



**Supplement to 2007 Call for Applications
HIV Prevention Evaluation Initiatives
One-time Special Opportunity Awards
Universitywide AIDS Research Program**



To support research to advance HIV prevention efforts in key areas and to advance scientific evidence of effective prevention of HIV/AIDS in high risk populations, the Universitywide AIDS Research Program in collaboration with the California State Office of AIDS calls for applications for funding of two new research initiatives:

- **Evaluating Deployment of RNA Testing for Acute HIV Infection in Public Health Settings** – Collaborative research award of up to \$325,000 in total costs for a 15 month project period. Requires Letter of Intent. Funding available to support up to two meritorious awards.
- **Developing and Evaluating a New Intervention Targeting African American Women at High Risk for HIV Infection** – Collaborative research award of up to \$500,000 in total costs for a 30 month project period. Requires Letter of Intent. Funding available to support one meritorious award.

The scope and specific requirements for each award are detailed below. Letters of Intent (LOI) are due by **12:00 noon, Friday, March 9, 2007**. The final application deadline is **12:00 noon, Thursday, April 19, 2007**. All materials must be submitted online to proposalCENTRAL at <https://v2.ramscompany.com/>. Please review **How To Apply** at the end of this document for submission instructions.

Evaluating Deployment of RNA Testing for Acute HIV Infection in Public Health Settings

Purpose: The purpose of this funding opportunity is to support development and pilot testing of utilizing pooled HIV RNA testing for detection of acute infections in one or more public health jurisdictions in California. These pilot projects are intended to demonstrate the feasibility of implementing such procedures at the county and community level, including the identification of relevant high volume testing sites, implementation of laboratory procedures, provision of appropriate follow-up counseling and referral to care and services. If successful, similar procedures may be replicated in multiple jurisdictions throughout California.

Background: Detection of acute infection is a significant public health concern because acutely infected persons are highly infectious, do not know they are infected, and may continue risk-taking behavior based partly on this false belief. Recent modeling and cohort studies have demonstrated that persons with acute HIV infection appear to disproportionately contribute to HIV transmission.^{1,2} While detection of HIV antibodies is the current method for routinely diagnosing HIV infection, people with acute infection are often not detected by standard testing methodology because of the body's delay in mounting an antibody response. While HIV RNA testing at an individual level would be effective in detecting acute infections earlier, it is currently cost prohibitive on a broad scale.

A multistage pooling method for detection of HIV RNA has been proven to be more sensitive than the p24 antigen method, and was five-fold less expensive than the p24 antigen assays.³ Pooling of samples for detection of acute infection has been used under experimental and limited public health applications in some US jurisdictions.^{4,5} Although determined to be efficient, sensitive and specific for detecting acute infections as well as relatively cost efficient, the technology has not been widely applied in standard public health practice in California.

In order to evaluate the feasibility of implementing this important technology on a broad scale, the California State Office of AIDS and the Universitywide AIDS Research Program in the Office of the President at the University of California have developed a funding opportunity to support up to two meritorious demonstration projects to evaluate deployment of RNA testing for acute HIV infection on a county or community level. The proposed research must have a strong theoretical and methodological foundation supported by the research literature. Applicant collaborators must demonstrate capacity to conduct pooled RNA sampling (may be by laboratory subcontract), as well as implement mechanisms for surveillance, notification, counseling, and referral to services of positive cases.

Requirements:

1. **Focus on Assessing Operational Feasibility:** The proposed research should be designed to assess whether local conditions and system capacity can be developed and applied in support of routine pooling of specimen samples for identification of individuals with acute HIV infection, and whether it is feasible for appropriate linkages and personnel to be activated and deployed to effectively inform and counsel identified individuals on an ongoing basis, and provide immediate referral to care.
2. **Evaluation Focus:** The primary focus of the evaluation is to determine whether pooled RNA testing can be feasibly implemented across California to enhance prevention efforts. In addition to formative research required during the developmental period (described below), the evaluation component of the proposal should include a plan for process monitoring and process evaluation, including information to evaluate quality and accuracy of laboratory methods, and success in providing appropriate counseling and referrals. Proposals should include a plan for collecting case study data on a subset of users to document experiences with disclosure and counseling components of the project in terms of their timeliness, quality and effectiveness in linking individuals to necessary services and in reducing risk behaviors.
3. **Collaborative Partnership:** Proposed projects should be based on a community collaborative partnership model, including one Principal Investigator (PI) from a public health HIV counseling and testing provider (local health department or community-based service organization currently providing HIV testing services) and one PI from a research institution. Additional collaborators may be included through subcontract. The study should be designed and implemented collaboratively by the partners. Each contracting organization will be required to demonstrate financial independence and stability as part of its application and prior to final selection. Applicants should also demonstrate a history of successful collaboration, or provide a blueprint for establishing successful collaboration through this endeavor. In addition, applications must allocate adequate resources to the HIV testing provider to ensure successful implementation of the project.
4. **Developmental Phase:** Applications should include a 3-month developmental period that will focus on three areas: (a) Establishing required collaborative partnerships; (b) Conducting formative research with consumers and prevention service providers currently implementing HIV testing to assess receptivity to and readiness for the introduction of the identification of acute infections, and to inform the design of the pilot and the counseling intervention; and (c) Developing protocols, identifying appropriate referrals, training the necessary staff, and pilot-testing the counseling and referral components with consumers.
5. **Laboratory Capacity and Expertise:** Applicants should document the involvement and commitment of a laboratory with previous experience with the experimental or limited use of the multistage pooling method of HIV RNA detection or the expertise necessary to immediately develop the relevant capacity. Applicants must include a quality assurance plan that demonstrates their expertise in developing appropriate controls and methods to maintain the quality of serum samples.

6. **Products and Dissemination:** Proposals should include detailed plans for development of collaborative linkages, laboratory services, follow-up counseling and referral, and training protocols for potential dissemination throughout California.
7. **Project Oversight:** Funded projects must adhere to the aims of the initiative and will join consortia and work collaboratively with UARP and OA on study implementation to ensure that the goals of the research initiative and the scientific validity of the project are supported and maintained, and that challenges encountered during implementation that could compromise achievement of the intended outcomes are adequately addressed. As part of this oversight, recipients should anticipate at least one annual site visit.

Mechanisms of Support:

1. Collaborative applicants should include one public health HIV testing provider and one partner from a not-for-profit research institution in California. A county health department must fulfill one (and only one) of these roles. The health department, in whichever capacity, must take the lead in developing and submitting the LOI and the application, and must demonstrate capacity to administer the award.
2. Total funding for the collaborating partners is \$325,000 to cover the entire project time period. The total cost may include indirect costs up to a maximum of 15% of personnel costs (salary and fringe benefits).
3. The project start date is October 1, 2007. The project period will span fifteen months, including a planning and development period as described above, an implementation phase including process evaluation, and a data analysis and dissemination preparation phase.
4. If funded, each of the two collaborating partners will be funded separately by UARP. If appropriate for the research project, additional collaborators/institutions may participate through subcontract(s) from one of the two collaborating partners.
5. Grants are one-time, non-renewable awards.
6. The academic collaborating investigator must have principal investigator status at a non-profit California research institution.
7. The collaborating principal investigators from each participating organization must contribute a minimum of 10% effort to the project.

Review Criteria: Reviewers will evaluate applications for:

1. The extent to which the proposal is responsive to the intent of this Call for Applications.
2. Adherence to the above requirements.
3. Strength of expertise and capacity of investigators and agencies.
4. Strength of the study design, proposed analysis and evaluation plan.
5. Strength of the dissemination plan.
6. Feasibility of the proposed study, including appropriateness of the proposed budget.
7. Strength of the collaborative partnership and linkages.

Developing and Evaluating a New Intervention Targeting African American Women at High Risk for HIV Infection

Purpose: To design and implement an innovative and promising social or behavioral HIV prevention intervention based on strong theoretical and methodological foundations tailored to meet the social, cultural, psychological, and structural conditions of African American women in California. This award is intended as a collaborating partnership between two organizations, typically including an academic research partner and a community-based partner.

Funding will support development, testing and evaluation of an innovative and promising HIV prevention intervention designed to serve African American women at high risk for HIV infection. Recognizing diversity within the African American population, the proposed research should address the specific needs of a high risk group in California and should respond to multiple issues relevant to the target group including economic conditions, relationship status, gender power relations, age, experiences of racism, disease stigma, drug use, incarceration, religion, access to preventive services, cultural acceptability and beliefs regarding current or potential prevention methods, and/or other social or environmental context issues that may impact experience and behavior.

Background: African American women account for approximately 70% of AIDS cases among women, and represent the fastest growing group of individuals infected with HIV in the United States. Moreover, HIV remains only one of a wide range of social, economic and health risks that African American women face.⁶ Risk for HIV infection among African American women is multi-factorial. To date, research-based HIV prevention interventions for African American women have demonstrated that addressing issues of gender and cultural identity/pride is critical to an effective approach.^{7,8} Existing research on health disparities further suggests that, in addition to providing support for individual-level behavior change, effective interventions should address structural and contextual factors that may limit the ability or willingness of an individual to implement risk reduction strategies.^{9,10} These contextual factors include high rates of incarceration among African American men, poverty and limited access to preventive health care, and disease stigma, among others. As HIV infections among African American women continue to increase at alarming rates, new interventions are needed that employ innovative methods and which take into account the role of such contextual factors in contributing to risk exposure in order to effectively address structural and psycho-social barriers to behavior change.

Given this urgent need, the California State Office of AIDS and the Universitywide AIDS Research Program in the Office of the President at the University of California have developed a funding opportunity to support development and evaluation of a meritorious and innovative intervention targeting African American women in California who are at high risk for HIV infection. The proposed research must address gaps in the research literature, must have strong theoretical and methodological foundations supported by the literature, and must provide epidemiological evidence demonstrating the need for a targeted intervention in California for the identified high risk group. It should include a formative component, pilot-testing of a new intervention, and an implementation and evaluation phase.

Requirements:

1. **Collaborative Partnership:** The study should be collaboratively designed and implemented by a scientific/academic investigator and one or more community-based organizations (CBOs) with the expertise and capacity to successfully implement and evaluate the intervention. The proposed project should include one Principal Investigator (PI) from an academic/research institution and one PI from a CBO or local health department in California. Additional collaborators or community organizations may be included through subcontract. Each contracting organization will be required to demonstrate financial independence and stability as part of its application and prior to final selection. Applicants should also demonstrate a history of successful collaboration, or provide a blueprint for establishing successful collaboration through this endeavor. In addition, applications must allocate adequate resources to the service provider/CBO to ensure successful implementation of the project.

2. **Focus of the Intervention:** The intervention should be designed through formative work conducted during a developmental phase, and should be informed by current literature on HIV prevention needs of African American women and a well-designed community assessment. The design of the intervention should be informed by community opinion leaders and African American women at high risk, and should respond to contextual or structural factors that influence African American women's sexual and health behaviors and that limit women's use of prevention strategies and services. Recognizing diversity within the African American population, the intervention should target a specific sub-population or issue of identified need in California. The plan should include a pilot component prior to full implementation.
3. **Selection of the Target Population:** The target population must be a subset of African American women at high risk for HIV infection in California, and the intervention may include a component targeting their sexual partners, families or social networks. Populations of particular interest in California include women whose sexual partners are MSM/W, women at risk for incarceration, or whose partners have been incarcerated, and others whose epidemiological profile indicates they are at high risk for infection. The study may target more than one sub-population of African American women as a basis for comparing acceptability or effectiveness of the intervention across sub-populations.
4. **Research and Evaluation:** The proposed research plan should include analysis of qualitative and quantitative measures from the formative research and a pilot intervention in order to inform the full implementation of the intervention, process monitoring and evaluation during implementation, and preliminary outcome measures, including feasibility and acceptability. Qualitative measures may include in-depth interviews and case study reports to document client experiences with the intervention and provider adherence to the intervention, and other approaches to documenting design and implementation processes. Emphasis will be placed on a comprehensive approach to formative research, intervention development, implementation, and process monitoring. As appropriate and feasible, research design may employ pre- post- and follow-up assessments. The proposed evaluation plan should prepare recipients to competitively apply for resources that may be available in the future to conduct a full-scale outcome evaluation of the intervention, should it prove feasible and acceptable.
5. **Proof of Need and Potential for Impact:** Applicants must document the need for prevention services among the target population in the proposed geographic areas to be served, as well as the potential for significant impact of the proposed intervention and evaluation. Documentation may include epidemiologic data, community needs assessments, or findings from previous or current research projects that provide compelling evidence for the potential impact of prevention services within this targeted population in California. Applicants must highlight the current state of knowledge in HIV prevention research conducted with African American women, and discuss how their proposed intervention addresses gaps in the research literature and how the proposed research will contribute to the advancement of science in HIV prevention and health disparities research.
6. **Dissemination:** Proposals should include detailed plans for development of protocols, a training guide, and dissemination of research findings and intervention materials through the UARP/OA Dissemination Project.
7. **Project Oversight:** Funded projects must adhere to the aims of the initiative and will join consortia and work collaboratively with UARP and OA on study implementation to ensure that the goals of the research initiative and the scientific validity of the project are supported and maintained, and that challenges encountered during implementation that could compromise achievement of intended outcomes are adequately addressed. To meet this requirement, the selected project will participate in at least two cooperative meetings with OA and UARP staff (one in 2008 and one in 2009) and at least one annual site visit.

Mechanisms of Support:

1. Collaborative applicants should include one not-for-profit community-based partner and one partner from a not-for-profit research institution in California. The community-based partner must take the lead in developing and submitting the LOI and the application, and must demonstrate capacity to administer the award.
2. Total funding for the collaborating partners is \$500,000 to cover the entire project time period. The total cost may include indirect costs up to a maximum of 15% of personnel costs (salary and fringe benefits).
3. The project start date is October 1, 2007. The project period will span 2.5 years, and should include four phases, according to the following approximate timeline: two month start up phase, six month formative phase, 18 months for implementation and data collection, and four months for data analysis and development of dissemination materials
4. If funded, each of the two collaborating partners may be funded separately by UARP. If appropriate for the research project, other institution(s) may participate through subcontract(s) from one of the two collaborating partners.
5. Grants are one-time, non-renewable awards.
6. The academic/research institution-based collaborating investigator must have principal investigator status at a non-profit California research institution.
7. The collaborating principal investigators from each participating organizations must contribute a minimum of 10% effort to the project.

Review Criteria: Reviewers will evaluate applications for:

1. The extent to which the proposal is responsive to the intent of this Call for Applications.
2. Adherence to the above requirements.
3. Innovation in concept and proposed intervention.
4. Evidence of need and potential impact on the proposed African American female subpopulation.
5. Strength of expertise, including demonstrated success working with the target population, and capacity of investigators and agencies.
6. Strength of the study design, proposed analysis and plan for evaluation.
7. Strength of dissemination plan
8. Feasibility of the proposed study, including appropriateness of the proposed budget.
9. Strength of the collaborative partnership and linkages.
10. Potential for replication of the project if successful.

How To Apply

An Informational Teleconference is scheduled for Friday, March 2, 2007 at 1:00 PM. Specific information for registering for the teleconference will be posted on the web at <http://uarp.ucop.edu> by February 26, 2007. Understanding of the intent of the award mechanisms and the application review process is central to the success of applicants. Participation by potential applicants is encouraged. During this meeting, program representatives will describe the intent of the award mechanisms and funding opportunities, and will answer questions about the review process and the potential relevance of proposed research projects to the goals of the current UARP funding program.

Applicants must submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) through proposalCENTRAL prior to submission of the full application. The purpose of the LOI is to create a feedback mechanism that will provide support for applications through input from UARP staff. The LOI should include the following: (a) Identification of the two collaborating principal investigators and their affiliations; (b) If applicable, the name and affiliation of any subcontractor; (c) A brief description of the proposed research approach and methods; and (d) Information about the experience of the proposed partners with collaborative research and the community partner's capacity to manage UARP research funds.

The LOIs must be submitted by the community partner or local health department, and should be no more than two pages. LOI submissions are made online at <https://v2.ramscompany.com/> and the deadline for submission is **12:00 noon** Pacific Time (3:00 p.m. Eastern Time), on **Friday, March 9, 2007**. Applicants with approved LOIs will be notified by e-mail and may then proceed to prepare a full application.

Detailed application instructions will be available at the proposalCENTRAL website beginning February 26, 2007.

All applications must be complete and submitted at <https://v2.ramscompany.com/> by **12:00 Noon** Pacific Time (3:00 p.m. Eastern Time), **Thursday, April 19, 2007**. Applications must be submitted through a nonprofit community-based institution or local health department in California, as specified herein.

The completed hard copy of signed Face Page with original signatures must be mailed directly to UARP and must be received by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, April 27, 2007.

The award start date is October 1, 2007 for both *Evaluating Deployment of RNA Testing for Acute HIV Infection in Public Health Settings* and for *Developing and Evaluating a New Intervention Targeting African American Women at High Risk for HIV Infection*.

For technical assistance with the online application process, contact proposalCENTRAL from 5:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Mon.-Fri., Pacific Time, by calling toll-free (800) 875-2562 ext. 227 or (301) 916-4557; or by email to support@ramscompany.com.

For questions regarding UARP procedures, application instructions, and budget requirements, contact:

Irma L. Moreno
Scientific & Grants Analyst
510/987-9964
irma.moreno@ucop.edu

Applicants are invited to contact UARP's Program Manager for Community Research and Dissemination in order to obtain feedback or direction that applicants can take advantage of and use in the drafting their proposals.

Kathleen Erwin, PhD
Program Manager, Community Research & Dissemination
510/987-9889
kathleen.erwin@ucop.edu

Developing a Grant Proposal

Applicants with little or no experience in developing and writing grant proposals may find that these websites offer useful information about proposal development:

- http://12.46.245.173/pls/portal30/catalog.grant_proposal_dyn.show
- http://ninds.nih.gov/funding/write_grant_doc.htm
- <http://deainfo.nci.nih.gov/extra/extdocs/gntapp.htm>
- <http://www.niaid.nih.gov/ncn/grants/write/index.htm>

Applicants may also glean useful advice from the following sources:

- <http://www.annals.org/cgi/reprint/142/4/274.pdf>
- <http://globetrotter.berkeley.edu/DissPropWorkshop/>
- <http://www.aas.org/grants/hints.html>
- <http://www.hfsp.org/how/ArtOfGrants.htm>
- <http://www.research.umich.edu/proposals/PWG/pwgcontents.html>
- <http://www.learnerassociates.net/proposal/>
- <http://www.cpb.org/grants/grantwriting.html>
- <http://nextwave.sciencemag.org/cgi/content/full/2000/01/06/1>

Universitywide AIDS Research Program

The Universitywide AIDS Research Program (UARP) at the University of California provides state funding for the support of merit-reviewed HIV/AIDS-related research to be conducted at non-profit research institutions and community organization throughout California. The UARP mission is to support excellent, timely, and innovative research that is attentive to the needs of California and will accelerate progress towards prevention and a cure for HIV/AIDS.

UARP funding mechanisms are intended to provide a niche that can best serve California investigators and to complement rather than duplicate funding opportunities offered by other sources.

How to Contact UARP

Universitywide AIDS Research Program
University of California, Office of the President
300 Lakeside Drive, 6th Floor
Oakland, CA 94612
510/987-9855 • 510/835-4220 (fax)
uarp@ucop.edu
<http://uarp.ucop.edu>

Awards pursuant to this announcement are contingent on the availability of funds allocated to the University of California by the California State Office of AIDS.

References

- ¹ Yerly S, Vora S, Rizzardì P, Chave JP, Vernazza PL, Flepp M, Telenti A, Battegay M, Veuthey AL, Bru JP, Rickenback M, Herschel B, Perrin L. Acute HIV infection: Impact on the spread of HIV and transmission of drug resistance. *AIDS* 2001; 15(17):2287-92
- ² Pilcher CD, Tien HC, Eron JJ Jr., Vernazza PI, Leu SY, Stewart PW, Goh LE, Cohen MS. Brief but efficient: acute HIV infection in the spread of HIV through populations. *J. of Infectious Disease* 2004; 189(10):1785-92.
- ³ Quinn TC, Brookmeyer R, Kline R, Shepard M, Paranjape R, Mehendale S, Gadkari DA, Bollinger R. Feasibility of pooling sera for HIV-1 viral RNA to diagnose acute primary HIV-1 infection and estimate HIV incidence. *AIDS* 2000; 14(17): 2751-7
- ⁴ Pilcher CD, McPherson JT, Leone PA, Smurzynski M, Owen-O'Dowd J, Peace-Brewer AL, Harris J, Hicks CB, Eron JJ Jr., Fiscus SA. Real-time, universal screening for acute HIV infection in a routine HIV counseling and testing population. *JAMA* 2002; 288(2):216-21.
- ⁵ Stekler J, Swenson PD, Wood RW, Hansfield HH, Golden MR. Targeted screening for primary HIV infection through pooled HIV-RNA testing in men who have sex with men. *AIDS* 2005; 19(12):1323-25.
- ⁶ McNair LD and Prather CM. African American women and AIDS: Factors influencing risk and reaction to HIV disease. *J. Black Psychology* 2004; 3(1):106-123
- ⁷ DiClemente RJ and Wingood GM. A randomized controlled trial of an HIV sexual risk-reduction intervention for young African American women. *JAMA* 1995; 274(16): 1271-76.
- ⁸ Wechsberg WM, Lam WKK, Zule WA, Bobashev G. Efficacy of a women-focused intervention to reduce HIV risk and increase self-sufficiency among African American crack abusers. *AJPH* 2004; 94(7): 1165-73.
- ⁹ Beatty LB, Wheeler D, Gaiter J. HIV prevention research for African Americans: Current and future directions, *J. Black Psychology* 2004; 30(1): 40-58.
- ¹⁰ Jipguep M-C, Sanders-Phillips K, Cotton L. Another look at HIV in African American women: the impact of psychosocial and contextual factors. *J. Black Psychology* 2004; 30(3):366-385.