Opportunity Summary

The University of California Firearm Violence Research Center (UCFC) is seeking applications from investigators at California public universities for small grants to support research on the causes, consequences, and prevention of firearm violence in California and for evaluations of policies and interventions to reduce firearm violence in California.

This RFP is for the center’s secondary research grant award program. A companion RFP for larger grants (up to $75,000) is also being issued and will be available at UCFC’s website.

Award amount: up to $10,000
Proposals Due: May 1, 2020
Notice of award: July 2020
Period of performance: up to two years

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, which began operation July 4, 2017.

UCFC’s mission 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.

The intent of this solicitation is to support research consistent with UCFC’s mission and to increase the number of public research universities in California where research on firearm violence is being conducted. UCFC has thus far supported research at seven California public universities, including UC Davis.

This award program has three specific purposes. It supports the generation of important new knowledge about firearm violence and its prevention in California. It assists new and early-stage investigators, and established investigators in other fields, as they build programs of research on firearm violence. It supports preliminary studies that will enhance the competitiveness of R01-scale proposals to funders such as the National Institutes of Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Institute of Justice, and National Collaborative on Gun Violence Research.
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 2008-2017, 29,409 Californians died from firearm violence: 13,890 from homicide and 15,159 from suicide. Just in 2017, there were 3,184 firearm-related deaths in California, including 1,610 suicides, 1,435 homicides, 86 deaths by legal intervention, and 53 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, in Isla Vista, at the Inland Regional Center in San Bernardino, and in Thousand Oaks.

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) Understanding and 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 disproportionate effects on subsets of the population. Emphasis is also be given to work on 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.
Eligibility and Exclusions

For this funding opportunity, principal investigators (PIs) must hold a full-time academic appointment at a California public university. PIs must supervise the research project and any trainees directly and must take responsibility for the project’s performance. U.S. citizenship is not a requirement for eligibility.

UCFC faculty are not eligible. An individual may serve as principal investigator (or co-principal investigator) on only one active UCFC research grant at any one time.

Allowable Costs and Budget Restrictions

1. Allowable Costs and Budget Justification: Proposal budgets may include expenditures that are incurred to directly support the proposed research activities only. Funding requests must be 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.

2. 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, incentives or gifts, food, 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.

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

4. Cost-sharing/matching: not required

5. Indirect costs. Per Budget Act of 2019, funds appropriated to the University of California Firearm Violence Research Center (after July 1, 2019) may not include any assessments for indirect costs.

Overview of Application and Review Process

All proposals must be received by 11:59 PDT on May 1, 2020. Late proposals will not be considered. Proposals that do not adhere to content and formatting guidelines will not be considered.

Proposals should be prepared using a 12-pt non-serif font with 1” margins and may be single-spaced.

Reviewers will have subject matter expertise in violence research, medicine, epidemiology, the social and public health sciences, and biostatistics. Final funding decisions and selection are at the discretion of UCFC.

Proposal Components:

1. Purpose Statement (50 words or less): Briefly describe the aims of your project.
2. Abstract/Project Summary (300 words or less): 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, not including references): 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 2 pages, describing the significant project expenditures.

6. Timeframe and Milestones (~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.

7. Dissemination and Project Evaluation Plan (~1/2 page): Describe the channels of dissemination for research findings. Address how findings will reach audiences beyond the research community: appropriate practitioners, policymakers, advocates, communities affected by firearm violence, and the general public. Include a description of the methods that will be used to assess the impact of the research.

8. Prior Work. (~1 page): Provide a review of research activities in the field by the PI and other investigators (anyone expected to appear as a co-author on study publication). What research has been done? What was the significance of the work? Was it innovative? Were the approaches rigorous? How were results disseminated? What impact of the work can be demonstrated?

9. Prior UCFC support (≤1 page): If the PI or another investigator has previously received support from UCFC, answer the following questions. What did the applicant accomplish with prior funding? What research projects were initiated, and were they completed? What was the significance of that work? Was it innovative? Were the approaches rigorous? How were results disseminated? What impact of the work can be demonstrated?

10. Attachments: Attachments must include the following applicable materials:
   a) Literature cited.
   b) Curriculum Vitae (CV) for the PI and other investigators (anyone expected to appear as a co-author on study publication). Note: There is no required CV format (NIH biosketch, NSF, and other formats are acceptable).
   c) Letter(s) of commitment assuring availability of data or other resources that will be required to complete the proposed research.
   d) A letter from the PI’s department chair or suitable substitute indicating the institution’s support for the proposal.
   e) Identification of any human subjects (IRB), animal use, or toxic substance matters and the approach to compliance (1 page summary). A final IRB determination that the project is approved or exempt from review will be required before funding can be provided.
f) A statement of agreement with the requirement that all recipients of funding will provide copies of their research publications as soon as is practicable following publication to UCFC, for submission to the Legislature. These submissions shall be submitted in compliance with Section 9795 of the Government Code.

Review Criteria

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. 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, understanding of violence and its prevention, or research methods? 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 PI and other investigators well suited to the project? Have they published research on the nature, causes, consequences, and prevention of firearm violence, or on violence more broadly? Do established investigators have an ongoing record of accomplishments that have advanced the field of firearm violence or violence research? Do early stage or new investigators have the appropriate experience and training to carry out their roles in the project? Are they adequately mentored? Does the team have experience conducting studies similar in scope and methodology to the proposed work? 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 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, include a plan for addressing them, and propose viable alternative strategies to achieve the aims of the study? If appropriate, 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

What will the primary channels of dissemination be, across a wide array of potential audiences for the work: researchers, practitioners, policymakers, advocates, communities affected by firearm violence, and the general public? If appropriate, 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?

Additional Award Information

Awards are contingent on the availability of funding and compliance with all research and reporting requirements. Funded projects must provide a progress report and fiscal expenditure report, due 45 days after the end of the project period.

Note: Funding will be transferred to successful UC campuses via the interlocation transfer of funds process (ILT). We will request accounting information from successful UC applicants at the time of award notification.

Submission Process

All documents should be incorporated into a single PDF file and sent by email to Pam Keach, MS, UCFC’s research administrator, at pakeach@ucdavis.edu and to the UCFC inbox at hs-ucfc@ucdavis.edu. Please specify that the proposal is for UCFC’s small grant award program.

Further Information

For questions about the RFP, allowable and non-allowable budget items, or the application process, please contact Pam Keach, MS, UCFC’s research administrator, at hs-ucfc@ucdavis.edu or at 916.734.3168. As appropriate, we will publish questions and responses at the program website.
Further information on UCFC can be found at https://health.ucdavis.edu/vprp/UCFC/index.html. The center’s authorizing legislation, the California Firearm Violence Research Act, can be found in the California Penal Code, beginning at section 14230.