

CRIME AND VIOLENCE INITIATIVE: RFP OVERVIEW

Spring 2025 Request for Proposals (RFP) - RFP 10

The Crime and Violence Initiative (CVI) fosters experimental research on crime and social and political violence. Crime and violence can hinder economic development and growth, and exacerbate governance challenges by fostering corruption and draining public sector resources. The initiative funds evaluations that focus on preventing, mitigating, and responding to the effects of crime, violence, and conflict.

CVI is now calling for proposals from J-PAL affiliates, J-PAL postdocs, invited researchers (from any J-PAL initiative), and PhD students (with support from a J-PAL affiliate or invited researcher) for travel/proposal development grants, policy outreach support grants, pilot grants, and full RCT grants. [CVI also welcomes Regional Scholars](#) to submit proposals for travel/proposal development grants and pilot grants.

To apply, please submit an application via our online portal, WizeHive. Instructions and links to the applications can be found below, under “How to Apply”. Complete proposals will be due **Tuesday, June 3, 11:59 PM US Eastern Time via WizeHive**. Please review the RFP Overview and Proposal Guidelines on the [CVI RFP website](#) for details on each proposal type and a complete list of application questions.

In addition, **regional scholars** are also required to submit letters of interest (LOIs) by **Tuesday, April 22, 11:59 PM US Eastern Time** via our LOI form ([Pilot LOI](#) and [Travel/Proposal Development](#)). Eligible applicants will receive an invitation to proceed with full proposal development in WizeHive. LOIs are only required for regional scholar applicants.

For questions on RFP priorities, application and review processes, eligibility, and general inquiries, please reach out to: cvi@povertyactionlab.org, or visit the [CVI website](#).

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Timeline for Spring 2025 RFP

CVI has two regular funding cycles per year. See below for the current round's timeline:

March 28, 2025	RFP is issued
April 22, 2025	[CVI Scholars Only] Required Letter of Interest (LOI) Deadline <i>*Selected scholars will receive an invitation to proceed with full proposal development</i>
June 3, 2025	Full Proposal Deadline
Mid-August	RFP decisions are announced (exact date subject to change by ~2 weeks)

Beyond simple program evaluation: Generalizability and innovation

Crime, violence, and conflict can pose complex obstacles to poverty reduction and economic growth. At the most fundamental level, crime and conflict can be lethal. Each year, an [estimated 400,000 to 450,000 lives are cut short by homicide](#) and a [sharp rise in armed conflicts globally over the past decade](#), including the recent eruption of a number of large-scale state-based conflicts, has led to the [highest figures of battle-related deaths](#) since 1994. More broadly, crime and conflict can hinder economic growth by scaring away investment or by diverting human capital away from more productive enterprises. Crime, violence, and conflict impose costs not only directly on victims, but also on society more broadly by eroding trust in institutions and diverting resources from development goals. The governance challenges produced by widespread crime and violence can foster corruption and drain public sector resources. Furthermore, poorly designed efforts to control crime and support communities recovering from conflict can themselves impose substantial social and economic costs, which often accrue most heavily among poor and vulnerable populations.

Since it was established in 2017, CVI continues to expand the narrow base of experimental evidence on the best ways to prevent, reduce, and manage crime and social and political violence. The first phase of CVI research generated insights on a range of previously understudied topics. This included, for example: research to address urban violence, including by examining [civilian alternatives to policing](#); strategies for equipping security institutions to be more responsive to violence against women, via [women's help desks in Madhya Pradesh police stations](#) and [SHE teams to prevent street harassment in](#)

[Telangana](#); evaluations of intergroup contact and perspective-taking programs in [Iraq](#), [Mozambique](#), and [Turkey](#) to improve inclusion and trust among refugees, internally displaced people, and host communities in contexts affected by conflict; and more. At the same time, ongoing CVI-funded work continues to answer questions on a range of critical topics like: the impacts of state-led punitive justice versus community-led restorative justice on property rights, crime, and violence in the [DRC](#); the impact of cognitive behavioral therapy on the mental health and prosociality of Afghan refugees in [Turkey](#); and the [moral, ideological, and economic drivers](#) behind participation in violent armed groups, as well as [strategies for eroding motivation](#) over time in the DRC. See [CVI's Funded Projects](#) page for more examples.

Despite these advances, there remains a need to further expand the evidence base on programs designed to prevent, mitigate, and respond to the effects of crime, violence, and conflict. To name a few illustrative evidence gaps, there is currently little international experimental research on: the psychological and behavioral roots of aggression; dispute resolution; gangs; criminal networks; “disorganized” crime; the role of social alienation in driving crime and violence; homicide and violence prevention programs; addressing and preventing conflict before it happens; the links between climate change and conflict; and how to counter the rollback of human rights and help individuals and groups exercise their rights.

CVI awards funds to the most innovative, generalizable experimental research geared towards advancing our understanding of the “basic science” behind crime, violence, and conflict and the most effective means for their prevention. Innovation can mean producing evidence where little exists, especially where little experimental work has been done.

Innovation also includes studies that tackle common interventions and test the fundamental assumptions and prior beliefs that underlie them. For example, reconciliation programs have become routine after conflict, and are often presumed to promote both societal and individual healing. Yet a randomized evaluation in Sierra Leone showed that a [truth and reconciliation program](#) implemented 10 years after the end of violence had positive and negative effects, improving community cohesion and relations between people from rival sides but also increasing symptoms of traumatic distress originating from the conflict.

Almost every major program or policy is founded on reasonable but untested assumptions—employment programs for those who have been incarcerated assume that criminal labor supply is responsive to non-criminal wages; reintegration programs for former combatants assume that specific skills or norms can be learned or adopted through short training courses or other interventions. Testing these assumptions in one context, and across contexts, aids generalizability.

Bringing new types of data or measurement to bear is also an important contribution, especially when those data will become available to others, they can be replicated in other contexts, or the measurement strategy can be mimicked by others. Other frontiers include new forms of data (including “big data”), new behavioral games, and new survey modules.

Scope of the initiative

Crime and social and political violence are wide-ranging phenomena. By crime, broadly speaking, we invite proposals related to the following phenomena:

- Violent crime and property crime
- Organized crime
- Interpersonal violence (such as between-household disputes, identity-targeted violence, and domestic violence)
- White collar crime (although please note that corruption research is generally the focus of the [J-PAL Governance Initiative](#))

By social and political violence, we invite proposals related to the following phenomena:

- State-supported violence and repression, including the rollback of human rights and regular and extreme use of force by arms of the criminal justice system
- Electoral violence
- Riots, protests, and other collective action (violent and nonviolent)
- Intergroup violence, including ethnic and sectarian violence
- Terrorism and violent extremism
- International and internal conflict (including insurgency and counterinsurgency)

General research priorities

There is relatively little international experimental evidence on “bread and butter” approaches to reducing crime, violence, and conflict; or on innovative interventions designed to address these challenges.

This initiative is open to funding high-quality interventions that fall under either category. In line with our emphasis on generalizability, however, we strongly encourage a focus on fundamental questions rather than narrow program evaluation. We also encourage work on challenges and policy strategies that are unique to low- and middle-income countries which supersede national and regional boundaries.

In particular, we encourage research that:

- Helps develop or test theories of crime, violence, and conflict, including causes and consequences
- Seeks to disentangle interventions to isolate and understand the underlying assumptions and theoretical mechanisms
- Tries to challenge common prior beliefs, which could lead to a new understanding of crime, violence, and conflict or new programs and priorities for mitigation
- Uses and develops novel measurement strategies

In addition, over the first phase of this initiative, we have seen growing interest and enthusiasm around specific themes and intervention types (e.g., intergroup contact, cognitive behavioral therapy, etc.). We encourage researchers interested in these topics to pursue research that will help further unpack mechanisms and address unanswered questions. We encourage researchers to review the GCCI Evidence Wrap-up’s deep dive on [open questions related to cognitive behavioral therapy](#) and [intergroup contact](#), respectively, if you plan to propose research in these areas. The associated chapters also recap existing evidence and ongoing CVI-supported research on these topics (as of 2021).

Priority questions

We encourage submissions that aim to push the frontiers of research and policy and that ask new or otherwise important questions. Questions where there is an established literature will be held to a higher standard of innovation and generalizability.

Research themes and questions that are especially relevant or in need of evidence include:

Motivations behind participating in crime and violence. A fundamental research area is “who participates in criminal activities?” and “why do they engage in violence?” We encourage research that sheds light on a range of material and nonmaterial incentives, such as:

- Psychological factors and behavioral motivations
- Economic opportunities (e.g. in labor markets)
- Social norms, as well as social networks and relationships
- Injustice, rights, and political representation
- Governance and the provision of public goods
- Opportunities and connections to criminal networks (and interventions that are designed to alter or break those connections)
- The role of groups (including but not limited to the provision of material and nonmaterial club goods, the role of social networks, and the role of group dynamics and social norms)

Addressing and preventing violence before it happens. Over the past decade, we’ve seen a sharp rise in global conflicts as well as a more [recent uptick in global violent deaths](#), contributing to unprecedented levels of forced displacement and constraining development progress. We encourage research that explores the actions and investments development, diplomatic, and security actors can take to both prevent new conflicts from emerging in the first place and to reduce the intensity and frequency of conflicts when violence does erupt. Relevant topics include:

- Identifying and addressing early warning signs of violence
- Strengthening informal and formal dispute resolution systems
- Improving citizen trust in state institutions and strengthening perceived legitimacy of the state to respond to crime and violence
- Addressing societal cleavages through programs that promote social cohesion by addressing prejudice and discrimination
- Testing prevention strategies that may act as ‘violence vaccines’, including psychosocial and behavior change interventions, as well as economic approaches (e.g., cash transfers, vocational training, or employment programs)
- Understanding effective approaches to building and sustaining stability after violence, including through conflict resolution interventions, peacekeeping operations, and state capacity building

Law enforcement, criminal justice, and security provision. CVI remains committed to generating evidence on the role of justice sector institutions and policies on preventing and responding to crime and violence, in alignment with furthering progress against SDG16. Many questions in this space remain, including on:

- Judicial training and effectiveness and its impact on the cost of engaging in crime and violence
- Restorative justice approaches to address and support community healing from crime and

violence

- How policing strategies can best be targeted and what strategies work best for deterring different types of crime
- How best to organize, manage, or demographically compose police teams and how these decisions impact their effectiveness and responsiveness to certain issues
- The effects of various forms of skills training—from investigative skills to interpersonal competencies—on improving police performance, reducing excessive use of force, and combating discriminatory behaviors
- The impact of militarized policing and military involvement in public security on civil liberties, human rights, and community trust
- Addressing corruption in police, courts, and other justice institutions
- Civilian alternatives to policing and security provision
- Alternatives to incarceration, particularly those for juvenile offenders, including those that leverage psychosocial and behavior change techniques, educational opportunities, and training and employment programs
- Reentry strategies to reduce recidivism and promote rehabilitation and reintegration within communities

Understanding and combating the operations of criminal groups. Organized crime poses new challenges and questions regarding how to effectively prevent crime and violence. Urban armed groups, especially criminal gangs, are a growing threat to peace and economic growth in cities across the world. These groups often exert state-like powers, enforcing contracts, policing, and taxing businesses in the areas they informally govern. This is an area that remains ripe for further research, including on:

- How criminal groups govern, finance, and recruit
- Effective actions the state can take to combat organized crime, including through prosecution, increased governance, and tackling gang revenue streams, including through combatting retail drugs and drug trafficking
- Examining the role of illicit economies, such as illegal mining, deforestation, and drug trafficking, in fueling crime and violence, and exploring strategies to disrupt these economies both locally and by addressing cross-border criminal networks
- Understanding the role of ‘criminal governance’ in terms of resolving local disputes, maintaining social order, and providing security
- Strategies for preventing recruitment and promoting desistance and rehabilitation

Understanding and combating extremist, insurgent, terrorist, and other non-state armed groups. Terrorism, violent religious extremism, and insurgency continue to challenge low- and middle-income countries. Many open questions remain, including on:

- Identifying the determinants for participating in such organizations (e.g., ideology, religion, economic, etc.)
- Designing effective strategies for countering and preventing violent extremism and radicalization
- Increasing civilian collaboration with legitimate authorities and decrease civilian collaboration with armed groups
- (Re)building trust in the state in areas where its reach is limited and non-state actors have emerged as alternatives for providing critical services and dispute resolution

- Understanding how these groups govern, finance, and recruit and how to counter these efforts
- Identifying effective actions the state can take to incentivize recruited members at various ranks to disengage and reduce their incentives or abilities to commit violence (e.g., through income support, government services, or interventions that address social and political ideologies)
- Evaluating strategies for disarmament, demobilization, reinsertion, and reintegration
- Countering and reducing incentives for war crimes and civilian abuse, including child recruitment, sexual violence, the use (and clearing) of landmines, and other civilian harms

Promoting social integration. Understanding how to promote social integration in fragile, violent, and conflict-affected settings is essential for peace and stability. Social integration helps in fostering positive social norms and ties within and between groups. It also facilitates the exchange of information, peaceful bargaining, and reduces inter-group tensions, which can prevent potential conflicts in the future. More research is needed to explore effective ways to foster social integration and prevent backlash among groups with experiences of violence and conflict, including, for example:

- Effects of trade and economic integration on mitigating violence
- The role of civil society organizations and grassroots movements in promoting social cohesion (such as intergroup decision-making bodies, and minority representation)
- Specific mechanisms by which intergroup contact interventions can influence social integration, attitudes, and behaviors between groups
- The role of media and communication technologies in influencing intergroup dynamics and promoting social cohesion

State and institution-building. While institutional reforms may be difficult to study using field experiments, CVI encourages innovation and attempts at studying these topics in fragile and conflict-affected states.¹ Relevant topics include:

- Reforms in the security sector, including militarized policing
- Civil service reforms in fragile states
- Formal and informal institutions to promote peaceful bargaining and dispute resolution, including criminal justice and judicial reform
- Forms of international order, including peacekeeping and justice systems
- Regulatory policies and platform-based innovations protecting freedom of expression and preventing misinformation on social media

Preventing the rollback of fundamental rights. Preventing the rollback of political, social, cultural, and other rights should be of central concern to policymakers as these underpin individuals' ability to control and develop their lives freely. When governments roll back rights, individuals and groups may be motivated to engage in political violence to secure their rights, while others may view the rollback of rights as a signal that other forms of oppression, including violence and exploitation, are acceptable—potentially sparking conflict. We encourage further research on interventions that counter the rollback of human rights and help oppressed groups exercise their rights. Relevant research will explore strategies for:

¹ For research exploring a broader set of state capacity and governance questions, including on the selection and recruitment of public officials, incentives to improve performance, and monitoring mechanisms and public service delivery, please direct proposals to J-PAL's [Governance Initiative](https://povertyactionlab.org/initiative/governance-initiative).

- Preventing the persecution of women, girls, LGBTQ+ people, and other vulnerable populations
- Increasing women's representation in security, justice, and other political institutions
- Addressing and tackling hate speech in all its forms, including online and via traditional media outlets
- Reducing discrimination against marginalized groups and promoting their social inclusion, including by building understanding of fundamental rights and shifting norms and attitudes
- Promoting community social cohesion, non-violence, and respect for human rights amidst government-led rollbacks of rights
- Shifting political incentives and social norms that contribute to governments pursuing rollbacks

Unpacking the links between climate change and conflict. While climate change is widely hypothesized to affect conflict—for instance, by triggering land disputes and conflicts over resources, exacerbating intergroup tensions, and forcing migration and displacement—there is little evidence on the specific populations and disputes most at risk or how to ameliorate these risks. Identifying the main mechanisms linking extreme climate and conflict remains a key research and policy question. CVI also aims to promote research that explicitly incorporates a climate lens into peace programming. Relevant research could explore whether:

- Building community resilience to negative climate shocks can reduce risks of local disputes
- Anticipatory programs delivered prior to the onset of climate shocks help minimize the risk of future conflict
- In countries at high risk of climate hazards, can peacebuilding and conflict prevention programs help prevent or mitigate the potential negative effects of future climate shocks on conflict

As long as proposals fall within this focus, CVI does not prioritize certain research questions over others. If you are uncertain about whether a proposal may be eligible, email cvi@povertyactionlab.org.

Designing responsible research projects

When working in conflict-affected settings and when studying topics like violence, it is important to prioritize the safety and security of all involved, and employ ethical research designs and measurement strategies informed by a deep understanding of crime and conflict drivers. CVI encourages building strong, transparent, and equitable partnerships among researchers, implementing partners, participants, and affected communities, valuing diverse perspectives and addressing power differentials. Applicants are required to demonstrate their commitment to maintaining rigorous standards for safeguarding throughout project implementation as part of their proposal. Competitive applications will substantiate how the safety and security of research participants and research teams will be prioritized throughout project planning and implementation. We also encourage applicant teams to consider including members experienced in working in such settings and to closely collaborate with their implementing partners to jointly assess and manage risks and incidents. Researchers should consult [Annex 1 for additional resources on responsible research](#).

Grant types and purpose

Proposal types

CVI will consider the following proposal types:

Travel/Proposal development grants (suggested period of performance: six months to one year): These grants are to develop preliminary research ideas. Activities may include background research, travel, relationship development, descriptive analysis, observational analysis, and data development or collection. Travel/Proposal development grants are intended for those who may not otherwise have access to this type of funding. PhD students, junior researchers, and those from institutions with limited funding are especially encouraged to apply. The review board will consider how this proposal helps researchers develop subsequent proposals for pilots or full randomized controlled trials (RCTs). **Maximum award:** \$10,000.

Pilot grants (suggested period of performance: one to two years): These grants are for studies with a clear research question, but for which the design and implementation requires substantial upfront investments, including: further trial-and-error piloting; developing new measurement strategies or instruments; analysis of existing data; or new descriptive or experimental data development or collection.² The review board will consider how this proposal helps researchers develop subsequent proposals for full RCTs. **Maximum award:** \$75,000.

Full RCT grants (suggested period of performance: 24 - 30 months): These grants are for research projects with a clear research question, committed implementing partner(s), randomization design, well-defined instruments, and sample size estimates. Grants can also fund the continuation or completion of research projects that have already started without CVI funding (including those for which data collection is complete). This includes long-run follow-ups from previously published trials, as well as "downstream studies" that use a randomized evaluation designed for a non-CVI priority to answer a CVI-relevant question. The expectation is that this work will result in a paper publishable in a top economic, political science, or science journal. **Maximum award:** \$400,000, including any previous CVI funding of any type for the same project. Other J-PAL and IPA funding may also affect award sizes.³

Please note: As a general rule, CVI does not fund pure lab experiments. In very rare cases, a proposal may be considered if a lab-in-field experiment supplements an underlying randomized evaluation, or if the lab-in-field experiment has direct policy implications. For example, Edward Miguel and coauthors' [lab-in-field evaluation of ethnic bias in Kenya](#) was implemented during Kenya's national elections to understand how proximity to election dates might affect participants' ethnic biases.

Off-cycle proposals

CVI also offers two types of funding outside of the regular RFP cycles:

Off-cycle projects: These grants are intended for research projects that face substantial time

² Full RCTs requesting less than \$75,000 are considered full RCTs and evaluated accordingly.

³ Proposals with a reason for requesting more than \$400,000 may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

constraints and need to receive funding before the end of a regular funding round to make use of an unanticipated opportunity (e.g., a newly announced policy change that will go into effect soon, creating an opportunity for a randomized evaluation). Proposals must clearly justify the need to receive a decision on an expedited schedule. The maximum amount awarded to off-cycle proposals is \$50,000. PhD students are not eligible for off-cycle funding. Please reach out to cvi@povertyactionlab.org to apply off-cycle.

Evidence use and policy outreach support: These funds are intended to support the take-up and dissemination of evidence from CVI-funded evaluations, or other randomized evaluations conducted by J-PAL affiliates and invited researchers that address the initiative's research priorities. Funds can be used to support activities such as conferences, workshops, or events to disseminate results and policy lessons from evidence, as well as to support the take-up of evidence, such as by providing technical assistance to or embedding staff in an organization, either with a partner from the original study or with other entities interested in using evidence. Finally, these funds may also cover outreach in which a team reports the findings of their research back to the participants and/or frontline workers from the study. The suggested budget range for these requests is \$10,000-20,000 and **applications for this grant type can be submitted on a rolling basis via email to cvi@povertyactionlab.org**; see the proposal guidelines on CVI's RFP webpage for additional details.

Eligibility

Focus countries

Funding for this initiative comes from the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO, formerly DFID), as part of the J-PAL and IPA Governance, Crime, and Conflict Initiative (GCCCI). As such, no funds can be spent in high-income countries (generally defined as the US, Canada, Western Europe, Japan, Korea, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand, Israel, and wealthy Middle Eastern countries).

Further, a majority of funds must be spent in GCCCI priority countries – please see the full list of [GCCCI priority countries](#), **noting these are subject to change over time**. CVI will consider proposals in non-GCCCI priority countries, but these proposals will have a lower probability of funding. In general, CVI and FCDO are interested in expanding beyond countries where most RCTs are concentrated and are especially interested in evaluations in fragile states. If you are uncertain about whether a country may be eligible, email cvi@povertyactionlab.org.

We also kindly ask that researchers please review MIT's list of '[Countries Presenting Added Risk](#)' and reach out to the CVI team **in advance of submitting a proposal** if considering research in one of these locations.

Researcher eligibility

J-PAL affiliates, J-PAL postdocs, and all J-PAL invited researchers (from *any* initiative) are eligible to apply for any type of CVI funding. PhD students who have a J-PAL affiliate or invited researcher on

their thesis committee may be eligible to apply for travel/proposal development grants, pilot grants, or up to \$50,000 for full RCT grants.⁴ All proposals may include collaborators outside of this network.

Notes for all award types:

- To prevent concentration of awards to any specific researchers, and to reduce the burden on initiative review boards, applicants are limited to submitting three proposals, inclusive of all proposal types, per 12-month period per initiative (either as PI or co-PI). **For example, if a researcher submitted two pilot or full-scale proposals in our Spring 2019 round, they were only eligible to submit a maximum of 1 pilot or full-scale proposal in our Fall 2019 round.**

CVI Regional Scholars - Extended eligibility for researchers based in an LMIC

CVI is invested in creating more opportunities for academics from traditionally underrepresented groups and offers additional funding and mentoring opportunities for researchers based in low- or middle- income countries (LMIC). Through the CVI Scholars Program, researchers who hold a PhD, whose primary affiliation is with a university, who are based in an LMIC and who are not yet part of J-PAL's network can apply for travel/proposal development (up to \$10,000) and pilot grants (up to \$75,000) as part of CVI's regular RFP.

Please refer to the [CVI Scholars Program webpage](#) for more information about eligibility and resources to support proposal development if your research interests fall within CVI's scope, you are based in an LMIC, and are not otherwise eligible for J-PAL funding.

Project timeline

Funding requests should not extend beyond December 2027. We encourage applicants to be realistic when setting the projected period of performance/end date for their project.

On full/pilot project *start dates*, applicants should be aware that MIT takes **approximately 60 days to establish a subaward** from the date you submit all of your setup forms and IRB approvals. We can backdate the award to cover expenses from the Award Date or the date of IRB approval, whichever is later. If a project includes non-Human Subjects work prior to the IRB approval, please let us know following the award and, in some cases, we may be able to cover those costs (post-award, but pre-IRB) under the award.

The process MIT follows for full/pilot grants is thus:

1. The CVI Review Board sends an official award notification letter.
2. If not already submitted, J-PAL requests your institution's approval of the proposal (letter of

⁴ A PhD student's adviser must provide a letter of support and indicate willingness to remain involved in a supervisory role throughout the project. For J-PAL affiliates or invited researcher advisers who do not reside at the student's host university, the application must also include a formal letter of confirmation from the student's department head confirming the adviser is a member of the student's official thesis committee. To apply for up to \$50,000 for pilot studies or full RCTs, PhD students must also provide evidence of successful pilot activities, funded either through a CVI travel/proposal development grant or other sources. PhD students are eligible to apply for a maximum of two travel/proposal development grants and two pilot study/full RCT grants during their time as graduate students. All else equal, priority will be given to graduate students who have not applied before. Applicants who received travel/proposal development grants as graduate students but have since moved to another institution may only apply for funding to continue that same project.

transmission) and your institutional IRB approval.

- a. In the case that IRB approval is not already in place when funding decisions are made, **proposed start dates should reflect time needed to get IRB approval** by the IRB of record, as well as time required to establish a reliance agreement and move forward in the subaward granting process.
3. MIT establishes a subaward to the institution to receive the award.
4. Institute to receive award invoices MIT for expenses incurred for the project on a cost reimbursable basis.

Travel/proposal development grants and policy outreach support grants are generally paid as travel reimbursements, which follow a different process. See the Administrative notes section below for more details on the payment and subaward process.

Review process

Proposals are reviewed along the following criteria: alignment with CVI's strategic priorities, academic contribution, policy relevance, technical design, project viability, and value of research.

Review board members will also consider research ethics and team diversity:

- **Ethics review:** Projects are required to have secured all necessary research approvals from all relevant local, national, and international ethics committees prior to beginning fieldwork. We ask applicants working with vulnerable populations and/or working in fragile contexts to elaborate on the ethical considerations underpinning their work, with a particular focus on the safety and security of research participants and staff, in addition to fulfilling J-PAL's regular IRB review requirements.
- **Team diversity:** CVI welcomes proposals from diverse research teams. We highly encourage proposals from teams with researchers or other research team members (research associates, managers, enumerators, etc.) with lived experiences related to the topic and with researchers from the countries where the project will take place. We also encourage prospective applicants to consider working across disciplines.

Travel/Proposal development grants: The CVI co-chairs review proposals and make final funding decisions.

Pilot and full RCT grants: The CVI review board, consisting of the CVI co-chairs and three other J-PAL affiliates selected by the co-chairs, reviews proposals. Co-chairs submitting a proposal in the current round of funding are required to recuse themselves from all funding decisions in that round, and any board member submitting a proposal in the current round of funding is required to recuse him/herself from the overall review.⁵ The CVI review board decides to (1) approve, (2) conditionally approve (with minor revisions or clarifications), (3) request a “revise and resubmit” during this or a subsequent round, or (4) not approve.

⁵ In addition, no spouse, partner, or immediate family member (parent, child, or sibling) of any individual named on a proposal application may serve as a peer or board referee in the round in which the applicant's proposal is being reviewed.

If applicants would like to appeal a CVI review board decision, they must e-mail cvi@povertyactionlab.org within one week of the announcement detailing the reasons for the appeal (maximum two pages). The CVI review board considers all appeals.

J-PAL Regional Offices

If your proposal involves a country with a J-PAL office, **contact the relevant office 3-4 weeks before submission**. These offices have strong connections with policymakers, understand regional policy priorities, and offer infrastructure to support research and scaling activities.

If this project takes place in a country that has a J-PAL office but it is **not** the host institution, please detail the reasoning in the Partnership section of the application. Your answer will help us understand how J-PAL offices can be more competitive and better respond to the needs of PIs. [Annex II](#) lists the point persons at each J-PAL regional office.

How to apply

To apply to this RFP, please submit an application via our online portal, WizeHive, using the following links:

- [Travel and Proposal Development Grant](#)
- [Pilot](#)
- [Full RCT](#)

Complete proposals will be due **Tuesday, June 3, 5:00 PM US Eastern Time via WizeHive**. Please review the RFP Overview and Proposal Guidelines on the [CVI RFP website](#) for details on each proposal type and the complete list of application questions.

In addition, [regional scholars](#) are also required to submit letters of interest (LOIs) by **Tuesday, April 22, 5:00 PM US Eastern Time** via our LOI forms ([Pilot LOI](#) and [Travel/Proposal Development](#)). Eligible applicants will receive an invitation to proceed with full proposal development in WizeHive. LOIs are only required for regional scholar applicants.

Other FAQs

For questions on RFP priorities, application and review processes, eligibility, and general inquiries, please reach out to: cvi@povertyactionlab.org, or visit the [CVI website](#).

For questions on award set-up and administration, please reach out to cvi_grant_admin@povertyactionlab.org.

Related Initiatives

Please do not submit the same proposal to more than one J-PAL or IPA initiative at the same time. When applying to CVI, consider whether your proposal may be better suited for one of the following initiatives, which often cover similar geographies and also emphasize supporting innovation and research that maximizes generalizability (and with it, broad policy relevance). The priority questions of CVI and IPA's Peace & Recovery Initiative are especially overlapping, although CVI has a much greater emphasis on crime and criminal justice issues, and P&R has a broader focus on state and institution building, humanitarian crises, and post-crisis recovery.

If you are uncertain about whether your proposal falls within the CVI's scope, e-mail cvi@povertyactionlab.org.

J-PAL Governance Initiative (GI): GI funds randomized impact evaluations of programs designed to improve participation in the political and policy process, reduce leakages in public programs, and improve state capacity. GI's research priorities are identified in the [Governance Initiative Review Paper](#) or its [Executive Summary](#).

IPA Peace and Recovery Initiative (P&R): IPA's Peace & Recovery Initiative is designed to support field experiments and related research in several broad areas: reducing violence and promoting peace; reducing "fragility" (i.e. fostering state capability and institutions of decision making); and preventing, coping with, and recovering from crises (focusing on conflict, but also including non-conflict humanitarian crises).

J-PAL and IPA Humanitarian Protection Initiative (HPI): HPI supports research to generate rigorous evidence through funding proposals to design, pilot, and evaluate solutions to effectively improve protection outcomes. HPI will foster research and learning on pivotal protection concerns in conflict settings, including the prevention of sexual- and gender-based violence; addressing the psychological effects of abuse and distress; promoting the recognition, respect and uptake of rights; and mitigating conflict escalation while fostering restraint among armed actors.

J-PAL and IPA Displaced Livelihoods Initiative (DLI): DLI funds proposals to design, pilot, evaluate, build research infrastructure, and scale interventions that can effectively support sustainable livelihoods for displaced populations and host communities.

Funding

With support from the [UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office](#) (FCDO, formerly DFID), the Governance, Crime, and Conflict Initiative (GCCCI) was founded in 2017 to fund rigorous and policy-relevant research to determine what works in improving governance and overcoming crime, violence, and conflict in low- and middle-income countries. J-PAL and Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA) run three interconnected research initiatives under GCCCI: J-PAL's [Governance Initiative](#) (co-funded by FCDO since 2011), J-PAL's [Crime and Violence Initiative](#), and IPA's [Peace and Recovery Initiative](#).

Administrative notes

Payments and subawards

RCT and pilot grants are provided under an award from MIT to the grantee's host institution. **PLEASE NOTE:** MIT now requires that at least one project PI be employed by the organization receiving the subaward and funds, also known as the Institute to Receive the Award, or ITRA.

Please be mindful that MIT also requires that the IRB determination be held by the institution that enters into the subaward agreement with MIT ([See here for further details and FAQ](#) on MIT's policy on subawards, ITRA, and IRB alignment). 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 [here](#). Please 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](#).

Travel/proposal development grants and policy outreach support grants are generally paid as travel reimbursements. Receipts are required for reimbursement. Note that if travel/proposal development grants have 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).

Grant conditions if funded

Funding awarded by CVI is conditional on continued support from our own core donors. If CVI's scheduled funding is reduced, CVI may need to reduce or cancel your award.

Full and Pilot Grants: If your proposal is selected for funding, the terms of the award will be as follows:

1. **Research conduct:** Grantees will be required to have IRB approval or exemption from the IRB of Record. The IRB approval must be held by the institution that enters into the subaward agreement with MIT (the ITRA). Similarly, the Principal Investigator (PI) of a subaward issued by MIT's Research Services Administration must have an official affiliation with the organization receiving the subaward and funds ([see here for further details and FAQ](#)). Specific instructions will be given in the Notice of Award. In addition, grantees are expected to adhere to MIT's community-wide policies that are available [here](#), as well as policies put in place by the [UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office](#).
2. **Peer-review proposals:** Grantees may be requested to peer-review proposals in future CVI rounds.
3. **Project registration:** Within three months of the start date indicated on the proposal, grantees must register their trial with the [AEA RCT Registry](#). Registration includes 18 required fields,

such as your name and a small subset of your IRB requirements. There is also the opportunity to include more information, including power calculations and an optional pre-analysis plan. (Full studies only)

4. **Reporting:** Grantees will be requested to provide a brief start-up report, annual financial updates; annual progress reports; a final financial report within 60 days of completion of the award period; and (Full studies only) a final substantive report with preliminary results within 12 months of completion of the award period, which will be made public on the J-PAL website.
5. **Collecting and reporting program cost data:** Policymakers are interested in program costs, as it is one of the key factors in their decision to support a program. Cost data also allows for [cost effectiveness analysis \(CEA\)](#), which J-PAL may conduct (with permission from the researchers), even if such analysis is not part of an academic paper. In order to facilitate cost collection, CVI awards include \$1,000 to defray expenses associated with collecting cost data. CVI will provide a costing worksheet for grantees to update annually. If grantees are unable to collect detailed cost data, grantees are still required to provide estimates of total program cost, average cost per beneficiary, and marginal cost to add another beneficiary. (Full studies only)
6. **Collecting and reporting gender-disaggregated data:** J-PAL, through its Gender sector, is making an effort to study heterogeneity in program impacts by beneficiary/participant gender more systematically. Please note that the following request only applies to J-PAL internal reports and does not extend to the academic paper or online J-PAL summary.

Many studies funded by J-PAL initiatives already collect study participants' gender. In such cases, and when outcome data are individual-specific, we request that grantees conduct heterogeneity analyses by beneficiary gender for the study's main results for internal reporting to J-PAL (to be shared in the final grant report). A single study might be underpowered to detect heterogeneous treatment effects, or null results might not seem interesting in one study, but these findings may be meaningful when included in an analysis across studies. J-PAL will use the reported results for (a) determining potential pooled statistical analyses to conduct across studies and (b) generating gender-related policy lessons in Governance. Our reporting template will include a question on this, which researchers are encouraged to fill in when applicable. We recognize that there will be cases where this reporting is not applicable, for various reasons. In these cases, the PIs can just provide a brief explanation to be shared with the Gender sector.

7. **Data publication:** Grantees may be requested to share data collection instruments and methodologies with other grantees. Furthermore, researchers funded through this grant will be required to publish de-identified data in accordance with J-PAL's [Data and Code Availability Policy](#). J-PAL's research team can work with you to clean, label, de-identify, document and replicate datasets collected as part of a randomized trial before publishing them in the [J-PAL Dataverse](#) or another data repository of your choice. (Full studies only)
8. **Participate in CVI activities:** Grantees may be requested to participate in one of CVI's activities at a mutually agreed time and place. Activities may include evidence workshops, matchmaking conferences, or presentations to one of CVI's donors.
9. **Credit CVI:** Any presentations and publications, including academic papers, policy briefs, press releases, blogs, and organizational newsletters that emerge from this project should credit the J-PAL Crime and Violence Initiative and FCDO. The exact wording on crediting CVI and donor support will be provided in the terms of your award.
10. As a FCDO-funded grantee, please note that you will be required to report on your disposal plans for any assets over £500 GBP at the end of the performance period. We prefer that you

indicate your plans for disposal as soon as you have identified the asset. You can update this information on the financial report should your plans change during the period of performance. Your disposal plan could be as simple as “At the end of the project, we plan to keep the <asset> and continue to use it for research purposes”.

Travel/Proposal development grants: If your proposal is selected for funding, the terms of the award will be as follows:

1. **Research conduct:** Grantees are responsible for following appropriate IRB protocol and providing CVI copies of any IRB approvals or exemptions, if any are necessary. If IRB is required, the IRB approval must be held by the institution that enters into the subaward agreement with MIT (the ITRA, [see here for further details](#)). In addition, they are expected to adhere to MIT’s community-wide policies that are available [here](#), as well as policies put in place by the [UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office](#).
2. **Submit report:** Grantees are required to submit a brief report within 30 days of completing travel. If the travel/proposal development work results in non-initiative-funded follow-on projects, grantees should inform CVI as part of their final report or upon receipt of additional funding.
3. **Participate in CVI activity:** Grantees agree to participate in one CVI activity or event. CVI will cover associated costs.
4. **Credit CVI:** Any presentations and publications, including academic papers, policy briefs, press releases, blogs, and organizational newsletters that emerge from this project should credit the J-PAL Crime and Violence Initiative and FCDO. The exact wording on crediting CVI and donor support will be provided in the terms of your award. Please familiarize yourself with the [FCDO guidelines](#) regarding child protection and safeguarding and ensure that you are in compliance. Should any potential risk arise, please notify cvi@povertyactionlab.org immediately.
5. Applicants requesting proposal development funds for costs at their institution (versus direct reimbursement to the PI after travel, where this is not required) must provide a letter from the receiving institution of the award to show that they have reviewed your proposal and accept your budget.
 - a. The Principal Investigator (PI) of a subaward issued by MIT’s Research Services Administration must be employed by the organization receiving the subaward. This individual is responsible for ensuring that the research project is carried out in alignment with the proposal and in accordance with appropriate research and data protection protocols. The individual need not be a co-author on any papers to come out of the study. Please find further guidance from MIT [here](#).
 - b. Please follow the MIT approved language for the Letter of Transmission (On ITRA letterhead) as follows:
The <name of ITRA> is pleased to support the <Name of research> proposal and will plan on carrying out the work in accordance with the submitted budget. <NAME OF PI at ITRA> will serve as <ITRA's> Principal Investigator for this work. The <ITRA> takes full responsibility for the actions and well-being of <PI's name> in the course of the activities related to the scope of work for this research project. For any concerns about the technical aspects of the project, please contact <PI's name

and email>. For administrative or contractual issues, please contact <ITRA's grant manager name and email>.

Code of conduct

Since J-PAL is part of MIT, everyone who is associated with J-PAL, including all researchers worldwide affiliated with J-PAL (affiliates and invited researchers), as well as all co-authors on J-PAL funded or implemented studies are considered part of the broader MIT community. It is therefore our hope and expectation that they will adhere to the [MIT code of conduct](#), as well as the [J-PAL code of conduct](#). MIT's section titled "Relations and Responsibilities Within the MIT Community" contains specific provisions regarding personal conduct, harassment, discrimination and retaliation, violence against community members, and substance use. Please take some time to review these.

Because almost all researchers we work with are also part of other university communities, they may also be subject to their host universities' policies and procedures. Many of these policies may be very similar to the MIT policies above. Finally, many researchers are separately affiliated with other academic associations and organizations, including the American Economic Association, and they should continue to abide by the codes of conduct established by the associations and organizations to which they belong. The AEA's code of conduct is available [here](#).

We continue to encourage all staff and researchers to have a direct and open dialogue with each other if they have concerns about interactions between researchers, staff, or partners on any of the above issues, or about any aspect of a research project (e.g., adherence to minimum must dos, IRB protocols, or finance/operation rules). But if staff do not feel comfortable holding such discussions, or if the concern cannot be resolved at this level, they can reach out to the individuals and offices identified in the relevant policies linked above.

Violations of MIT community guidelines or of J-PAL research/operations rules can also be directly reported to any of the J-PAL contacts for further action: (i) Global Executive Director; (ii) any of the regional Executive Directors; (iii) Cindy Smith (Global Director of Finance and Operations); or (iv) Anna Omura (Global Senior Manager of Finance and Operations).

Annex 1: Resources for Responsible Research

Below we provide a non-exhaustive list of resources on responsible research, emphasizing resources related to research in fragile and conflict-affected settings or research related to violence outcomes.

Resource	Content
J-PAL's summary of ethical conduct of randomized evaluations	This resource is intended as a practical guide for researchers to use when considering the ethics of a given research project. It draws heavily from J-PAL's own ethics training for research staff and Rachel Glennerster and Shawn Powers's chapter in the Oxford Handbook of Professional Economic Ethics (2016).
J-PAL's repository of measurement and survey design resources	This repository provides a list of resources on measurement and survey design relating to various topics, <i>including resources on CVI-relevant outcomes</i> like trust or gender-based violence (see also ELRHA's report on gender-based violence research in humanitarian settings).
IPA's guidance on The Safe and Ethical Conduct of Violence Research	This report provides guidance on policies and best practices for conducting surveys for violence research.
IRC's Humanitarian Research Toolkit	This is a resource for conducting research in fragile and conflict-affected contexts, comprising guidance, training documents, and other practical tools.
Inter-Agency Standing Committee's Operational Guidance on Data Responsibility in Humanitarian Action	This operational guidance provides concrete steps to ensure that data is safe, ethical, and effectively managed in humanitarian action, laying out a set of principles and actions for data responsibility.
Falb et al. 2019's " The ethical contours of research in crisis settings: Five practical considerations for academic institutional review boards and researchers "	This article discusses challenges related to ethical research in crisis settings, including conflict settings.

Annex 2: J-PAL Leads by Region

J-PAL Regional Office	Regional Point Person(s)	Contact Information
J-PAL Africa	Rochelle Jacobs (Associate Director of Research)	rjacobs@povertyactionlab.org
J-PAL Europe	Adrien Pawlik (Associate Director of Research)	apawlik@povertyactionlab.org
J-PAL Latin America & the Caribbean	Edivaldo Constantino (Senior Research Manager)	econstantino@povertyactionlab.org
J-PAL Middle East & North Africa	Amira El-Shal (Associate Director of Research)	aelshal@povertyactionlab.org
J-PAL North America	Sarah Margolis (Senior Initiatives Manager)	smargolis@povertyactionlab.org
J-PAL South Asia	Sandhya Seetharaman (Senior Research Manager)	sseetharaman@povertyactionlab.org
J-PAL Southeast Asia	Nadia Rayhanna (Senior Research Manager)	nrayhanna@povertyactionlab.org