Review Criteria

Reviewers will evaluate and score the scientific merit of proposals based on the following criteria. Although projects will receive distinct scores for each criterion, uniformly high scores are not required for a reviewer to deem a proposal as likely to substantially impact the field of firearm violence research.

Significance

If the project aims were successfully achieved, how would this change the field’s major concepts, methods, or understanding of violence and its prevention? Does the proposed research represent more than an incremental advance? How would this project resolve unanswered questions, debates, or barriers in the field, or overcome methodological limitations of extant research? Does it create a resource for use by others? How would the project advance the field of firearm violence research, and what is the significance of the project’s contribution to scientific knowledge on the nature, causes, consequences, and prevention of firearm violence?

Investigator(s)

Are the PD(s)/PI(s), collaborators, and other researchers well suited to the project? Have the PD(s)/PI(s), or collaborators published research on the nature, causes, consequences, and prevention of firearm violence, or on violence more broadly? Do the PD(s)/PI(s) have experience conducting studies similar in scope or methodology to the proposal, and the expertise to complete the intended aims of the project? Do Early Stage Investigators or New Investigators have the appropriate experience and training to carry out the proposal? Are they adequately mentored? Do established investigators have an ongoing record of accomplishments that have advanced the field of firearm violence or violence research? If the project is collaborative or multi-PD/PI, has the team worked together previously? Do the investigators have complementary and integrated expertise; and does the proposal outline how the investigators and their respective organizations will coordinate project roles, management, and execution?

Innovation

Does the application challenge and seek to shift current research or clinical practice paradigms by utilizing novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions? Are the concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions novel to the field of firearm research or novel in a broad sense? Is a refinement, improvement, or new application of theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions proposed?
Approach

Are the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses well-reasoned and appropriate to accomplish the specific aims of the project? Are the proposed strategy, methodology, and analyses sufficiently rigorous to achieve unbiased, interpretable, and specific results? Does the proposal identify potential problems and limitations, and propose viable alternative strategies to achieve the aims of the study? Does the approach include fidelity of implementation measures? For projects in the early stages of development, does the proposal include a strategy to establish feasibility and manage particularly risky aspects of the study?

Environment

Will the scientific environment in which the work will be done contribute to the probability of success? Are the institutional support, equipment, and other physical resources available to the investigators adequate for the project proposed? Will the project benefit from unique features of the scientific environment, subject populations, or collaborative arrangements? Does the scientific environment offer the expertise and staffing necessary to support the resources demanded by this project?

Dissemination

Does the applicant propose a sound approach to engaging communities affected by firearm violence in either a collaborative partnership or by proactively informing about the nature and significance of the research and research outcomes? To what extent does the dissemination of findings include channels and tools targeting clinicians, public health practitioners, advocates, policymakers and the general public?

Submission process:

Submissions must be made through the UC Davis online portal at https://ucdavis.infoready4.com.

Those currently affiliated with UC Davis should log into the system using their Kerberos password. Applicants from outside UC Davis may request log-in credentials from that link. Please allow yourself enough time prior to the deadline to request access.

Once you have logged into InfoReady, you can find this opportunity by searching for Firearm Research Small Grants Program, or by clicking to view open opportunities.

UCFC Contact:

For questions about the RFP and application process, please contact Brian Hayes, (916) 734-3539, brhayes@ucdavis.edu.

Resubmission Policy: Unfunded applications in the 2018 grant cycle may be revised and resubmitted once during the next two subsequent grant cycles. Please note that UCFC will accept only a single resubmission of the same or very similar project, regardless of change in application title.