

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

Policy Research Center for Tobacco and the Environment

2026 Pilot Research Awards

The **Policy Research Center for Tobacco and the Environment** is a multi-disciplinary collaborative effort working in partnership with advocates, community members, policymakers, and other key stakeholders to advance the goals of the Tobacco Endgame. Funded by the **California Tobacco-Related Disease Research Program (TRDRP)**, the Center's mission is to conduct community-driven tobacco policy research that leads to cleaner and healthier indoor and outdoor environments by eliminating the toxic legacy of commercial tobacco products. Cigarette butts, vaping pods, and other tobacco product waste (TPW) are the most littered items in California, harming ecosystems and potentially human health. Similarly, secondhand smoke (SHS) and thirdhand smoke (THS) continue to pollute indoor environments, leading to involuntary exposure to known carcinogens and reproductive toxicants years after smoking ends. TPW, SHS, and THS contribute to health and environmental disparities, disproportionately affect vulnerable communities, and create financial burdens for communities.

AWARD PURPOSE

The Policy Research Center for Tobacco and the Environment is pleased to announce the call for the 2026/27 Pilot Research Grant applications. **For this round of awards, we are particularly interested in projects examining the accumulation and reaccumulation of tobacco product waste in neighborhoods with different socio-economic, land use, tobacco use, geographic, and climate characteristics.** Successful pilot studies should inform the development of larger, policy-oriented research proposals that can compete successfully for TRDRP or other research funding. Research proposals are invited from any scientific discipline, and may focus on any policy aspect of tobacco and the environment that has the potential to bring new allies (e.g., consumers, environmental groups, renters) and policy approaches to the Tobacco Endgame. Proposals should have broad public appeal, especially among youth; create a counter-narrative to discredit the tobacco industry's "greenwashing"; and promote tobacco control policies in novel and complementary areas (e.g., housing codes, real estate, single-use plastics). All proposals must reflect collaboration between community members and academic researchers.

KEY DATES

October 1, 2025: Call Release
November 14, 2025: Applications Due (Noon, Pacific Time)
January 19, 2026: Notification of Review Outcome
March 1, 2026: Award Start Date
February 28, 2027: Award End Date

DURATION OF AWARD

12 months

FUNDS AVAILABLE

One (1) award of up to \$50,000 total costs per award (total=direct + indirect).

ELIGIBILITY

This award aims to support research by post-doctoral fellows and researchers new to tobacco control policy. Applicants identifying with underrepresented groups are particularly encouraged. The Principal Investigator (applicant) must have an appointment and principal investigator

status at a California research institution, commit a minimum of 1.2 person-months (10%) of effort to the project for a 12-month appointment or equivalent, and be able to conduct the project in the San Diego County region. U.S. citizenship is not a requirement for eligibility.

Researchers from community organizations are not eligible to apply. However, community organizations are encouraged to partner with California academic researchers to submit proposals. Community-based researchers may serve as Co-PI or Co-I. **The Policy Research Center can facilitate connections between community-based and academic researchers as needed.** Please contact Sarah Lavalley, Center Coordinator, to secure such assistance (slavalley@sdsu.edu).

The Principal Investigator named in the application must certify that in the past five years, neither the Principal Investigator, nor any investigator or community partner associated with the proposal: has had a paid, voluntary, or in-kind relationship with the Commercial Tobacco, Electronic Cigarette, Alcohol, or Cannabis Industries (“the Industries”); accepted funding from nor had an affiliation, contractual relationship, or engaged in corporate responsibility program activities with the Industries; and acknowledges that if funded, acceptance of any paid, voluntary, or in-kind relationship with the Industries is grounds for termination of the funding agreement.

PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Application templates may be requested from Georg E. Matt (gmatt@sdsu.edu), Director, Policy Research Center for Tobacco and the Environment (Center).

- 1) **Cover Page** (see cover page template)
- 2) **Research Plan** (see research plan template)
 - Specific Aims** (1 page)
 - Research Strategy** (3 pages)
 - Literature Cited** (1 page)
- 3) **Budget summary and Budget Justification** (1 page, see budget page template)
- 4) **NIH Biosketch of PI and Co-PI** (see biosketch template)
- 5) **Human subjects** (see human subjects accrual template)
- 6) **Vertebrate animals** (see vertebrate animals template)

Parts 1-6 should be combined into one PDF document.

Grantees must comply with the policies written in the Research Grants Program Office Grants Administration Manual (GAM): https://www.ucop.edu/research-grants-program/_files/documents/srp_forms/srp_gam.pdf. These include Research Misconduct, Conflict of Interest, Acknowledgments, Open Access, and Human & Animal Subjects Usage Policies.

BUDGETARY GUIDELINES

The budget may include indirect costs and partial salary support for investigators, graduate students, post-docs, and technicians. The budget may include publication fees, supplies, and other study-related expenses. Funds cannot be used for travel, professional & meeting fees, salary support for administrative personnel, or equipment.

REVIEW CRITERIA

Each application will be reviewed by two Center investigators (Greiner, Lopez Galvez, Matt, Novotny, Stigler Granados) and two members of the Community Advisory Board based on the

criteria outlined below. The scored proposals and reviews will be forwarded to the Policy Strategist and Scientific Advisory Committee for the selection of the project to be funded.

- **Feasibility (required):** The application will not be scored if it is unlikely to achieve its aims given the budget requested, and institutional and other available resources.
- **Human Subjects/ Animal Welfare (required):** The application will not be scored if there are major ethical concerns surrounding human subjects and animal welfare.
- **Significance of proposed research to Center's central theme (30 pts):** The proposed project addresses an important policy question related to tobacco and the environment.
- **Merit of the proposed policy research (40 pts):** The proposed project has clear policy-related outcomes; evidence of community collaboration; appropriate aims and strategies to attain goals; sound study design and methods, and analyses; and a high likelihood of contributing valid and meaningful data.
- **Innovation of the proposed approach to advancing the policy research on tobacco and the environment (20 pts):** The proposed project addresses concerns of underserved communities; has the potential to lead to policy change; is led by diverse investigators who are new to tobacco science; and capitalizes on unique populations/ environments, specialized expertise, new concepts/ perspectives, innovative methodologies, and/or emerging technologies.
- **Plans for external grant funding (10 pts):** The pilot project is likely to lead to significant follow-on funding and/or return on investment, e.g., meaningful preliminary data will be generated for potential future grant funding from TRDRP or other sources.

SUBMISSION

Deadline November 14, 2025 @ Noon (PT).

The single application PDF file consisting of (1) Cover page, (2) Research Plan, (3) Budget Summary and Justification, (4) NIH Biosketch, (5) Human Subjects Form, and (6) Vertebrate Animals Form should be sent via email to Danielle Butler (dsbutler@sdsu.edu).

FORMAT SPECIFICATIONS

All applications must be submitted on the forms provided and adhere to the following guidelines:

- Use Arial font 11 points or larger
- Use 0.75-inch margins (top, bottom, left, and right) for all pages
- The application must be single-space
- Consecutively number pages in the footer of the Research Proposal
- Insert name and affiliation in the header of the document
- As applicable, figures or other materials must be inserted directly into the body of the application
- No appendices

HUMAN AND ANIMAL SUBJECTS, SAFETY, AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

Pending IRB or IACUC approval or copies of IRB or IACUC approval must be submitted prior to activation of the grant award.

GRANTEE PROGRESS AND FINAL REPORTS

Reviews of work and progress will be made quarterly through conference calls. A final report is due within 3 months of the project's end. Grantees are expected to present their project findings at a Center webinar.

PUBLICATIONS

All publications (as well as posters and abstracts at scientific meetings) that result from the support provided by this award must acknowledge that support in writing as follows: “This project was supported by the Tobacco Policy Research Center for Tobacco and the Environment funded by the Tobacco-Related Disease Research Program Grant #T33PC6863.”

EARLY TERMINATION OR TRANSFER OF RESEARCH FUNDS

If the grantee decides to discontinue the research project or leave their California-based research institution, the Policy Research Center for Tobacco and the Environment must be immediately notified, and the project will be terminated.

INQUIRIES AND APPLICATION TEMPLATES

For inquiries and to obtain application templates, contact

Georg E. Matt, PhD

Director, Policy Research Center for Tobacco and the Environment

gmatt@sdsu.edu

For more information, click here:

- [Tobacco-Related Disease Research Program](#)
- [TRDRP's general research priorities](#)
- [Information about the California Endgame](#)