

# LAI Budget Instructions

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## General Instructions for All Grant Types

### Instructions:

#### 1. Project Budget Submission:

- a. Please use the Excel template linked to the application to submit a detailed project budget.
- b. If your project has co-funding, show this funding and the requested amount in the "Total Project Budget" spreadsheet. Show only the amount requested from J-PAL in this RFP in the "LAI Budget" spreadsheets in the template.
- c. Applications must include **detailed** budget notes in the column "NOTES/Justification." For example, "Travel Costs" should include a breakdown of how many trips are planned, the estimated cost per trip, etc. "Field Costs" should include a breakdown of the number of respondents, cost per respondent, etc.
- d. Field costs that are detailed clearly in the budget (e.g., # of respondents times US\$/respondent = total US\$) do not require additional justification in the budget notes section.
- e. Please denote costs by the calendar year in which expenditures are taking place, not by fiscal year or a year from the project start date. Awards are typically paid on a cost-reimbursable basis.

#### 2. Allocation of External Funding

In the designated budget narrative spot of the application, please include if you have other pending awards for this project; please tell how you plan to allocate the funds received in case you are successful and receive all of these requested awards.

### 3. Budget Narrative:

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 to the application in the designated budget narrative spot. This document is required in addition to the Proposal Budget -- i.e., notes included in the Excel sheet do not suffice.

### 4. In-Country Expenses:

- a. These grants can cover in-country costs such as flights, accommodations, meals, enumerator hiring, translation, transcription services, instrument development, etc. Usual expenses for travel/proposal development grants would include travel and partnership building costs such as flights, accommodation, etc.

**Note:** If you intend to use travel/proposal development grants for human subject research (HSR), then IRB approval or exemption will be required before MIT reimburses expenses. 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).

- b. J-PAL will provide the necessary forms to document these expenses with your award notice.

### 5. International Travel:

**Per diem:** A per diem stipend of US\$25/day in-country can be claimed to cover food and miscellaneous expenses.

### 6. Expenses Not Covered:

J-PAL does not cover travel or trip protection insurance, lost luggage insurance, incidental expenses, or grantees' time.

### 7. Unallowable Costs:

- a. LAI research funds cannot cover program implementation costs. The implementing partner must bear program implementation costs on the project. Program implementation costs generally include the cost of the intervention itself, e.g., textbooks, teacher salaries, educational software, etc.
- b. Costs labeled as "insurance," "incidental," "miscellaneous," or "contingency" are not allowed.
- c. Any rent costs should be explained in the budget notes.

- d. Please note that LAI does not cover the salaries of PIs based in high-income countries (OECD member countries).

## 8. Asset Purchases:

- a. When budgeting for computer/equipment purchases, specify what is being purchased (e.g., the number of laptops) and the project staff assigned to the equipment.
- b. You can include asset purchases in your budget, and it will not inherently harm your application, but depending on the source of funds from prime awards, we might not approve the expense.

## 9. PI Salaries:

For PIs based at an academic institution in low- and middle-income countries who have completed a PhD, the following rules apply for salaries:

- a. **Full RCTs:** Up to US\$8,000 per low- and middle-income country (LMIC) researcher PI/co-PI per year, with the total budgeted amount for LMIC researcher PI time in aggregate across all co-PIs not exceeding US\$20,000 per year.
- b. **Pilots:** Up to US\$8,000 per LMIC researcher PI/co-PI for the entire award period, with the total budgeted amount for LMIC researcher PI time not exceeding 25% of the total budget.
- c. **Travel/Proposal Development:** There are no individual PI limits, but the total budgeted amount for LMIC researcher PI time in aggregate across all co-PIs should not exceed US\$3,750 per award.

## 10. Collaboration and Notification:

- a. If working with a J-PAL regional office, an IPA country office, or another implementing organization, notify them before submitting your grant application.
- b. These organizations may require budgeting for overhead or other expenses.

## 11. Indirect Costs:

- a. Universities in high-income countries (OECD member countries) can charge up to 10% in indirect costs.
- b. Independent non-profits located anywhere and universities from mid- or low-income countries may charge up to 15% in indirect costs.
- c. We understand that the cap on overhead or indirect costs under LAI is low and that grantees may have reasonable project support costs included in budgets as direct costs. Such costs should be reasonable and explained in the budget notes.

## 12. Institute Affiliation:

- a. If the project is running human subject research (HSR), the PI must be listed on the Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval. MIT requires that there be a primary investigator formally affiliated with the Institute to Receive Award (ITRA) and that the primary investigator should be listed on the IRB documents. Please see the [J-PAL Human Subjects Memo 2023 for full details](#).
- b. The IRB approval must be held by the institution that enters into the subaward agreement with MIT. If the institution does not have its own IRB, it must engage the services of a commercial IRB to review and provide oversight for its research activities. J-PAL recommends these third-party IRBs: [Brany](#) and [Heartland](#). If the project is exempt from IRB approval, we will need the exemption status but no other action is required.
- c. Please note that J-PAL requires that the reviewing IRB have [IORG](#) status with the US Office of Human Protections. An IRB's status can be found by consulting the database of IORGs [here](#).
- d. It is your responsibility that your budget follows your host institution's policies for costs. As part of your proposal, you must submit a letter from the institution to receive the award that states that they have reviewed your proposal and accepted your budget. If the organization allows you to submit your proposal without such a letter (due to time constraints or some other reason), please note this on the Proposal Cover Sheet (under the "Institution to receive grant funds" field). Please note that this applies to all receiving institutions, including regional J-PAL offices and IPA country offices. You should contact them in advance to make sure you are aware of their policies for proposal review and that you give them enough time to meet the proposal deadline; we suggest allowing a 3-4 week turnaround.

## 13. Donor-specific requirements

- a. Please note that if you receiving funding from the LEGO Foundation:
  - i. Total indirect costs cannot make up more than 15% of the total amount funded. This means that if you have further subawards, the 15% maximum is the combined indirect total costs of your subaward plus that of your subawardee. You will be asked to report on the indirect cost rate in detail.

## 14. Suggested Timelines for Different Project Types:

- a. **Travel/Proposal Development Grants:** 6 months
- b. **Pilots:** 1 year
- c. **Full RCTs:** 2 - 2.5 years
- d. **Scaling Grants:** 1-3 years

## Travel/ Proposal Development Grants

These grants are designed to support costs associated with Principal Investigator (PI) travel and proposal development activities. LAI would encourage the teams to think through some partnership development and research activities during this stage, instead of submitting a budget with only travel expenses. If the budget is mostly for flights, accommodation, meals, etc., please justify how those expenses will eventually be useful for partnership development and research.

### Grant Amount and Payment:

1. Awards for travel/proposal development grants are capped at a **maximum of US\$10,000**.
2. The typical grant amount is US\$5,000, intended for one researcher's travel.
3. Travel expenses will be paid as direct reimbursements to the traveler. For the Travel/Proposal Development awards, the grantee will be expected to cover project costs up front and, following the end of the grant period, be reimbursed by J-PAL. Receipts are required for reimbursements.

## Pilot Grants

Pilot funding is available to studies with a clear research question, but for which the design and implementation require further testing and pilot data. The expectation is that these projects will ultimately develop into full-scale randomized evaluations. These grants may be used for activities intended to facilitate access to administrative data for designing or conducting an RCT. Examples of these activities include but are not limited to, negotiating data use agreements, conducting exploratory data analysis and cleaning, or setting up technical access mechanisms.

### Grant Amount and Payment:

Awards for pilot grants are capped at a **maximum of US\$75,000 (or ~US\$25,000 for descriptive work projects)**.

## Full Randomized Evaluation Grants

This funding is for a full randomized evaluation.

### Grant Amount and Payment:

Awards for full randomized evaluation are capped at a **maximum of US\$400,000**.

## Path-to-scale (Scaling) Grants

**Adaptation grants** are for projects in which the government partner has identified the potential evidence-informed solutions from randomized evaluations, but more work needs to be done before they can pilot a scalable version of it. **Policy pilot grants** are for projects where the partner is ready to pilot the evidence-informed solution from randomized evaluations but would like technical support in either setting up a pilot, making sure it maintains fidelity to the evidence in terms of the program features that drove positive impacts, and/or monitoring pilot implementation quality. **Scale projects** are where the partner has already piloted a version of the evidence-informed solution in their context, either in a randomized evaluation or policy pilot or elsewhere, with sufficient justification that the solution has been responsibly adapted and contextualized. Based on previous results, the government partner would like to move forward with a scale-up and would like technical support in expanding the program more widely.

### Grant Amount and Payment:

Awards for scaling grants are capped at a maximum of

1. **Adaptations: Max amount US\$75,000**
2. **Policy Pilots: Max amount US\$200,000**
3. **Scale Projects: Max amount US\$300,000**