Letter of Interest Instructions

2024 LEVER Evaluation Incubator

Please submit a .pdf answering the following questions to our [application form](). Please include your jurisdiction/agency name in the header, page numbers, and name your file "Agency/Department_LOI".

Question 1 (100 word limit)

Tell us about your team! Please briefly describe your agency and your major activities, including the key programs that you oversee or administer.

Question 2 (200 word limit)

Describe the proposed policy or program you would like to examine. Please include the current status of the policy or program (e.g., undergoing development or ready to implement) in your description, as well as any preliminary evidence about the policy or program's effectiveness. Please also describe the primary outcome(s) you are interested in measuring and why you would like to study this policy or program through a randomized evaluation.

Question 3 (200 word limit)

How does the program or policy you seek to evaluate advance economic mobility in your jurisdiction?

Question 4 (300 word limit)

Initial ideas for including randomized evaluation in your program/policy. See the following prompts for details to include:

A. Two or three opportunities for randomization within enrollment. Examples include oversubscription (e.g. more applicants than spots available), new program rollout (e.g. opportunity to build randomization into a new enrollment process), program expansion to a new population (e.g. opportunity to build randomization into enrollment for a new group of participants).

B. An estimate of how many people are currently reached by the program or policy and over what timeframe (e.g., 400 students tutored each semester, 250 job seekers each year, 100 households each month).

C. The two to three primary challenges you foresee in carrying out a randomized evaluation. Examples include ethical challenges (e.g., constituent or political concern over a control

group), logistical challenges (e.g., capacity constraints, lack of data skills among staff), or financial challenges (e.g., not enough funding or staff time to support the project).

Question 5 (100 word limit)

Please describe any emerging/developing relationships, established collaborations or partnerships with local stakeholders, organizations/groups or, and the broader community. Please indicate whether you have discussed the evaluation idea with organizations or collaborators whose support or buy-in would be needed to carry-out the evaluation (e.g., a school district leader or leadership from a community-based organization implementing the program).

Question 6, optional (200 word limit)

This year, we especially encourage applications from government agencies that are currently working with community organizations, leaders or stakeholders, or are seeking to collaborate with community members in the evaluation process. *Note: This is optional and your eligibility for this opportunity will not be determined by whether or not your evaluation is community-engaged.*

Please describe the community impacted by your program/policy and any current efforts or interest in working with community leaders, stakeholders, and/or community organizations/groups in your evaluation process. See the following prompts for examples of what to include, and our definition of community engagement below:

- Information on the sociodemographic characteristics of the community impacted by your program/policy (e.g., racial/ethnic makeup, percent that is foreign born, number of households that speak a language other than English at home, household size, median income, percent of school children that qualify for free or reduced priced lunch).
- Initial ideas for working with your community through the evaluation process. (e.g. gathering community feedback, incorporating community perspectives, including community in decision making, building new relationships or leveraging existing collaborations to support your evaluation process).

Definition of Community Engagement

Community engagement in research and evaluation encompasses a range of approaches for working with and involving individuals, groups, and organizations along the research continuum, from conceptualization to dissemination and application. Engaged research is designed to ensure projects reflect the perspectives, strengths, and priorities of community members. Ideally, projects are built on mutually beneficial and reciprocal relationships that center community leadership in decision-making, therefore providing a structure for inclusive and equitable assessments, analyses, and policy recommendations. Given the complexity and

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dynamic nature of communities, we are looking for projects that intentionally define what constitutes 'community' and 'engagement' in the context of an evaluation project.

WHAT IS J-PAL NORTH AMERICA LOOKING FOR?

J-PAL North America will consider the following general criteria in reviewing Letters of Interest:

1. Clear description of an important policy question or challenge. Does the proposal address crucial questions for state and local governments' understanding of pressing social policy issues in the United States? Does the proposal align with J-PAL North America's objective of supporting studies of interventions that impact low-income populations or populations living in poverty/populations that have risk factors associated with falling into poverty?
2. Promising approach to addressing the question or challenge. What is the current status of the policy or program (e.g., undergoing development or ready to implement)? Which entities fund, oversee, and/or administer the program, and which stakeholders would need to demonstrate buy-in for an evaluation?
3. Feasible opportunity for a randomized evaluation. Are there any practical or political concerns about implementing a randomized evaluation? Are the government's executive leadership and staff supportive of conducting an evaluation? What is the number of people who would be eligible for the program and the number of available spots, and over what timeframe?
4. Commitment to using evidence to inform decision-making. Is there demonstrated commitment from senior leaders within the government to use the evidence to inform decision-making?