

LAI Travel/Proposal Development Grant 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).
3. Confirm with 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 or csmith@povertyactionlab.org; LAI Manager or the LAI Policy Associates (as listed on the [webpage](#))

Narrative

Change of Research 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.

Topic Statement

Please provide a concise statement of the topic and activities. [500 word max.]

1. Travel/proposal development grants are intended to facilitate very preliminary, exploratory research, so proposals need only address the general topic of interest and current ideas on how the question might be explored through a pilot and a randomized evaluation in the future.
2. They do not need to include a detailed program or evaluation design, but should clearly indicate how this grant will help the research team develop a strong proposal in a future RCT.
3. If there is any survey component, please explicitly include the number of individuals surveyed. Please list activities, which could include preliminary data collection such as focus groups or small sample surveys to understand the barriers that program participants may face, working to set up data sharing agreements and/or MOUs.

Timeline

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

Policy Motivation

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

Potential Policy Impact

Please briefly describe the potential policy impact of this potential intervention (policies, programs, processes, or delivery mechanisms), including whether and how the project could inform policy or program design in this context or more broadly. How will it meet the needs of your partner? [250 word max.]

Uncertainty of Study's Results

Demonstrate meaningful ex ante uncertainty about the results of the study, i.e., that given existing evidence there are both reasons to believe the intervention(s) studied are promising and also reasons to doubt whether they will achieve their goals. [250 word max.]

Anticipated Target Population and Context

What population(s), if known at this time, will the intervention attempt to impact? What characteristics do they have? If applicable, do you have any comments on the target population and context's alignment with the initiative's priorities? [300 word max.]

Unique Contribution to the Field

What knowledge gap are you addressing, and how will it advance the field? Explain the project's potential to provide a unique scientific contribution. Provide a brief literature review to demonstrate the uniqueness of your project. Note that a full reference list can be attached in the "Additional Attachments" section. [500 word max.]

Pathway to an RCT

Describe how results from this grant would inform a future RCT. Will it provide qualitative data to inform intervention design? How could the findings meet the needs of policymakers or development practitioners? In what specific ways will the travel/proposal development grant prepare researchers for a full RCT project? [300 word max.]

Impact

Describe, specifically, what researchers and practitioners can expect to learn from this travel/proposal development grant. Outline the hypothesized pathway and scope for impact. Clearly establish a plausible and promising link between the proposed approach to be tested and the hypothesized channel for impact. Indicate the reliability of existing evidence from relevant expert opinion in your research context. [300 word max.]

Implications on Equity and Social Inclusion

Please provide a comment on whether the research proposal addresses equity or social inclusion, in any way. Topics of social inclusion include, but are not limited to 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 potential intervention(s) studied may have disproportionate benefits for disadvantaged groups. [500 word max.]

Gender Implications, Analysis, and Reporting

Does the proposal address any gender issues? For example, have you taken into account how gender considerations could affect the outcomes of the intervention? [500 word max.]

Gender Reporting

Does the proposal disaggregate data and outcomes by gender? Pilot and RCT projects are required to report on gender-disaggregated impacts: Please briefly explain whether you will disaggregate gender impacts or why this would not be feasible. [250 word max.]

Local Researcher Involvement

Please describe whether/how the project involves researchers local to the project context. [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.]

Institutional Review Board and Institute to Receive Award

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).

Human Subject Research

Do you plan to conduct human subjects research during your travel/proposal development? If your project scope of work includes collecting the types of data above, 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?

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.

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]

Budget

From the [RFP website](#), download and complete the Travel/Proposal Development 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

Name & Role of Partner Organization

Indicate the name/s and role/s of the partner organization on this project, if known at this time.

Letter of Support from Implementing Partner

Travel/Proposal Development projects are recommended to provide a letter of support from their implementing partner. This letter should indicate a willingness to work with the research team.

Letter of Transmission

For travel/proposal development projects that will be setup as subawards, a letter or document stating approval of the proposal materials and budget from each proposed institute to receive award (ITRA) is required. Please note that MIT policy states that the project PI needs to be employed 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.

Are you applying as a PhD Student?

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.

Additional Attachments

Please attach any relevant materials discussed in your answers to the previous questions, as well as letters of support from partners.