

**University of California
Labor and Employment Research Fund (LERF)
Call for Proposals**

INTRODUCTION

The Labor and Employment Research Fund (LERF) is a multi-campus University of California research program devoted to studying labor and employment issues in California and the nation. It is administered by the Office of Research at the UC Office of the President. The mission of the LERF is to encourage rigorous and relevant academic research that can help address public policy problems in this area by increasing our understanding of their causes and possible solutions.

The world of work, and the public and private policies that govern it, are today in flux, in California, in the nation, and throughout the world. In much the same way, the discipline of “industrial relations,” which the University of California has advanced for more than 60 years, has evolved significantly as it tries to capture the multitude of challenges which today confront California’s workforce in one of the world’s largest and most globally integrated economies. California employment demographics, for example, have shifted radically: workforce and wage outcomes are differentiated by skill and education, and the labor force is more heavily female, ethnically diverse, and includes a higher proportion of immigrants than at any time since the early 20th century. At the same time, the structure of the economy and of the public policy that regulates it has undergone an equally abrupt transformation. Domestic manufacturing and union density have declined, service sector employment has risen, and all sectors of the economy are more subject to global competition and opportunities. New issues have crowded the labor and employment agenda: areas of increasing concerns include racial and gender inequality at work and in education, the rising challenge in providing employment-based health and pension benefits, and the lengthening of the work day and the consequent stress it has put on family life.

2006-2007 LERF Research Priorities

LERF is committed to supporting research, from a variety of perspectives and disciplines, that advances our knowledge and understanding of these new challenges. Below, we identify three research areas of particular priority for 2006-2007; these have been identified as important by practitioners and scholars in labor, government, and the academy.

We encourage faculty to address these priorities, but we will also consider proposals that investigate related issues. Graduate students are offered an even wider canvas. We will consider all proposals relevant to a broad definition of the labor and employment research field. In addition to sociological and economic modes of inquiry, historical, comparative, and institutional approaches are welcome.

The LERF research priorities for 2006-2007 include:

1. The Changing California Workforce

California's working families and their communities are transforming as a consequence of changes in the economic and political landscape. We are specifically interested in research that analyzes:

- * Changing inter-racial and inter-ethnic relations and gender conditions in the California workplace and economy;
- * The impact of industrial change on immigration, the impact of immigration on labor and employment, and the impact of immigration policy on the workforce;
- * The impact of greater numbers of women in the work force, including issues of child care and elder care, and the work-family balance;
- * The impact of economic and political change on workers' identity and civic engagement;
- * The projected labor shortage: how might it impact California?

2. Job Quality and Low-Wage Work

Over the last two decades California has experienced growth in both low-wage and high-wage jobs, with a relative decline in the middle. The growth of low-wage jobs has been accompanied by the decline in other aspects of job quality including the provision of health care and retirement benefits. We are specifically interested in research that analyzes:

- * Determinants and correlates of wages, health and retirement benefits, and other aspects of job quality;
- * The causes of the growth in low-quality jobs, including changing government policy, shifts in labor demand and business practices, and the impact of technology and globalization;
- * The consequences of the rise of low-wage work, including the impact on families, communities, government expenditures, workforce development, productivity, competitiveness, and economic growth;
- * The relationship between shifts in job quality and health outcomes, including studies of occupational safety and health issues and more directly-related health issues;
- * The effectiveness of new efforts by government and civil society to improve job quality, including research on the impact of new minimum-wage, living wage, paid family leave, pay-or-pay health care and other relevant policies;
- * The effectiveness of efforts to improve job quality through training, sectoral upgrading, new job creation and other economic development strategies, as well complementary policy efforts such as the provision of workforce housing;
- * Other studies that analyze changes in the quality of life of workers and their families.

3. Labor Market Institutions and Workers' Rights

Changes in the economy and industrial organization in the United States have presented new challenges for workers' efforts to defend their rights and represent themselves. These

developments have generated a debate within American labor unions and other organizations about future strategies and organizational forms. We are specifically interested in research that analyzes:

- * The reorganization of labor markets, including the rise of labor market intermediaries such as staffing agencies and workforce development providers; new forms of contract labor; and the restructuring of employment services to accommodate offshore outsourcing and other changes associated with the new economy;
- * Efforts to revitalize American unions or to create other forms of worker organization; analysis of the determinants of successful or unsuccessful organizing and bargaining; legal, cultural and institutional obstacles to union growth and worker organization; and changes in union structure and other organizational forms;
- * Efforts to build alliances between labor and other organizations on issues of common concern; the connections between worker organizations based in the workplace and the communities where workers live; and organizing strategies in immigrant communities and communities of color;
- * The impact of labor and other constituencies concerned with employment issues on politics and government policy;
- * The effects of public policy changes and private initiatives by employers and others on the rights and ability of workers in California to organize and bargain collectively.

4. Other Areas of Research.

Although priority will be given to faculty research proposals in the areas identified above, the Labor and Employment Research Fund will entertain any strong and innovative proposal that considers, from any disciplinary perspective, issues that illuminate the character of and relationships between work, labor, and employment. Graduate students are invited to submit proposals that advance such research on any front. Their work will receive full consideration regardless of the priority areas listed in this RFP.

GRANT PROGRAM CATEGORIES

Four types of awards are available for the fiscal year from July 1, 2006 to June 30, 2007. Each is described in detail on the following pages. For complete on-line application, please go to

Application Deadline: October 27, 2006

- I. Faculty (includes UC Principal Investigators)
 - I.A. Research and data generation grants
 - I.B. Workshop, planning and conference grants

- II. Graduate Students:
 - II.A. Doctoral Dissertation Fellowships
 - II.B. Thesis Fellowship
 - II.C. Mini-Grant

I. FACULTY GRANTS

Eligibility

All University of California faculty and academic staff who have principal investigator status are eligible to apply, as well as groups, campus units or departments. LERF awards for the fiscal year 2006-2007 may contribute to new or ongoing projects. Only one proposal will be accepted from each applicant for each category.

I.A. FACULTY RESEARCH AND DATA GENERATION GRANTS

Individual faculty, academic staff, multi-disciplinary, and multi-campus team applications are all accepted. Multi-campus applications are accepted and encouraged. The LERF encourages the development of system-wide partnerships among UC departments and units, and faculty and students with an interest in labor and employment issues.

The anticipated funding levels in this category will be between \$20,000-\$50,000. Proposed budgets may be cut substantially if they seem unduly large relative to the work involved in the project.

Proposals should include a dissemination plan for the research that is accessible to a general audience. Researchers may be invited to present their findings and work in progress at a meeting convened by the LERF. The dissemination plan may include seminars, conferences or other forums. Data generation grants must make these new data sets available to other University researchers and the public.

Proposal Submission

1. Apply on-line at <http://www.ucop.edu/research/labor>
2. Provide project abstract of no more than 1 page or 300 words in the box provided in the on-line web page. The summary should be a self-contained description of the project objectives, methods to be employed, significance of anticipated results
3. Narrative project description of no more than 10 pages or 3000 words, singled spaced, including:
 - The primary objectives and potential significance of the project, in the labor and employment research area as well as possible policy implications.
 - Discussion of how this project builds upon previous research literature on the topic.
 - Discussion of project methods and data.
 - The nature of any prior or ongoing work on this project and how that prior work will be advanced.
 - Project timeline and work plan.
 - A dissemination plan.
 - Information about any collaborators, if any
4. Personnel
Include abbreviated c.v. (maximum 2 pages) for the Principal Investigator and other key project faculty and staff.
5. Budget
A realistic budget and budget justification using the worksheet provided on the web site. The budgets may include a maximum of one summer ninth per project (regardless of the number of PIs) and may not include permanent equipment such as computer, printer, or scanners, etc. Benefits must be included for all faculty and staff salaries (including summer ninths) listed in the budget.

Selection Criteria

Evaluation criteria include the quality of the proposed research, its potential contribution to California labor and employment policy debates, the experience and qualifications of the PI(s) and staff, the feasibility of completing the project within the proposed time frame.

I.B. WORKSHOP, PLANNING AND CONFERENCE GRANTS

This grant category is designed to support projects that facilitate the dissemination of labor and employment research as well as collaborative research. Eligible projects include:

- Conferences, working groups, colloquia, or public forums focused on research findings.
- Policy briefs and other types of research dissemination.

The anticipated funding levels in this category will be between \$5,000-\$20,000.

Proposal Submission

1. Apply on-line at <http://www.ucop.edu/research/labor>
2. Provide project abstract of no more than 1 page or 300 words in the box provided in the on-line web page. The summary should a self-contained description of the project objectives and significance of anticipated results
3. Narrative project description of no more than 4 pages or 1,200 words, single spaced, including:
 - The primary objectives of the project
 - Project timeline (including work already in process and key deliverables).
 - If the proposal builds on prior work, the nature of the prior work, and how much of that prior work will be incorporated.
 - A dissemination plan.
 - List of anticipated participants and invitees
 - List of institutional or constituent partners, if any
 - Campuses involved
 - Information about any collaborators, if any

4. Personnel

Brief biographies of the applicant and other key faculty and staff (attach abbreviated c.v.s for key personnel).

5. Budget

A realistic budget and budget justification using the worksheet provided on the web site. The budget may not include permanent equipment such as computer, printer, or scanners, etc. Benefits must be included for all staff salaries listed in the budget.

Selection Criteria

- The project should represent an innovative perspective on the problem or issue addressed.
- The project will be judged on its conceptual framework, feasibility and cost effectiveness.
- The project should be useful to decision makers, based in part on the applicant's assessment of the relevant audiences for the proposed work.
- The demonstrated capability of the applicant to undertake the project.

REPORTING

The research paper, meeting/workshop proceedings, and/or data set and a financial report on the project results must be submitted to the LERF within 90 days of the grant end date.

II. GRADUATE STUDENTS

Graduate students should carefully consider which of the following categories is most appropriate for their research plans and their academic standing; they may apply in only one category in any single year.

II.A. DOCTORAL DISSERTATION FELLOWSHIPS (\$30,000) *

Eligibility

Students in Ph.D. programs on all UC campuses, in any discipline, are eligible. Applicants must have completed all degree course work and other pre-dissertation requirements by January 1, 2007.

Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship recipients must be enrolled in the university for the duration of the grant. Students are not permitted to work while receiving fellowship support. *Campus tuition and fees will be paid from this amount. The remainder will be disbursed as a monthly stipend. If tuition and fees are being paid by another source, the award recipient will receive the stipend portion only (approximately \$22,000).

Proposal Submission

1. Apply on-line at <http://www.ucop.edu/research/labor>
2. A 250-word **abstract** (summary) of the dissertation project and its relevance to labor and employment policy.
3. A brief **narrative** version of the dissertation proposal (no more than ten pages, 3,000 words, single-spaced).
4. An unofficial copy of **transcript** of all graduate work at UC
5. Two **letters of recommendation** to be submitted on-line. One of these must be from the dissertation committee chair.
6. The complete **dissertation proposal** formally approved by the student's dissertation committee and a copy of **proof of advancement to candidacy**.

Selection Criteria

The selection committee will consider the applicant's potential to contribute creatively as a scholar of research and policy dialogue in the area of labor and employment, as well as her/his intellectual abilities and past achievements. Projects that involve collaboration with unions, employers, community-based organizations, or government agencies are particularly encouraged. The selection committee will review the applicant's dissertation proposal, course work record at UC, and recommendations from faculty and others with whom the applicant has worked.

REPORTING

As a condition of the fellowship award, students must provide a copy of their Ph.D. dissertation when it is completed. They may also be asked to present their research at a LERF conference.

II.B. PRE-DISSERTATION AND MASTER'S FELLOWSHIPS (\$7,500)

Eligibility

Pre-dissertation and Master's Fellowships are designed to provide support for students in professional schools and graduate programs while they are doing research on labor and employment issues.

Graduate students in all UC campuses are eligible, provided their research meets the criteria outlined below. Applicants must have completed all Master's course work and other requirements by June 30, 2006. Students must be enrolled in a professional school, a doctoral program, or a Master's Degree program, and they must adhere to the rules and regulations on their campuses regarding employment while receiving this fellowship.

Proposal Submission

1. Apply on-line at <http://www.ucop.edu/research/labor>
2. A three-page (single-spaced) or 900 words abstract (summary) of the project and its relevance to labor and employment policy.
3. An unofficial transcript of all graduate work at UC
4. Two letters of recommendation to be submitted on the web. One of these must be from the student's faculty advisor.

Selection Criteria

The selection committee will consider the applicant's potential to contribute creatively as a researcher and/or practitioner to policy dialogue in the area of labor and employment, as well as the applicant's intellectual abilities and past achievements. The selection committee will review the applicant's research proposal, course work record at UC, and recommendations from faculty and others with whom the applicant has worked.

REPORTING

Awardees must report to the LERF on progress made during the quarter or semester that they

received the pre-dissertation fellowship, and they must provide a copy of any paper or research product when it is completed. They may also be asked to present their research at a LERF conference.

II.C. MINI-GRANT

Eligibility

These small grants, in amounts up to \$4,000, are designed to facilitate specific graduate student research projects. They will be awarded twice a year, in the spring and the fall, and may support travel to archives, field work in the social sciences and humanities, transcription of interviews, purchase of data sets and other research materials, and travel to scholarly conferences and other academic meetings. Graduate students at any stage of their UC career are eligible to apply.

Proposal Submission

1. Apply on-line at <http://www.ucop.edu/research/labor>
2. A 500-word summary of the research project and its relevance to the student's academic career at the University of California. Include the approximate dates during which work on this project will take place.
3. A budget of no more than one page detailing travel, lodging and other expenses.
4. One letter of recommendation to be submitted on the web.

Selection Criteria

The selection committee will consider the applicant's potential to contribute creatively to research in the field of labor and employment, broadly conceived. Important consideration will be given to the intellectual abilities of the applicant, as well as to the usefulness of their proposal to their overall scholarly career. The selection committee will review the applicant's proposal, budget, and letter of recommendation in awarding funds.

REPORTING

Awardees must report to the LERF on progress made during the quarter or semester that they received the mini-grant, and they must provide a copy of any paper or research product when it is completed. They may also be asked to present their research at a LERF conference.