**Request for Proposals to Establish Labor Centers at**

**UC Davis, UC Santa Cruz, UC Santa Barbara, UC Riverside, UC Irvine, and UC San Diego**

University of California Worker Rights Policy Initiative (WRPI)

August 8, 2022

**Overview**

The University of California Worker Rights Policy Initiative (WRPI) is requesting proposals for new research and educational programs focused on the health and welfare of California’s diverse workforce.  This RFP applies to all University of California campuses that have not received direct legislative funding for campus-based labor centers (all UC Campuses except for UC Berkeley, UC Merced, and UCLA).  Funding through this initiative will support the operational expenses needed to build the capacity of labor-related research and educational initiatives. We anticipate making awards up to $500,000 per year to each campus.

**Background**

UC labor centers have a long-standing, internationally-renowned reputation of excellence in applied research and education, rooted in a history of deep and meaningful engagement with worker organizations. Yet the twenty-first century has revealed new, global challenges facing workers. The COVID-19 pandemic amplified long-standing disparities as Black, Latinx, low-wage, immigrant, and women workers faced greater losses of income, and exposure to workplace hazards with little to no safety net. Recent decades have also witnessed an acceleration in low-road approaches to economic development, such as subcontracting, temporary, and gig work that significantly lower wages and reduce workers’ economic security and bargaining power. California low-wage workers are now at the forefront of global technological and climate changes that threaten to entrench and widen these inequalities. The UC WRPI aims to address these and related challenges, by advancing labor research and education across California’s diverse regions—and in collaboration with worker organizations.

To address these challenges with aim to fund programs that center working people, their communities, and their organizations, with three areas of activity:

* Policy research on a broad range of topics related to labor and employment policy, worker organizing, workforce development and a worker-centered economy.
* Educational opportunities and hands-on research experiences for future labor researchers, educators, and staff for Labor and allied non-profit organizations, who are reflective of the diverse people of California.
* Robust new labor research and education programs in underserved regions of California, supported by the enhanced capacity of existing programs within the UCs.

**Program Goals**

Within these broad priorities, the WRPI will support research and program development that has concrete and identifiable outcomes in the following areas:

*Capacity Building for a Worker-Centered Economy*

* Develop infrastructure on UC campuses that supports the funding priorities of the WRPI in underserved regions of the state (hire staff/faculty, establish centers and/or organized research units).
* Support unions and worker organizations to conduct their work more strategically by developing curricula, training staff and rank-and file members, and providing technical assistance.
* Develop the next generation of labor and community organizers, researchers, and leaders among undergraduate and graduate students.
* Develop capacity for inter-campus, systemwide, and intersegmental collaboration in research and education focusing on the WRPI priorities.

*Research for the Public Good*

* Fund robust community-engaged research in collaboration with organized labor and worker organizations
* Incentivize, recognize, and reward faculty public service that builds infrastructure for applied research on labor issues, broadly defined
* Create, expand, or support venues/meetings that showcase UC-wide efforts to share labor-policy research, communicate the varied products of community engaged research focusing on WRPI priorities
* Foster research capacity of worker and community organizations through technical assistance, educational activities, and the facilitation of classroom and experiential learning activities for UC undergraduate and graduate students

**Developing Campus Proposals**

The UC WRPI fund is administered by a five-person committee with one representative of each of the Labor Centers at UC Berkeley, UCLA, and UC Merced, and two representatives of the California Federation of Labor. Total funding available for the 2022-2023 academic year is $3 million to be distributed among the six UC campuses (UCSD, UCI, UCR, UCSB, UCSC, and UCD). Campus proposals should identify two or more ladder faculty who will be significantly involved in the planning and implementation of proposed activities. We encourage faculty and staff of a given campus who might consider separate proposals to attempt to work together to achieve scale and disciplinary breadth. We encourage campus teams to identify financial or in-kind commitments by their home campus. Funded activities must fall within relevant UC and campus policies.

**Proposal Elements**

Campus teams will develop detailed proposals for a 3-year time frame with funding up to $500,000 per academic year. Funding is expected to be ongoing, but is assured only for the academic year 2022-23.  A priority would be to recruit and select a director.  Funding may cover the cost of a director, research and administrative staff, instructional staff (including faculty), graduate and undergraduate student staff, research expenses, conferences and gatherings, public-facing programs and communications, and other costs associated with the mission and goals of the campus team. Proposals should set aside funds for participation in the annual WRPI statewide conference. Each campus team will submit an annual report to the WRPI funding committee. Multi-year proposals should be flexible enough to respond to emerging needs as expressed by community partners. Complete applications must also include one or more letter(s) of support from the local labor council or a union/community partner; and a list of key labor and community partners.

Proposals should address the following guidelines:

Mission Statement: Proposals should include a brief mission statement that captures in plain language the goals of the campus group (aspirational and short term), how the group intends to work with community stakeholders, and what types of activities the group expects to use to achieve its goals. Identify which of the UC WRPI Program Goals (see above) your project addresses.

Sustainable Campus Infrastructure: Funding is intended to support campus and regional infrastructure for labor related research, education, and public service. Programming must fulfill the goals of the UC WRPI related to capacity building and research for the public good. Each campus will need to tailor this infrastructure investment according to local conditions, and there are a variety of models across the UC system.

Community engagement: Proposed activities must include meaningful participation by organized labor and community stakeholders. At a minimum, campus programs must have a community advisory board that includes representatives of organized labor and community organizations. Research projects should be developed with feedback from the advisory board and stakeholders directly impacted by the research. Dissemination of research findings must include modes of communication that are accessible to community audiences beyond the university.

Proposed projects are encouraged to “move at the speed of trust” in order to build sustainable relationships. Funding through this initiative is intended to be operational rather than for specific identified research projects. We welcome discussion of examples of proposed research that would occur within each campus of projects, but are primarily aiming to help build capacity and long-term sustainability.

**Timeline: RFP opens August 8. Submission deadline is Monday, September 19 at 5 PM.**

**Please direct inquiries and submit proposals to: Kent Wong (**[**kentwong@ucla.edu**](mailto:kentwong@ucla.edu)**), Ken Jacobs (**[**kjacobs9@berkeley.edu**](mailto:kjacobs9@berkeley.edu)**), and Ana Padilla (**[**anapadilla@ucmerced.edu**](mailto:anapadilla@ucmerced.edu)**) with subject “UC WRPI RFP.”**

**We will host an informational webinar on August 19 at 10am PT to provide an overview of the RFP process and answer any questions related to the application.**