

Short-Term Research Management (STReaM)

Introduction

Launching a new randomized evaluation requires significant time, resources, and expertise. Our staff at J-PAL North America can help researchers address these challenges by providing part-time, remote research support through short-term research management (STReaM). STReaM support will have a defined scope and time-frame and be delivered with the goal of successfully passing off research management responsibilities to the Principal Investigators' (PIs') permanent research staff.

J-PAL North America invites PIs applying for RFP funding from J-PAL North America to concurrently apply for STReaM. We also welcome applications from projects that have received funding in a prior round that are now interested in receiving short-term research support. Selected studies will be led by Principal Investigators (PIs) for whom STReaM support would be marginal, in the economic sense, i.e., those who have relatively limited prior RCT experience or have limited access to other options for full-time research staff. Researchers are invited to include support for STReaM in J-PAL North America initiative application budgets.

Projects selected to receive support through STReaM will be:

- Strategically aligned with J-PAL North America's mission
- At or near the stage of launching randomization
- Able to demonstrate how and what kinds of project management support will be useful for the success of their work

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Eligibility criteria

Studies receiving STReaM will meet all the following criteria:

- PI is a J-PAL affiliate or a researcher invited to the RFP under which they are applying.
- PI has relatively limited previous randomized evaluation experience and/or has limited access to other research staff. Graduate students are not eligible for STReaM support.
- Study demonstrates academic rigor as defined by the J-PAL North America RFP selection criteria. Studies may demonstrate this by receiving an award through a prior J-PAL North America RFP, or by being allocated RFP funding during the current round.
- Both full studies and pilots that receive RFP funding are eligible for STReaM.

Budgeting for STReaM

The cost of STReaM depends on the level of support needed from J-PAL North America staff. PIs can select the level of engagement they need within the activities shown in the STReaM questionnaire application. The cost of staff time will account for either 25% or 50% of one FTE depending on project needs as shown in the table below. Estimates assume six months of support and account for the direct cost of staff time as well as costs related to recruitment, supervision, and management of STReaM staff. PIs are invited to reach out to STReaM staff directly with questions about how to budget for projects that will require significantly more or less staff time at stream@povertyactionlab.org. Estimates will be refined in conversation with J-PAL North America staff before award decisions are made.

Once an application is received, J-PAL NA staff will reach out to researchers to plan project support in more detail. These conversations are intended for planning purposes. The review board will consider the STReaM proposal alongside the project to make a funding decision.

If PIs are applying for STReaM for a pilot project, the cap on RFP awards will be raised to \$75,000 to allow additional funding for STReaM support.

J-PAL staff allocations for STReaM

J-PAL staff time will be allocated to deliver STReaM. This will include support from Research Managers (RMs) and Research Associates (RAs) with prior experience managing randomized evaluations. While durations will vary depending on the study's needs, we expect that engagements may take the equivalent of 25-50% of one FTE for up to six months. STReaM support can be flexible on timing depending on project needs and staff capacity. STReaM support will be delivered primarily remotely, with some possibility of traveling to support on-site meetings and trainings. STReaM staff are available to support training new permanent research staff.

Project guidelines

J-PAL North America staff can provide support in a number of areas related to short-term research management. The following are example “packages” of work, with estimated costs, that cover different elements of research management, based on the study stage. These represent a broader universe of tasks that researchers might draw from when determining the type of support that is appropriate for their work.

Cost and approximate %FTE over a six month period	Tasks
Study design support \$17,000 (25% FTE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Initiate data use agreement and IRB protocol process ● Facilitate project design conversations with implementing partner ● Preliminary survey development ● Refine design of randomization implementation and consent procedures ● Power calculations ● Refining file structure and project management procedures
Piloting and data collection \$34,000 (50% FTE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pilot design ● Field staff training ● Randomization implementation support ● Randomization monitoring support ● Survey piloting ● Study process monitoring
Early stage study implementation \$34,000 (50% FTE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Study process monitoring ● Recruitment strategy and consent protocol support ● Coordinating communication across stakeholders ● Provision of descriptive information about intervention and study implementation ● Research staff training

Review process & timeline

Deadlines	STReaM review process description
RFP application deadline	Complete questionnaire. Studies interested in applying for STReaM should complete an initial questionnaire before the RFP application deadline and submit the questionnaire along with the project proposal.
Within 2 weeks of RFP application deadline	STReaM support definition. Studies from the RFP that are eligible for STReaM will be contacted by J-PAL NA who will coordinate an initial conversation with PIs to more clearly define what support would entail for their studies.
Within 4 weeks of RFP application deadline	Full application review. STReaM applications will have a review board comprised of J-PAL NA staff leadership. Depending on project needs, there may be subsequent iteration about the precise budget for STReaM. Decisions about STReaM allocations will be made before the RFP notification date.
RFP and STReaM notification date	Notification. Studies from the RFP that were elected to receive funding and STReaM support will be notified at the same time by J-PAL NA staff.

Evaluation criteria

Studies applying for STReaM will be selected based on three main criteria, detailed below. Reviewers will consider these areas in relation to available J-PAL North America staff capacity.

1. How does the study align with J-PAL North America's strategic mission?

- Demonstrates academic rigor as defined by RFP selection criteria
- Alignment with J-PAL North America's mission of poverty reduction
- Under-studied topic or area, or replication of a critical study
- Closely aligned with policy- and decision-makers or public policy issues

2. Will STReaM add value to the study?

- PI demonstrates need for additional research management support – criteria to support this may include having relatively limited previous randomized evaluation experience or having limited access to other research staff
- Study could benefit from an area of research management that STReaM can provide

3. Is the study at or nearing the launch of randomization?

- Intervention has been identified. Implementing partner has been identified and understands the need for and potential structure of randomization in the evaluation
- Outcomes have been defined, and at least the primary data source has been identified

- Study feasibility has been assessed and deemed suitable

How to apply

Please fill out the brief questionnaire [here](#), which includes questions about the kind of support your study would benefit from. Before RFP decisions are released, eligible PIs will be contacted by J-PAL North America staff to discuss next steps.

Responses to common questions about STReaM can be found in our FAQ section [here](#). For further information and questions, please email us at stream@povertyactionlab.org.