

Transformative Consumer Research



ASSOCIATION FOR CONSUMER RESEARCH

Instructions to Applicants for Research Funding in 2013

(Submission deadline is June 15th)

This document is a guide to assist applicants for funding support in the conduct of Transformative Consumer Research (TCR). To learn more about the Association for Consumer Research and TCR, please consult our website at www.acrwebsite.org.

Nature and Mission of Transformative Consumer Research

Transformative Consumer Research focuses first and foremost on matters of well-being. TCR projects are impelled by a specific fundamental problem or opportunity that is related to consumer behavior and its role in well-being. Accordingly, these investigations strive to develop insights that can be directly communicated to and acted upon by consumers and/or their agents (e.g., caregivers, policy makers), for the purpose of upholding and improving well-being for individuals, subgroups, societies, other living entities, and/or the earthly environment. Aside from having an immediate practical orientation, Transformative Consumer Research strives to employ scrupulous methodology and develop or apply perceptive theory. Through meticulous description and compelling explanation the findings can most likely lead to constructive, actionable implications for well-being.

Examples of topic areas where problems or challenges of well-being exist include, but are not limited to: overconsumption; addictive consumption (e.g., drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, television, Internet); consumer safety; product labeling; consumption and ecological degradation; parenting and consumption; poor, disadvantaged, illiterate, elderly, or handicapped consumers; and emerging economies. Examples of topic areas where opportunities of well being exist include, but are not limited to: pro-environmental consumption behaviors (e.g., recycling); organ donations; preventive and affirmative health decision making; wise money management and investing; and other consumer activities that enrich personal and social development.

Purposes of This Funding

The two key purposes of this funding of Transformative Consumer Research via ACR are (1) to stimulate and support scholarly inquiries consistent with the mission of TCR (see above) and (2) to provide seed money for groundwork projects from which scholars will apply for subsequently larger grants on consumption and well-being from agencies and organizations that often require completed preliminary studies.

Covered Research Expenses and Common Funding Levels

The research expenses covered by this funding program include compensation to research participants, costs of preparing materials and executing studies, travel for the purpose of data collection, data sets, software, and similar expenses. The funding provided is not for salary or salary replacement for the principal investigator. The funding is also not for support of thesis or dissertation projects. Those projects have other sources of research support to pursue (e.g., Sheth Foundation Dissertation Proposal Competition; the American Marketing Association's Marketing and Society Dissertation Proposal Competition).

At this time, ACR and the Sheth Foundation have teamed together to replenish the funding account that supports this year's TCR grant competition. Most funding support for TCR this year will be in the range of \$1,000 to \$2,000 per project. Smaller or larger amounts may be requested. The total amount of funds to be released in the 2013 TCR grant competition is not expected to exceed \$13,000. In general, the review process will seek to spread the total funds across several projects. Thus, all other thing being equal, well-crafted proposals seeking modest funding are more likely to be supported.

Submitting Proposals

Proposals for funding of Transformative Consumer Research via ACR are typically called for in the spring of the year, and the deadline for submissions is then the forthcoming **June 15th**. Proposals are reviewed over the summer. Recipients and non-recipients are notified by end of summer. If there is any question about whether a project fits the mission of TCR and this funding competition, the researcher should contact the ACR/TCR representative listed below.

The typical format for a funding proposal is as follows:

- Cover letter (see *Other Requirements and Expected Output* below)
- A title page, with the name and contact information of the principal investigator, plus a short biographical note (maximum 100 words) about the PI's background, research accomplishments, and so forth.
- Then five to eight (5 – 8) double-spaced pages that deal with these issues:
 - The specific problem or opportunity being addressed that relates to consumption and well-being, including its seriousness or importance

- A short overview of prior research on the topic, focusing on how and why prior research has not sufficiently produced insights of a particular nature that can be communicated to and acted upon for better benefits of well-being
- A description of the proposed project, including (a) theoretical frameworks to be used a priori or to be inducted from this work; (b) research hypotheses (if any); and (c) the research design and methodology
- An overview of the most pragmatic insights related to the mission of TCR, and how the researcher intends to disseminate them and their implications, plus any other knowledge advances related to theory, substantive topics, or methodology
- A timetable for the research, including major mileposts and expected completion date
- Funding or support needs, including a budget outline
- A firm and specific indication of how the researcher plans to use this project as groundwork to apply for subsequent relevant funding, and the names of those possible sources of funding (organizations, agencies, etc.)

Proposals, due by June 15th, should be sent as a single email attachment to:

Professor Julie L. Ozanne
 Chairperson, ACR Advisory Committee on
 Transformative Consumer Research
 Pamplin College of Business
 Virginia Tech
 Email: jozanne@vt.edu

Proposal Selection

Each proposal is sent out for review to 2 – 4 individuals who are knowledgeable of the substantive, theoretical, and/or methodological issues contained in the proposal. Decisions on proposals are made via the members of the ACR Advisory Committee on Transformative Consumer Research (its members are listed on the ACR website) and notifications are sent by late summer. All proposal writers receive the reviews of their project proposals.

Proposals are evaluated in terms of (1) their potential contribution for generating new practical knowledge that can lead to improved well-being regarding the problem or opportunity in focus; (2) their value as a preliminary investigation that will improve the chances of getting further and larger funding from other organizations relevant to the given topic; (3) the quality of literature review, conceptual development, and research design; and (4) the qualifications of the principal investigator. If the principal investigator is an early-career scholar, the proposal will be strengthened by pointing out

his or her access to mentoring and future collaborations with other senior researchers in the topic area.

Other Requirements and Expected Output

Applicants for funding of Transformative Consumer Research via ACR must comply with the following conditions and should address these issues, as relevant, in a cover letter appearing in front of their proposal:

- a) The principal investigator must be a current member of the Association for Consumer Research.
- b) The proposed project must be approved by the institutional review board of the principal investigator's institution, and thereby comply with the ethical precepts of leading research universities. This approval can be acquired before applying for ACR funds or after receiving a positive evaluation of a proposal. If the applicant is in a setting in which no institutional review board exists, he or she can contact the main ACR representative listed above for further advice.
- c) If the research involves purchasing or acquiring an existing data set which is not restricted by license or other means for sharing with likeminded researchers at ACR, the principal investigator must agree to make the data set available on request from other ACR members.
- d) The principal investigator agrees to serve as an occasional resource of advice to other proposal writers and researchers seeking to conduct TCR, and agrees to share his or her proposal for ACR funding on request.
- e) The principal investigator agrees to acknowledge the funding support from the Association for Consumer Research and the Sheth Foundation in any subsequent publications or press communiqués associated with the conduct of the research project.
- f) It is also considerable favorable, though not required, that the principal investigator plans to present the research at a conference of the Association for Consumer Research or another venue where the work can be shared with other scholars and interested individuals.