J-PAL Initiative Co-chair Recusal Policy

All of our initiatives are co-chaired by affiliates and we greatly value their insights at the intersection of rigorous research and its policy relevance. Most of them have also been on J-PAL's Board of Directors for a while and are very familiar with J-PAL policies and priorities.

1. **Whenever any one of the chairs of a single initiative applies for funding in any round**, **they should recuse themselves from all funding decisions in that initiative's round including:**
    a. Reading or commenting on the proposals, attending the review board meeting, accessing the comments or votes of the review board members, or reviewing any of the decisions taken by the board.
    b. If an initiative has multiple boards (e.g a board for decisions on research proposals and a board for decisions on scaling proposals) that follow entirely separate review processes in the same round, the co-chair will only be recused from funding decisions for the board for which they applied.
2. **We strongly encourage all initiative co-chairs to continue taking turns applying for funding from their initiative in any given round.**
    a. Since all our initiatives are led by two co-chairs who also co-chair the meetings of the review board where all proposals are reviewed and funding allocated, this provides continuity in decision making and adherence to J-PAL policies and priorities even when one of the chairs is recused.
    b. For this reason, historically co-chairs take turns applying for funding so that at least one of them can chair the review board meetings and participate in the review process.
3. **In the very rare case when it becomes completely unavoidable for both chairs to apply in the same round of their initiative, both co-chairs would be recused and (along with relevant regional executive director) nominate another J-PAL affiliate to chair that review board**.
    a. This rule also applies in cases where both co-chairs are applying for different types of funding within the same round (ie. one co-chair applies for a pilot grant, the other for a full study grant), unless the proposal types are subject to completely separate review processes.
        i. In the case co-chairs apply to two different proposal types with completely separate review processes (e.g. a co-chair applies for a travel/proposal development grant and the other co-chair applies for full study funding, and the review process for travel/proposal development grants is separate and independent from the review

process for full studies). In this case, the one co-chair recusal policy described in item 2 above will be applied for each of these review processes (ie. the first co-chair will be recused from the travel/proposal development grant review process; the second co-chair will be recused from the full study review process).

4. **When a co-chair is a supervisor of a graduate student proposal submitted to their initiative in a round, the co-chair is recused from being assigned as a reviewer of that proposal and from commenting on that proposal during the review process.**
    a. The co-chair need not recuse themselves from the entire review process and can still read or comment on other proposals, attend the review board meeting, and participate in funding decisions as long as they do not provide comment on the proposal they are supervising.
    b. This rule applies for all proposal types.
    c. This rule applies to both co-chairs in the event that both co-chairs are supervisors of different graduate student proposals in any round.
    d. We strongly encourage co-chairs to not be co-supervisors of the same graduate student proposal in a given round in their initiative. In the very rare case when it becomes completely unavoidable for both chairs to supervise the same graduate student proposal in a round of their initiative, another member of the initiative's review board will be assigned to comment and review that proposal during the review process.

March 2021 addition: Policy for partial recusals by co-chairs or other Permanent Board members

The EC approved the following proposal for partial recusals:

In certain exceptional circumstances, the EC may allow partial non-recusal. In such cases, to address potential conflict of interest when a co-chair or other Permanent Board member has a proposal under consideration but the EC has permitted them to not be recused from the full RFP round, the Board call will start with a discussion of recused proposals in the absence of the relevant co-chairs(s).

Recused individuals will join the call once the discussion has moved on to the first unaffected proposal. Final decisions on funding allocations will be done by the staff and permanent board members after all proposals have been discussed, without the recused individual's presence.

This would require adjusting the agenda for Board Calls, to group recused proposals for discussion at the start of the call, and to finalize funding decisions without the recused Board member’s input.