REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA)
PILOT PROJECTS IN TOBACCO REGULATORY SCIENCE

Letter of Intent Deadline: November 22, 2019
Application Deadline: January 31, 2020

OVERVIEW: This RFA is being issued by the Center for the Assessment of Tobacco Regulations (CAstOR), a multi-institutional center headquartered at the University of Michigan (https://bit.ly/2EiEq6t, http://tcors.umich.edu/). The purpose of this RFA is to support pilot tobacco regulatory science research activities that could inform the FDA’s Center for Tobacco Products (CTP) (https://www.fda.gov/tobacco-products) in its execution of the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act (TCA). The Act gives the federal government authority to regulate the manufacturing, marketing, and distribution of tobacco products for the protection of the public’s health (a full description of the TCA can be found at https://bit.ly/2KYMlqv).

A goal of the RFA is to foster careers in tobacco regulatory science relevant research. Funded projects should be stepping-stones for the development of an application for externally funded research, for example, through the Tobacco Regulatory Science Program (TRSP) at the NIH and FDA (https://prevention.nih.gov/tobacco-regulatory-research). Applicants are encouraged to seek out collaborators across the network of Tobacco Centers of Regulatory Science (https://bit.ly/2P5lYV6).

The priority research areas for pilot funding include biological, behavioral, social, and economic analyses of modified risk tobacco products (e.g., e-cigarettes, IQOS), nicotine reduction and flavored products. Other areas of interest include disparities research on tobacco use and consequences, marketing and advertising of tobacco products, and tobacco use in youth and young adults. Although not required, applicants are encouraged to propose research that will inform computational models or use modeling approaches. The NIH and FDA recommend use of the PhenX Toolkit (www.phenxtoolkit.org) and other common data elements (https://www.nlm.nih.gov/cde/), as appropriate.

ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION: The funds are available for researchers at earlier stages of career development. Only doctoral students, post-doctoral fellows, assistant researchers, and assistant professors may apply. Applications must be generally responsive to current TRSP and CTP research priorities (https://bit.ly/2RCxAfe).

DUE DATES: A Letter of Intent (LOI) is required to apply. The letter should briefly (one page maximum) describe the research to be proposed and how it will be responsive to the RFA’s goals. The due date for the LOI is 11:59 PM EST November 22, 2019. After reviewing the LOIs, selected applicants will be invited to submit a full application. Invited applications will be due at 11:59 PM EST January 31, 2020.
FUNDING: Pre-doctoral applicants will be eligible for a maximum award of $20,000. All other applicants can request up to $40,000. The project period will be 12 months starting in spring 2020.

INVITED APPLICATION GUIDELINES: 4-page limit, including all tables and figures (but not including references, budget, and budget justification). Additionally, applications from doctoral students and post-doctoral fellows will require a letter of support from a faculty mentor with a brief description of a mentoring plan. The application should be single-spaced, 11-point font minimum, with at least 0.5-inch wide margins. The proposal should include the following sections, which align with NIH guidelines: specific aims, background and significance, research design and methods, and future research plans.

BUDGET AND JUSTIFICATION: Include a brief budget and budget justification (one page maximum). Funds can be used only for direct costs associated with project research activities, including faculty time, staff or student support, project-related travel, and purchase of research materials including data sets, software, and computing time. Funds will be released after proof of IRB approval is provided.

REVIEW PROCESS: Applications will be peer-reviewed using the current NIH review criteria and scoring methods. Reviewers will assess the responsiveness of applications to the RFA.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS: Awardees will be required to provide a photo and project abstract for posting on the CAsToR website. Within two months after the end of the project, awardees will submit a final written report. Awardees may be asked to deliver an oral presentation about their research and career development.

HOW TO APPLY: Submission should be completed via Qualtrics form (https://umich.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_1S6S6MRzoRX8vgF). Invited applicants will be informed about the online application submission system and process.