

August 2022

Virginia Youth Tobacco Projects
Small Grants Program—Research on the
Causes and Prevention of Youth Tobacco Use

Request for Applications

August 4, 2022

Virginia Youth Tobacco Projects
Center for the Study of Tobacco Products
Department of Psychology
Virginia Commonwealth University

SMALL GRANTS PROGRAM--RESEARCH ON THE CAUSES AND PREVENTION OF YOUTH TOBACCO USE

RELEASE DATE: August 4, 2022

Virginia Youth Tobacco Projects (VYTP), Center for the Study of Tobacco Products, Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU)

APPLICATION RECEIPT DATE: October 21, 2022

PURPOSE OF THIS RFA

The Virginia Youth Tobacco Projects (VYTP) is a statewide, multi-university effort to advance the prevention and treatment of youth tobacco use and nicotine dependence through an integrated program of basic and applied research. This effort is coordinated by the Center for the Study of Tobacco Products (CSTP) at Virginia Commonwealth University, with funding provided by the Virginia Foundation for Health Youth (VFHY). The VYTP is implementing several initiatives to enhance Virginia's efforts to learn more about the causes and prevention of youth tobacco use.

The specific goals of the VYTP are to:

- Build a statewide program of research on the causes and prevention of youth tobacco use;
- Create active multi-university collaborations in carrying out the VYTP research program;
- Attract new faculty scholars and students to work on problems of youth smoking;
- Use VFHY funding as a base for attracting additional outside funding for youth tobacco research in Virginia; and
- Translate research findings into improved prevention services and policies.

The purpose of this announcement is to stimulate new research into the causes and prevention of youth tobacco use and nicotine dependence. It is anticipated that awardees will use grant funds to support pilot studies that will lead to larger grant applications to federal, state, and foundation sources. The VYTP small grants program is intended to foster multi-university and multi-disciplinary research teams. It is also anticipated that this program will be used by relatively new investigators and by senior researchers who are new to the field of youth tobacco research to initiate their efforts in this growing and critical area of investigation. The participation of students is encouraged in order to train the next generation of researchers on youth tobacco use.

AREAS OF INTEREST

The Small Grant Program may be used to support research covering the broad spectrum of methods and approaches related to increasing our understanding and improving the **prevention and cessation** of youth tobacco use. Thus, research to be funded may include, but is not limited to, basic research including the biological and behavioral mechanisms associated with tobacco use and nicotine dependence; measurement research, including the development of new instruments to assess the processes and outcomes of preventive interventions; clinical research, including the translation of basic research into new interventions and testing the efficacy of interventions with new populations; epidemiological research, including genetic epidemiology and studies to determine the incidence and prevalence of youth tobacco use and addiction in

Virginia and among specific subpopulations; and services research, including the financing and organization of services, effectiveness studies, and the studies of effective methods for disseminating evidence-based interventions. Of particular importance are studies leading to effective efforts to reduce youth tobacco use in Virginia. Specifically excluded is research on the health effects of tobacco use.

Given the current status of youth tobacco use research and the specific needs of the Commonwealth of Virginia, the VYTP is particularly encouraging applications addressing the following topics, although the full range of research topics described above are entirely appropriate and acceptable as research topics:

1. The effectiveness of existing evidence-based youth tobacco use prevention programs in new settings and/or with new sub-populations of youth (as defined by gender, age, race/ethnicity, SES, disability status, etc.). This would include research on what adaptations are necessary in applying these programs in new settings/populations.
2. Tobacco use cessation, including controlled laboratory experiments that can answer basic questions about the physiological, psychological, and behavioral effects of tobacco cessation in adolescent smokers, and systematically evaluate the impact of various behavioral and pharmacological interventions on these effects; basic and clinical research that can evaluate theoretical causal mechanisms proposed to explain tobacco use and relapse in adolescents; preclinical research that can be designed to provide insights into the specific processes involved in tobacco use, quitting, and relapsing during adolescence; the development and testing of developmentally-appropriate behavioral and pharmacological interventions (and their combinations).
3. Human laboratory studies that are designed to bridge the gap between basic research on nicotine and the causes and consequences of tobacco use among youth. These might include studies related to the effects of nicotine and tobacco, the roles of genetic and environmental variables, the neurocognitive aspects of tobacco use and the influence of attitudes, expectations and social perceptions.
4. The development and testing of youth tobacco use preventive and treatment interventions in primary care settings, including epidemiological and behavioral research that would help to inform the development of new interventions or improve the effectiveness of existing interventions.
5. The use of new and emerging tobacco products (e.g., electronic cigarettes and hookah) by youth, including accessibility, patterns of use, health consequences and policy issues.
6. Dissemination and implementation research including research on the diffusion of youth tobacco use prevention programs beyond those funded by the VFHY, the level of and factors related to the fidelity of implementation of the VFHY-funded programs, and the sustainability of the VFHY-funded programs.

7. Tobacco control policy/regulation, including the effects of pricing, tobacco outlet registration/licensing, and law enforcement on youth tobacco use.
8. Studies that use VFHY-funded prevention programs as research sites and/or that are collaborations between university-based investigators and community-based prevention programs.
9. Studies that are collaborations between university-based investigators and state and/or local policy makers (e.g., local public health districts, Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, local community services boards, and the Alcohol Beverage Commission).

FUNDS AVAILABLE

A total of \$80,000 is available for this program. It is anticipated that two awards will be made, with **each award not exceeding \$40,000**. Awards will be for a maximum of 18 months. The funding of these awards is subject to appropriations by the State or Master Settlement Agreement with tobacco manufacturers and appropriations approved by the VFHY Board of Trustees.

Special Requirements:

- One no-cost extension, not to exceed 6 months, may be granted at the discretion of the grantor. Requests for no-cost extensions must be submitted in writing at least 60 days prior to the initially agreed upon completion date and must fully document and justify why the extension is needed.
- Grant funds may be used only for expenses clearly related and necessary to conduct the research.
- Allowable costs will follow Uniform Guidance
- Indirect/administrative costs will not be paid by this grant.
- Applicants should budget sufficient funds and time for the PI to attend two, two-day meetings in Richmond, Virginia to share progress on their studies with other grantees and to present interim and final results.
- Final invoice and written report are due within 30 days of the end of the award period

ELIGIBLE INSTITUTIONS

Applications are open to all public universities and colleges in the Commonwealth of Virginia, and applications from Virginia's historically black colleges and universities are particularly encouraged. Special consideration will be given to applications from universities/colleges not currently receiving VFHY research funding and to principal investigators not previously funded by the VFHY or through a VYTP small grant. Investigators who have previously received funding from the VFHY/VYTP should document the impact of this funding in terms of publications, grant applications made, and awards received.

Individuals affiliated with a community-based prevention program are encouraged to use this as an opportunity to explore a possible collaboration with a local public university/college.

INDIVIDUALS ELIGIBLE TO BECOME PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS

Any full-time university faculty/staff with the skills, knowledge, and resources necessary to carry out the proposed research is invited to work with their institution to develop an application for this award. Individuals from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups as well as individuals with disabilities are encouraged to apply, as are new investigators or senior investigators with a new interest in youth tobacco use research.

PROTECTION OF HUMAN AND ANIMAL SUBJECTS

Grants funded under this program are subject to all applicable state and Federal laws and regulations regarding the protection of human and animal subjects. Before an award can be issued, the grantee will be required to show documentation of approval by the applicable institutional review board (IRB) or institutional animal care and use committee (IACUC). Applicants are solely responsible for securing appropriate IRB or IACUC approval and ensuring the protection of human and animal subjects.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES

Applicants must complete the attached *Research Award Application Form* and the *Project Budget Form*. A research plan must also be submitted which **shall not exceed 10 pages, single spaced**. Applications exceeding the page limit will be returned. Additional pages are allowable for relevant appendices. Appendices may not be used to merely extend the narrative. There is no expectation that applications use the entire 10 pages.

The application package must be submitted as a pdf document sent by email to Dr. Alison Breland abbrean@vcu.edu. Please put "VYTP Application" in the subject line. Please send a pdf file with institutional signing office signature. Deadline for receipt of all applications is **October 21, 2022 at 5:00 pm EDT**. Applications received after that date and time will not be considered.

VYTP staff persons are available throughout the grant process to provide consultation on the preparation of the application. Please contact Dr. Alison Breland at abbrean@vcu.edu or at (804) 628-2300 with any questions.

APPLICATION CHARACTERISTICS

A complete application will include, **in the following order**:

- Research Award Application Form (see attached)
- Project Budget Form (see attached)
- If the applicant's university does not participate in FDP, the VCU entity form for non-FDP Expanded Clearinghouse Subrecipients (<https://thefdp.org/default/expanded-clearinghouse/>).
- Research Plan (limited to 10, single-spaced pages, 1 inch margins, 12-point font)
- Bibliographic References
- Biographical Sketches of Key Staff--Forms Version G Biographical Sketch, is preferred. See: <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm>

- Appendices (if any), including:
 - Measures
 - Letters of Agreement/Support (see Staff/Management Plan on p. 6)

REQUIREMENTS OF THE PROPOSAL RESPONSE

To assure that sufficient information is included for technical merit review, the **Research Plan** should include the following and be organized under the following major headings. This section is **limited to 10, single-spaced pages, 1-inch margins, 12-point font.**

Specific Aims

- List the broad, long-term objectives and what the specific research proposed in this application is intended to accomplish. State the hypotheses to be tested.

Background and Significance

- Briefly describe the background leading to the present application.
- Critically evaluate existing knowledge and identify the gaps which the project is intended to fill.
- State concisely the importance and relevance of the proposed research to the field of youth tobacco use.
- Relate the specific aims to the broad, long-term objectives.

Research Design and Method

- Research design
- A description of the research setting or context of the project, particularly note any relationship to existing VFHY initiatives
- Operational definition of the subject population, access to subjects, the number of subjects, sampling design, etc.
- Apparatus, if applicable
- Research procedures
- Measures, including the procedures for developing any new measures and the psychometric properties of any existing measures that will be used (copies of measures can be included in appendices)

Proposed Data Analysis Strategy

- A description of the types of analyses to be conducted.
- How the analyses will answer the research questions.

Project Implementation Plan

- Description of the project tasks that covers the entire duration of the project, including:
 - A description of each task and how it will be accomplished
 - Timelines for accomplishing each task
 - Potential obstacles or problems that may occur and how these would be addressed

- Resource utilization plan that identifies all resources needed to conduct the study (e.g., staff, equipment, space, and data) and evidence that the project will have access to these.

Staffing/Management Plan

- A description of the role of all key project staff.
- Management plan that identifies the organizational location for the project, lines and mechanisms of authority and responsibility, and how the project will be managed.
- Written agreements/letters of support for other participating organizations should be included in an appendix. Written agreements should specify the roles and responsibilities of each party.

Budget Narrative/Justification

- A detailed, justified line-item budget.

Future Research and Capacity Building

- How the project will enhance the capacity of the institution/PI to conduct research on the causes and prevention of youth tobacco use, particularly as it is related to new investigators or senior investigators new to the field of youth tobacco use.
- What steps will be taken to extend this line of research upon completion of the grant and, in particular, what sources of funding will be sought.
- How the results of the research will be disseminated and, in particular, what publications, grant applications and/or other products are anticipated as a direct result of the research. Specifically identify one or more journals to which you will submit your work for publication and one or more grant programs/announcements to which you will respond.
- If the PI or one of the co-investigators was the PI of a previous VYTP research award, identify the title of the previous award and list the publications, conference presentations, grant applications and awards received that directly resulted from the previous award. Include this as an attachment to the application—it does not count as part of the 10-page limit.

Animal and Human Subjects (not included in the 10-page limit)

- For human subjects, describe their proposed involvement; inclusion/exclusion criteria; the inclusion of any vulnerable populations; recruitment and consent procedures; copy of consent forms; potential risks, their likelihood and seriousness; procedures for protecting against risks; and the reasonableness of the risks in relation to the benefits of the study.
- For animal subjects, describe the proposed use of animals; the justification for the use of animals and choice of species; the veterinary care of the animals involved; procedures for ensuring that discomfort, distress, pain, and injury will be limited to that which is unavoidable in the conduct of scientifically sound research; and the method of euthanasia to be used and if it is consistent with the recommendations of the Panel on Euthanasia of the American Veterinary Medical Association, and if not, the justification.

Failure to submit any component of the proposal response may result in finding the proposal non-responsive.

PEER REVIEW PROCESS

Upon receipt, applications will be reviewed for completeness and responsiveness by staff of the VYTP. Incomplete and/or non-responsive applications will be returned to the applicant without further consideration.

Applications that are complete and responsive to the RFA will be evaluated for scientific and technical merit by a multi-disciplinary committee consisting of the VYTP co-principal investigators, at least four VYTP members each from different universities, and a representative of the VFHY. In addition, if proposals are received requiring expertise not possessed by members of the scientific review group, in order to provide a competent review, consultation from persons with appropriate technical expertise will be sought. Review committee members will not participate in the review of proposals from their own institution or from their research partners.

REVIEW CRITERIA

All proposals will be evaluated using the criteria below. Proposals will be ranked according to their accumulated scoring.

1. Significance/Relevance. What is the relevance of the proposed study in helping to understand the causes of youth tobacco use and/or to improve youth tobacco use prevention services in Virginia? Does the study address an important problem in the field of youth tobacco use research? If the aims of the study are achieved, how do they advance scientific knowledge? Does the study help us understand youth tobacco use among the ethnic and geographically diverse populations of the Commonwealth? (Weight = 20 points)
2. Approach. Are the conceptual framework, design, methods, and analyses adequately developed, well integrated, and appropriate to the aims of the project? Are potential problem areas acknowledged and alternative tactics considered? (Weight = 25 points)
3. Innovation. Does the project employ novel concepts, approaches or methods? Are the aims original and innovative? Does the project challenge existing paradigms or develop new methodologies or technologies? (Weight = 15 points)
4. Investigator. Are key staff appropriately trained and well suited to carry out this work? Is the work proposed appropriate to the staff's experience? Has the PI previously received funding from the VFHY, and if so, did this funding result in publications, conference presentations, grant applications and/or new awards? (Weight = 10 points)
5. Environment. Does the scientific environment in which the work will be done contribute to the probability of success? Is there evidence of institutional support? Is there a commitment of the resources, cooperation and/or collaborative arrangements needed to implement all components of the study? Is there demonstrated access to research subjects or databases to conduct the research? Is there evidence of multi-university collaborations

and collaborations with community-based prevention programs and/or state/local policy makers? (Weight = 15 points)

6. Capacity. To what extent will implementation of the proposed research build the institution's and PI's capacity to engage in youth tobacco use research? Are the plans for the dissemination of research findings and the pursuit of future funding support adequate? What is the likelihood of obtaining other funding support in the future? (Weight = 10 points)
7. Budget. Are the proposed budget and the requested period of support in relation to the proposed research reasonable? (Weight = 5 points)

In addition to the above criteria, the following will be considered in the review if applicable.

8. Protections. The adequacy of the proposed protection for humans, animals, or the environment, to the extent they may be adversely affected by the project.
9. Inclusion. The adequacy of plans to include subjects from both genders and all racial and ethnic groups (and subgroups) as appropriate for the scientific goals of the research. Plans for the recruitment and retention of subjects will also be evaluated.

AWARD CRITERIA

In addition to scientific merit (as determined by the peer review), consideration will be given to the following factors in making award decisions:

- Representation of multiple public universities in Virginia.
- Representation of the broad spectrum of youth tobacco use research including basic, epidemiological, measurement, clinical/efficacy and services research, with a particular emphasis on the topics identified above.
- Representation of both new and senior investigators.
- The use, when appropriate, of data obtained in Virginia.

RECEIPT AND REVIEW SCHEDULE

Application		Earliest Possible
<u>Receipt Date</u>	<u>Award Notification</u>	<u>Start Date</u>
October 21, 2022	December 15, 2022	January 2, 2023

SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS OF THE GRANTEE

- Brief, semi-annual progress reports must be submitted in writing that describe the current status of the project including: challenges encountered, their likely impact and how they will be addressed; preliminary results (if any), plans for the next reporting period; and any publications, conference presentations and grant applications based on the project. A template will be provided for these reports, and the recommended length of the reports is

two pages. Progress reports are due January 2, 2023 and every six months thereafter until the completion of the grant.

- A final written report of the completed project, including: challenges encountered and how they were addressed, study results, public health impact, and dissemination plans. A template will be provided for this report, and the recommended length of the report is four pages. This report is due within 30 days of the end of the grant period.
- An oral presentation of the completed project must be made to the VYTP Research Coalition within 6 months of the end of the project period. Grantees may be asked to give additional presentations (for example, to describe their projects before data collection has begun, as well as to describe interim findings) at VYTP Research Coalition meetings.
- The awardee is encouraged to prepare an article based on the project for publication; any publications related to the project must acknowledge the VFHY.
- Grantees must submit, on an annual basis for up to six years after the project period, a list of all publications, presentations, and grant submissions related to their study.

PRE-PROPOSAL MEETING

A pre-proposal meeting will be held via Zoom on **September 7, 2022 at 2:00 pm** for persons interested in responding to this announcement. A brief overview of the RFA will be provided and there will be an opportunity to ask questions. Participation is encouraged, but not required. To register for the meeting, please e-mail Dr. Alison Breland at abbrelan@vcu.edu by 5:00 pm on September 6, 2022.

WHERE TO SEND INQUIRIES AND APPLICATIONS

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