LAI Full Research Proposal Application Preview

Last updated January 2025

*****Do NOT submit this form*****
Applications can <u>only</u> be submitted through the online portal.
See the LAI RFP page for more information.

CONTENTS

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

Timeline

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

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.

Policy Motivation

Provide a summary of the policy problem that motivates this 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 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. [250 word max.]

1. How will it meet the needs of your partner?
2. Will results from the intervention have broader implications?
3. How, if at all, will the "lessons learned" have relevance beyond this test case?
4. Is there demand from policy makers for more/better information to influence their decisions in this area?

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.]

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.]

Unique Contribution to the Field

Please describe what knowledge gap you are addressing and how it will advance the field. Specifically:

- Explain the project's potential to provide a unique scientific contribution.
- Provide a brief literature review to demonstrate the uniqueness of your project.
- Does the study answer new questions or introduce novel methods, measures, or interventions?
- How does the study compare with the existing body of research?
- Does the research strategy provide a bridge between a practical experiment and underlying economic theories?

Note that a full reference list can be attached in the "Additional Attachments" section. [500 word max.]

Innovative Intervention Details

State how the intervention is either innovative or uses a straightforward intervention to study a big question. Could the intervention potentially improve one or more of the initiative's priority outcomes and benefit people living in poverty? How can the intervention, or innovation, make changes to existing programs, processes, technologies, or delivery systems? [300 word max.]

Evaluation Design

Provide a brief description of the evaluation design, and how it fits with the topics outlined in the RFP materials. Does the research design appropriately answer the questions outlined in the proposal? Please include the randomization method, treatment groups, and describe any combinations of the interventions. [800 word max.]

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.
- Include preliminary, pilot, or other available descriptive data in support of your hypotheses, models, and/or theories of change. Indicate the reliability of this existing data from this research context.
- In the "Additional Attachments" section, You may also attach more detailed pilot data and results as an appendix (that does not count as part of the character/page limits for this proposal narrative), but please highlight in this section of your narrative the key details to ensure reviewers take them into account.

Details of your evaluation design can include but are not limited to:

- What are the units of randomization and analysis (e.g., individual, household, village, etc.)? 9. What is the method of randomization (e.g., lottery, phase-in, encouragement, etc.)?
- What is the sample size? How would it be divided into treatment and control?
- Are there threats that could compromise the validity of results? How do you plan to address those threats?

Value of Research

Does the proposal make a compelling case for the value of the research based on at least one of the following? Please explain the prior evidence and/or the resources that are being invested in the intervention. [500 word max.]

1. There is prior evidence indicating that this is a promising intervention
2. This is an intervention into which considerable resources are being, or will be, invested

Outcomes of Interest

Beyond the initiative-specific outcomes listed under the "Innovative Intervention Details" and "Evaluation Design," please list any additional outcomes from this list to tag your evaluation with, in the case that a summary is later drafted of your evaluation. This list is the wider set of outcomes of interest for all J-PAL sectors and initiatives. Please add as many can apply to your planned study.

See [Appendix](#) for picklist.

Outcomes and Measurement

Please describe the outcome variables, how they relate to the initiative, and how you plan to measure the outcome variables. [250 word max.]

Validation of Measurement Tools

If new or not used in the same context & population before, please describe the validation of measurement tools and comparability to existing tools. If your team includes education measurement experts or if you plan to consult a measurement expert, please indicate so. [250 word max.]

Mechanisms

Through what mechanisms do you expect the treatment to affect outcomes of interest? How will you test these mechanisms? What is the theorized causal relationship between the intervention and the outcomes to be tested? [250 word max.]

Null Results

Please describe your approach to addressing null results. Specifically, how do you plan to monitor the implementation of your project and/or what mechanisms will you test to better understand null results if they occur? Please include what data you will collect. [100 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, 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. [500 word max.]

Gender Implications, Analysis, and Reporting

Please answer the prompts in the space below. [500 word max.]

- Does the proposal address any gender issues? For example, have you taken into account how gender considerations could affect the outcomes of the intervention?
- Does the proposal disaggregate data and outcomes by gender? Since funded projects are required to report on gender-disaggregated impacts, briefly explain whether you will disaggregate gender impacts or why this would not be feasible.

Local Researcher Involvement

Please describe how the project involves researchers local to the project context. [250 word max.]

Power Calculations

Please provide detailed, convincing, and well-justified power calculations, e.g., based on current or past pilot data, existing literature, admin data of ongoing operations, etc., for any impacts that the research team plans to measure. Include and describe effect size, take up/compliance, variance, clusters, observations per cluster, rho). Power calculations should quantitatively demonstrate that the study is well-powered enough to detect effects on the outcome(s) of interest that would be practically or conceptually meaningful. Proposals should articulate which null hypotheses are relevant for this exercise and why (in particular, not assuming that the null of zero impact is necessarily the relevant one). [700 word max.]

Be sure to answer these two questions:

1. What is the minimum detectable effect size? Why do you believe this is an appropriate size?
2. Clearly state what data and assumptions you use for these estimates. Always discuss take-up, and do not assume take-up will be 100% for the purposes of power calculations.

For more detailed information about power calculations, see this resource:
https://www.povertyactionlab.org/resource/power-calculations

Project Costing Exercise

LAI would like to see the research team's plan for how they will gather, interpret and share program implementation cost data. Please outline the approach that you will take to collect and report costing data for the intervention you are evaluating.

We acknowledge that it can be a challenge to distinguish implementation costs from evaluation costs, and see the value in making a plan during the proposal phase to identify and address the challenges and potential opportunities for effectively determining the full costs of the program/intervention in question. Please use this section to outline the rationale of your approach to cost collection in light of this reporting requirement. [500 word max.]

Suggested prompts:

1. Discuss your rough assessment of what the intervention, in its scalable form without associated research costs, is anticipated to cost per beneficiary reached or per benefit achieved.
2. Which elements will be considered costs of implementation, and which elements will be considered evaluation costs?
3. What types of cost data do you anticipate collecting?
4. When in the data collection process would you collect each of these types of data, and how?
5. How will you partner with those organizations and staff responsible for implementing the intervention to understand and report the associated costs in these identified categories?
6. Report any challenges you anticipate facing in collecting or reporting this data. How would you plan to address these challenges to make the cost collection exercise most valuable in the context of your research, given the goals of the exercise outlined above?

Scalability and Translatability Potential

Please comment on the ability of this intervention to potentially scale and translate in different contexts. [500 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

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.

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.

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.]

Budget

From the [RFP website](#), download and complete the RCT 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

RCTs are required 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

RCT projects 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.

Potential Scale-Up Partner Letter of Support

If available, applicants should also include letters of support from potential scale-up partners.

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.

Appendix

Outcomes of Interest Picklist

Access to justice
Age of childbearing
Age of marriage
Aggressive behavior
Alcohol, tobacco, and drug use
Anemia
Arrests and convictions
Aspirations
Asset ownership
Attitudes and norms
Business investment
Charitable giving
Citizen satisfaction
Climate change adaptation
Climate change mitigation
Cognitive development
Communicable diseases
Conservation
Consumption smoothing
Corruption and Leakages
Credit balance/repayment
Crime
Crime reporting
Deforestation
Diarrhea
Discrimination
Dropout and graduation
Earnings and income
Elected official performance
Electoral participation
Employment
Empowerment
Energy access
Energy conservation
Enrollment and attendance
Evictions
Fertility/pregnancy
Firm formality
Firm survival and sustainability

Food security
Forgiveness
Freedom of movement
Gender Attitudes and Norms
Gender-based violence
Health outcomes
HIV/AIDS
Homicide
Housing stability
Immunization
Income diversification
Job mobility
Malaria
Market access
Market share
Maternal health
Mental health
Mortality
Non-communicable diseases
Nutrition
Pollution
Post-conflict recovery
Productivity
Profits/revenues
Recidivism
Recycling and plastics
Remittances
Road safety
Savings/deposits
Self-employment
Self-esteem/self-efficacy
Sentencing and incarceration
Service provider performance
Sexual and reproductive health
Social cohesion
Social service delivery
Socio-emotional development
Soft skills
Student learning

Stunting
Take-up of program/social service/healthy behavior
Taxation
Technology adoption
Transparency and accountability
Trust
Tuberculosis
Violence
Water access
Water quality
Women's/girls' decision-making
Worker satisfaction