

# LAI Scaling Proposal Application Preview

Last updated January 2025

**\*\*\*Do NOT submit this form\*\*\***

Applications can only be submitted through the online portal.

See the [LAI RFP page](#) for more information.

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## Important Information

Please note that applicants can move back and forth between sections to edit answers before submitting. Applicants can also save their applications, then come back later to make changes before submitting. For more details about how to navigate WizeHive, please see [these instructions](#).

### Subaward Setup

For grants with **human subject research**, subaward contracts will be drafted within 90 days of receiving all materials and subaward amendments will take about 60 days. Please provide conservative rather than optimistic estimates for start and end dates to reduce the likelihood of needing to submit no-cost extension requests.

### Code of Conduct and Child Safeguarding

J-PAL takes safeguarding against workplace abuses and the appropriate use of funds, including any adverse effects of aid expenditure that have an undesired or unexpected result upon recipients, seriously. All Learning for All Initiative (LAI) grantees and partners must comply with the guidelines of [J-PAL's Code of Conduct](#). If your project requires your team to interact directly with children, you will be required to adhere to the [LEGO Child Safeguarding Policies](#) (regardless of funding source). If you receive funding from the LEGO Foundation, you will also be asked to follow the LEGO Code of Conduct and take these steps:

1. Share information about child safeguarding guidelines with staff working directly with children related to your work with J-PAL. Share the LEGO and J-PAL Code of Conduct with project staff.
2. If your research falls within the scope of General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) requirements, comply with GDPR and let the Learning for All Initiative team know right away ([lai@povertyactionlab.org](mailto:lai@povertyactionlab.org)).
3. Confirm with [lai@povertyactionlab.org](mailto:lai@povertyactionlab.org) that your organization has recruitment processes in place for screening relevant candidates to prevent unsuitable individuals from working with children within activities related to your work with J-PAL.
4. Complete child safeguarding training annually for any staff with direct contact with children. If you already have robust training in place, then this will suffice. However, if you do not have one in place, we suggest this UNICEF Online Child Safeguarding Training (approx. 90 minutes long). For multi-year subawards, keep accurate records of who is working on the project and the dates they completed their annual training. You will submit this information each year in your report.
5. Ensure all staff are aware of how to report incidents of abuse. Participants in this project or others can raise concerns with:
  - LEGO Foundation Whistleblower: <https://legohouse.com/en-gb/info/whistleblower-line/>
  - J-PAL: Cindy Smith, Director of Finance and Operations at J-PAL Global: [cinsmith@mit.edu](mailto:cinsmith@mit.edu) or [csmith@povertyactionlab.org](mailto:csmith@povertyactionlab.org); LAI Manager or the LAI Policy Associates (as listed on the [webpage](#))

## Narrative

### The Scaling Types are as follows:

Adaptations (up to US\$75,000 and a suggested period of performance of up to one year)  
Policy Pilots (up to US\$200,000 and a suggested period of performance of up to two years)  
Scale Projects (up to US\$300,000 and a suggested period of performance of up to three years).

### What type of funding are you applying for?

#### Change of Scaling Focus Areas and/or Cross-Cutting Themes

Please tell us if your focus areas or themes have changed since submitting your Letter of Interest by adding this information here. LAI research focus areas and/or cross-cutting themes are: Foundational Literacy and Numeracy, Socio-emotional Learning (SEL) and Measurement of Holistic Skills, Girls' Education, Intersections of Climate and Education, and the Long-term Economic and Health Impacts of Education Interventions.

#### Timeline

Please write out a timeline with key project activities. [250 word max.]

#### The Activities

List the proposed activities and how they will contribute to the end goal along with a clear timeline and concrete milestones. Milestones should represent key decisions, outputs, changes, etc. that will demonstrate whether your work is on track. Applications applying evidence in a new context should diagnose the problem and determine if past evidence is relevant. Applicants should state how they will adapt, pilot, and monitor the innovation in the new context before scaling. [750 word max.]

#### Policy Motivation

Provide a summary of the policy problem that motivates this project and how it fits with the topics outlined in the RFP materials. [250 word max.]

#### Target Population and Context

What population(s) does the intervention attempt to impact? What characteristics do they have? Do you have any comments on this target population and context's alignment with the initiative's priorities? [350 word max.]

#### Locally Grounded

Please include a clear rationale for why the intervention may be relevant or appropriate for the proposed context and/or institution. When possible, please include descriptive statistics about the nature and extent of the problem and aspects of local systems and institutions that make it amenable to the intervention. Specify which aspects of the existing evidence are or are not likely to generalize given the proposed implementer, context, and delivery model(s). [300 word max.]

## **The Innovation and Underlying Evidence**

Please describe the innovation the implementing partner will explore adapting, piloting, and/or scaling as well as a brief summary of the experimental evidence on this innovation to date in one or more of the initiative's focus areas and how it could potentially benefit people living in poverty. Innovations can be new programs or changes to existing programs, processes, technologies, or delivery systems. [750 word max.]

## **Depth of Impact**

Please include a brief note on the effect size(s) found in the previous RCT(s) of this intervention for these and any other relevant outcome areas, whether they were economically significant, and whether you expect the effect size to be similar in magnitude, lower, or higher in this context and why. [400 word max.]

## **Randomized Evaluations and Intervention/Treatment Details (if applicable)**

Funding randomized evaluations is not the main goal of scale-focused projects. However, we recognize that in some cases rigorous evidence of effectiveness at scale is a critical input for the partner's scale-up decision. In these exceptional cases, the initiative will allow proposals that include partial funding for randomized evaluations. If your project includes a randomized evaluation that is intended to inform scale decisions, please provide the following information on the next six questions, referring to the initiative's RCT questions for further details.

## **Description of the Research Activities, Treatment, or Intervention [250 word max.]**

### **Evaluation/Research Design [250 word max.]**

Please provide a brief description of the evaluation design, and how it fits with the research topics outlined in the RFP Overview, Evidence Review, or Research Agenda. Please include the randomization method, treatment groups, and describe any combinations of the interventions. Please include information about data collection and key outcomes: succinctly describe your data collection plan and key outcome measures of the study. Please include the data collection partner and your relationship with them. What are your intermediate and final outcomes? How will these be measured? When will you take measurements, and how frequently? If there are more than two treatment groups, please list them using numerals.

### **Power Calculations [250 word max.]**

**Please state whether the research proposal addresses gender issues in any way including analysis disaggregated by gender. [250 word max.]**

(Note that funded projects will be required to report on gender-disaggregated data)

### **Data Publication Plans [250 word max.]**

## Implications on Equity and Social Inclusion

Please provide a comment on whether the project proposal addresses equity or social inclusion, in any way. Topics of social inclusion include, but are not limited to, gender, income level, location, ethnicity, race, language, citizenship status, disability, and at the intersection of those factors. Explain whether and how the project design allows us to learn about baseline differences between and differential impacts on groups mentioned above. Explain what reasons (if any) there are to expect that the intervention(s) studied may have disproportionate benefits for disadvantaged groups. [300 word max.]

## Local Researcher Involvement

Please describe how the project involves researchers local to the project context. [200 word max.]

## Gender Implications and Analysis

Does the proposal address any gender issues? For example, have you taken into account how gender considerations could affect the outcomes of the intervention? [250 word max.]

## Gender Reporting

Does the proposal disaggregate data and outcomes by gender? Please briefly explain whether you will disaggregate gender impacts or why this would not be feasible. [250 word max.]

## Implementation and Cost Documentation

Please comment on what efforts you will make to collect implementation costs and document implementation details and scale-up processes so these can benefit other policymakers and researchers and staff at J-PAL. [350 word max.]

## Potential Cost-effectiveness

Considering any existing evidence on cost-effectiveness, please provide your assessment of the potential cost-effectiveness of the innovation if delivered at scale. You may wish to consider the theory of change of the innovation and other data to inform how effectiveness may change at scale and any expected economies of scale that have a bearing on marginal cost per beneficiary. Please include any existing cost-effectiveness estimates if available. [250 word max.]

## Validation and Test Accuracy Data

Proposals that include Artificial Intelligence (AI) or any new specialized technology should include validation and test accuracy data in the proposal, showing that the technology successfully does what it intends. If applicable, please provide that validation and test accuracy data here, or attach it in the "additional attachments" section. If not applicable, please write "N/A." [300 word max.]

## Potential Risks

To protect children, research participants, staff, and community members, to comply with donor requirements, and to maintain a strong reputation for ethical research, J-PAL wants researchers to think carefully about the risks their research projects could face and how they will address such risks. The below questions provide an opportunity for researchers to do that. Successful applicants must provide updated answers in annual narrative reports only if there have been substantial changes since their proposal or last annual narrative report.

**Please answer the following questions in detail.**

### **Completion**

Are there any technical, logistical, ethical, or political obstacles and risks that might threaten the completion of the project (e.g., implementation capacity, government authorization, or other funding)? How do you plan to monitor and prevent/address these types of risks throughout the project? [200 word max.]

### **Implementing Partners**

Please discuss any information about the implementing partner(s) that could pose ethical, reputational, or legal risks (e.g., child safeguarding, corruption or misuse of funds, etc). If applicable, what proactive measures have you taken or will you take to assess, monitor, and mitigate/prevent any such potential risks? [150 word max.]

### **Child Safeguarding**

Particularly for projects working with children, what child safeguarding risks exist? [200 word max.]

### **Participants, Staff, Community Members**

For each of the groups below, please describe any potential unintended consequences or risks of this project to them. What proactive measures have you taken or will you take to assess, monitor, and mitigate/prevent any such potential risks? [300 word max.]

- i. Program and research participants
- ii. Staff (e.g., implementing partners, research assistants, enumerators)
- iii. Community members (e.g., untreated members of a household, untreated neighbors, or broader communities if the treatment might have spillover or downstream effects beyond the study sample)

### **Contractual Limitations**

Are there any contractual limitations on the ability of the researchers to report the results of the study? If so, what are those restrictions, and who are they from? [150 word max.]

## **Partnership Questions**

### **Partnership Status**

Have you established communication with relevant stakeholders including but not limited to government agencies and implementing partners, for research collaboration? [Y/N]

### **Name of Partner Organization**

Indicate the name(s) of the partner organization.

### **Role of Partner Organization**

Indicate the role of the organization on this project. If you are adding co-funders, you will not be able to submit until you (a) indicate the amount of received or committed funding, (b) add the funded proposal or project title, and (c) add the name of the primary PI for the co-funded proposal or project.

## Partner Description

Please provide a brief description of the partner(s), the partner's involvement in project activities, and any in-kind or financial support they have committed or provided to the project.

## Point of Contact Based at the Partner Organization

Please provide details about your point of contact at the partner organization.

**You may add up to three (3) Partner Organizations.**

## Description of Government Partnership

Please provide a brief description of the partner(s), the partner's involvement in project activities, and any in-kind or financial support they have committed or provided to the project. Please include any potential partnership risks. [250 word max.]

## Description of Scaling and Implementing Partners

Please provide a brief description of the scaling/implementing partner(s) and the partner's proposed involvement in project activities any in-kind or financial support they have committed or provided to the project. [250 words max.]

## The Institutionalization of the Partnership

Do you hope to make this a long-term partnership or is it already part of one? If the key contact is transferred, are there other stakeholders who are equally invested? Are you planning to enter into an institutional MoU? Include the dates of upcoming elections and/or administration changes and discuss whether these are likely to affect the project. Does the project have necessary institutional support of the regional J-PAL office and/or an on-the-ground research or implementing partner such as an IPA country office, university, and/or NGO? What is the level of J-PAL affiliate or LAI invited researcher involvement in terms of providing high-level leadership, guidance, and advice to staff and policy partners? J-PAL offices may be able to provide support in facilitating connections to policymakers, researchers, supporting key policy partnerships, and implementing technical assistance. If this is something you are interested in, please discuss it with the relevant J-PAL Executive Director. Any relevant J-PAL office support should be included in the project budget. [500 word max.]

## Co-funder Details

If you are adding co-funders, indicate the total amount of received or committed funding, the funded proposal or project title, and the name of the primary PI for the co-funded proposal or project. [150 word max.]

## Interest in Co-Funding

In the "Interest in Co-Funding" box below, tell us if you are interested in applying for co-funding from [Development Innovation Ventures \(DIV\)](#), the [Fund for Innovation in Development \(FID\)](#), or other donors in J-PAL's network. Would you potentially like assistance from J-PAL staff in preparing a proposal to these donors? Please note that assistance will be provided on a case-by-case basis, but the first possible step is assessing interest. [250 word max.]



## Institutional Review Board and Institute to Receive Award

### Human Subject Research

Do you plan to conduct human subjects research during your scaling grant? According to US federal regulations, a human subject is a living individual about whom an investigator conducting research obtains 1) data through intervention or interaction with the individual (e.g., through an interview, focus group, or survey), or 2) identifiable private information (e.g., individual-level health or education data). If your project scope of work includes collecting this type of data, please select Yes. [Y/N]

### Institutional Review Board (IRB) Information

Please be mindful that MIT requires that the Institutional Review Board (IRB) determination must be held by the institution that enters into the subaward agreement with MIT. The PI at the ITRA must be listed as the main PI on the IRB. If the institution does not have its own IRB, the institution must engage the services of a commercial IRB to review and provide oversight for the research activities. [Heartland](#) and [Solutions](#) provide review of international research and satisfy J-PAL's IRB requirements; fees can be found on their respective websites. Further information about this MIT policy can be found in this [MIT Research Administration Services Memo](#) and [J-PAL FAQ document](#). Consult with J-PAL regarding including the cost of this commercial entity in the project budget. J-PAL also requires that the reviewing IRB have IRB Organization (IORG) status with the US Office of Human Protections.

[You can look up the IORG status of an IRB here.](#)

### Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Record

Please provide the current or expected IRB of record. IRB Requirements - If this proposal receives initiative funding, we will ask that you submit the following in order to establish a subaward:

- All IRB approval(s) or exemption(s)
- All IRB-approved protocols
- Any IRB-approved consent forms

### Is this IRB of Record IORG certified?

### Local Legal Requirements Certification

All PIs and Co-PIs certify that they understand they must adhere to all local legal requirements, including obtaining local IRB approval and government research permits, where applicable. Do you agree? [Y/N]

### Data Publication

Please confirm you plan to publish data collected in an open-access, online database at the end of the evaluation. Data publication is required for projects funded by a J-PAL initiative, unless researchers request an exemption (which J-PAL has the discretion to deny) for legal, ethical, or proprietary reasons. [Y/N]

Please see [J-PAL's Data and Code Availability Policy](#) for more information about data publication.



## **Institute to Receive Award (ITRA) Information**

**PLEASE NOTE:** MIT now requires that at least one project PI be employed by the organization receiving the subaward and funds. Please provide the name of the ITRA here. Please see this [memo](#) and [FAQs document](#) for more information.

## **Institute to Receive Award (ITRA)**

Please indicate the institution that will receive the grant funds.

## **Budget**

From the [RFP website](#), download and complete the scaling budget template. There are two tabs: one for the initiative-specific budget and one for the project budget (i.e., the initiative-specific budget plus any other sources of funding you may have). When done, please reupload the budget in the budget section of the online application portal. Please note that the budget is formatted specifically for this application. Please do not remove the formatting, change any of the formatting, or create new columns.

## **Budget Upload**

### **Budget Narrative Upload**

Please justify the expenses outlined in your budget in a Word document with the title [PI Last Name, First Name][Budget Narrative].doc(x), and upload it here. This document is required in addition to the Proposal Budget. Notes included in the Excel sheet do not suffice.

## **Letters of Support & Additional Materials**

### **Letter of Support from Implementing Partner**

Scaling grants are required to provide a letter of support from their implementing partner. This letter should indicate a willingness to work with the research team and an agreement to share program cost data with J-PAL (through the PI) for the purpose of conducting a cost-effectiveness analysis.

### **Scale-up Partner Letter of Support**

Applicants must also include letters of support from potential scale-up partners (if different from the implementing partner).

### **Letter of Transmission**

Scaling grants are required to provide a letter or document stating approval of the proposal materials and budget from each proposed institute to receive award (ITRA). Please note that MIT policy states that the project PI needs to be at the ITRA and that the ITRA should provide the IRB (either using the Institute's IRB or a third party IRB). The Project PI must be the PI on the IRB.

### **J-PAL Affiliate or Invited Researcher Letter of Support**

PhD student applicants are required to submit a letter of support from a J-PAL affiliate or invited researcher who serves as an adviser on the applicant's dissertation committee. This letter should indicate the adviser's willingness to advise the student throughout the project's lifetime. Please note that in some cases, the adviser may be asked to add their name to the financial award and IRB documents.

### **Existing/Underlying Evidence**

Please upload the corresponding written document(s) about the existing/underlying evidence on which your scaling proposal is based. Additional information on required documentation is outlined in the RFP Overview, Evidence Review, or Research Agenda.

### **Additional Attachments**

Please attach any relevant materials discussed in your answers to the previous questions.