

# Request for Proposals: Education Research and Scale for COVID-19 Recovery

---

## Fall 2020 Round

*Updated on 12/7/20.*

J-PAL is hosting a one-time Education Research and Scale for COVID-19 Recovery request for proposals (RFP) to fund randomized evaluations and scale-ups of strategies to improve access, quality, equity, and relevance of pre-primary, primary, and post-primary education in response to the COVID-19 pandemic across low- and middle-income countries. This request for proposals will consider full research projects, pilot research projects, proposal development projects, and scale-up projects that address key questions on how best to mitigate learning loss as a result of school closures and how to continue and motivate student learning during the ongoing COVID crisis. This will be a joint round between J-PAL's [Post-Primary Education Initiative](#) and [Innovation in Government Initiative](#).

J-PAL affiliates, postdoctoral fellows, and PPE invited researchers are eligible to apply for full, pilot, and proposal development funding. PhD students who have a J-PAL affiliate on their thesis committee at their host university are eligible to apply for up to \$50,000 in pilot or proposal development funding. For scale-up projects, J-PAL affiliates, J-PAL regional offices, and IGI invited researchers are eligible to apply in collaboration with their government partners.

The Education Research and Scale for COVID-19 Recovery RFP welcomes a full range of proposals that are particularly relevant for a COVID-affected world.

For research projects, this includes but is not limited to topics such as girls' enrollment, remote and distance learning, and remedial education, as well as cross-cutting themes in gender, equity, and public/private schools. Based on evidence gaps and policy needs, we particularly welcome strong proposals in the following areas:

- Innovations in education technology designed to make remote learning more equitable and accessible during school closures;
- Policies to reduce the gender gaps in school participation and learning both during and after the COVID crisis; and
- The use of remedial education to support disadvantaged students, such as girls and disabled children, upon re-entry into schools.

For scale-up projects, we particularly welcome proposals to adapt, pilot, and scale evidence-informed innovations in education that have been previously evaluated with a randomized evaluation(s) and found to improve the lives of people living in poverty. We will prioritize partnerships that explore one or more of the following cross-cutting themes:

- Technology- and data-enabled program delivery and monitoring;
- Implementation science; and
- Cost analysis.

Application materials should be [submitted online](#) by **Sunday, December 20, 2020 at 11:59 pm ET**. If you have any questions, please email Priyanka Varma, PPE Manager, at [PPE@povertyactionlab.org](mailto:PPE@povertyactionlab.org) and/or Gaëlle Conille, IGI Manager, at [IGI@povertyactionlab.org](mailto:IGI@povertyactionlab.org).

**Background:** The COVID-19 pandemic has left an unprecedented 1.6 billion children and youth out of school,<sup>1</sup> affecting approximately 85 percent of the world's student population.<sup>2</sup> Yet even before the pandemic, 258 million children and youth of primary- and secondary-school age were out of school,<sup>3</sup> and low levels of school quality meant that even students attending school regularly were struggling to achieve basic literacy and numeracy. In Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda, for example, three-quarters of grade 3 students could not read a basic sentence in 2014. In rural India, half of students in grade 3 could not solve a two-digit subtraction problem in 2018.<sup>4</sup> Based on current projections, the share of children below minimum proficiency levels is expected to increase by 25 percent.<sup>5</sup>

Learning losses, resulting from school closures, are compounded by [inequities](#),<sup>6</sup> particularly for students who were already left behind by education systems. In response, many countries have pursued online learning during school closures as a stop gap measure. However, less than half of households in low- and middle-income countries have internet access.<sup>7</sup> With differential access to remote learning and home conditions further widening learning gaps among students, children and youth from disadvantaged backgrounds are at high risk of being left further behind.

Meanwhile, as schools slowly begin to reopen, girls and other vulnerable groups are at high risk of not returning to school. School systems must therefore both encourage school re-entry for as many students as possible, while ensuring equitable learning for all. Previous research shows that a central barrier to learning is that children enter classrooms at very different levels, many unable to keep up with curriculum. As the COVID crisis is expected to widen the gap between children with access to learning resources out of school and those without, teachers are likely to return to classes with an even wider range of students' abilities in their classrooms, making their jobs even more difficult, and risking even more children being left behind.

Finding ways to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and support school systems as they reopen is a pressing challenge that must be met in the context of severe budget constraints, insufficient crisis preparation, and persistent gender and socioeconomic gaps in many low- and middle-income countries around the world.

**Framework:** Over the past seven years, J-PAL has supported research to inform critical policy decisions in post-primary education. J-PAL's [Post Primary Education Initiative \(PPE\)](#), supported by a number of donors, including the Douglas B. Marshall, Jr. Family Foundation, Echidna Giving, Google.org, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, and the U.K. Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (formerly the U.K. Department for International Development), has aimed to fill key gaps in what is effective in secondary, vocational/entrepreneurial, and tertiary education. Notably, funding from PPE has doubled the number of randomized evaluations in post-primary education since 2013. However, many open questions remain in both post-primary education and other segments of the education landscape, from early childhood programs to technical and vocational education and training (TVET), and

---

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2020/08/sg\\_policy\\_brief\\_covid-19\\_and\\_education\\_august\\_2020.pdf](https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2020/08/sg_policy_brief_covid-19_and_education_august_2020.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/33696/148198.pdf?sequence=4&isAllowed=y>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.brookings.edu/research/beyond-reopening-schools-how-education-can-emerge-stronger-than-before-covid-19/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.povertyactionlab.org/updates/focusing-foundations-education-time-covid-19>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/future-development/2020/07/30/learning-losses-due-to-covid-19-could-add-up-to-10-trillion/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.cgdev.org/blog/more-our-database-school-closures-new-education-policies-may-be-increasing-educational>

<sup>7</sup> <https://en.unesco.org/news/new-report-global-broadband-access-undermines-urgent-need-reach-half-world-still-unconnected>

tertiary education. The COVID-19 pandemic has likely exacerbated existing questions and challenges.

Meanwhile, for more than a decade, the J-PAL network and our partners have built long-term partnerships with governments around the world to increase the use of evidence in policy, and adapt and scale programs informed by evidence. Together, we work with government partners on their policy priorities, helping to determine whether and how evidence is relevant to their context, supporting them in piloting programs leveraging this evidence, and building systems for data-enabled program delivery and monitoring. The [Innovation in Government Initiative \(IGI\)](#) believes that supporting governments during this middle phase is critical to bridge the gap between the generation of promising evidence and the effective delivery of evidence-informed programs at scale. As such, IGI aims to fund technical assistance to governments to adapt, pilot, and scale evidence-informed innovations that have been previously evaluated with a randomized evaluation(s) and found to improve the lives of people living in poverty.

**Focus:** J-PAL's one-time Education Research and Scale for COVID-19 Recovery RFP funds randomized evaluations and scale-ups of strategies to improve access, quality, equity, and relevance of pre-primary, primary, and post-primary education in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In doing so, the RFP aims to build a stronger base of evidence to inform the design of more effective (and cost-effective) education policies and programs in response to the COVID crisis. The special COVID-responsive round explicitly encourages proposals to consider both the opportunity costs of money (how do the financial resources required to implement the program compare to other possible investments?) and time (how does the time required to implement the program during the school day or outside school hours over a given duration compare to other alternative options?). We also request proposals to consider potential negative or unintended consequences of the program being evaluated when relevant, and to test for these effects to the extent possible.

The joint round focuses equally on research and scale-up projects. (See page 5 for details on the scale-up project priorities).

For *research*, J-PAL's Education Research and Scale for COVID-19 Recovery round is particularly interested in research projects evaluating the impact of the following three priority areas and three cross-cutting themes as they relate to access, quality, equity, and relevance of education:

1. **Remote and Distance Learning:** Large-scale efforts to utilize technology in support of online learning, distance education, and remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic are quickly emerging and developing. Yet despite growing interest in the potential for technology-enabled instruction to ensure remote student learning, the evidence on the impact of greater use of technology for learning is both limited and mixed. We welcome proposals that seek to close this evidence gap and answer important immediate questions, such as: How can remote and distance learning programs be used effectively to improve student learning at home? What are the key implementation issues to take into consideration with online learning (i.e., electricity or internet access, durability of devices, etc.)? What kinds of software/learning products are most effective (i.e., television, radio, laptops/computers)? What role should parents and/or caregivers take to support younger learners with technology use and online learning? Are different types of programs required for different types of skills? Will remote and distance learning exacerbate issues of inequity

where vulnerable groups or low-income populations will be excluded from or kept at the edge of educational practices and innovation? How effective are remotely-designed, tailored instruction programs in supporting student learning?

2. **Girls' Education:** Around the world, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated school participation rates, with girls particularly at high risk of not returning to school. As schools gradually begin to reopen, we particularly welcome proposals that explore three of the main barriers to girls' enrollment/re-enrollment in school that have limited evidence: (1) distance to school, (2) financial and other opportunity costs of attending school, and (3) health and safety concerns with attending school. We also encourage proposals that seek to answer key open questions in girls' education, as highlighted by the Population Council's recent literature review, including: What is the impact of better water, sanitation, and hygiene efforts in schools on girls' enrollment, particularly in light of the COVID crisis? How can schools mitigate issues of gender-based violence and create safe spaces for female participation and learning in schools? Would a well-developed life skills curriculum, practically designed to respond to real-life concerns, reduce girls' dropout rates? Which aspects of multi-component life skills programs are most effective at improving participation and learning? Does offering remedial education to support out of school girls catch up once enrolled in school encourage greater school participation and learning among girls? What role, if any, do nutrition-based interventions and the general provision of food in schools have on female enrollment rates and learning outcomes?
3. **Remedial Education:** Summer learning loss, compounded by the COVID-19 crisis and extended school closures, will likely exacerbate low learning outcomes and related learning gaps among students. As schools reopen, teaching effectively will be particularly challenging for teachers due to the overall learning loss among students, as well as the greater variation in the preparation of children and youth when they re-enter school. We welcome proposals that help us understand how to reduce the variance of achievement in classroom settings and ensure that all students are progressing.

Given the Education Research and Scale for COVID-19 Recovery round is motivated by the need to rapidly understand the most effective ways to address COVID-induced challenges, J-PAL will give preference to proposals that are relevant both during and after the crisis (i.e., how to leverage household educational engagement, what forms of remedial education are effective, how to bridge achievement gaps, etc.). As such, we welcome proposals aiming to evaluate the impact of strategies that improve other aspects of education systems to build resilience against future crises.

Three critical themes that cut across the three priority areas listed above are **gender, equity**, and **public/private schools**. Particularly in response to the ongoing pandemic, it is important to examine the gender implications of different educational programs, as well as the differences related to socioeconomic status, disability status, and other ways in which groups are marginalized. We encourage projects to expand in their proposals whether and how the research proposal addresses issues of gender and equity. Furthermore, given school closures and re-openings affect both public and private schools, J-PAL encourages proposals that aim to understand the implication of these strategies on both public and private school going populations.

For gender specifically, researchers should include a discussion in their proposals of how the intervention they are looking at may affect boys and girls differently, whether the intervention is likely to have a particular gender focus, and whether the intervention is cognizant of the potential special vulnerabilities of girls or boys. A study may also be directed narrowly at boys or girls as long as the researcher(s) justify why the intervention is specifically aimed at a particular gender. Evaluations are expected to include analysis disaggregated by gender, and we request applicants to state if the studies are powered to detect differential effects by gender.

To elaborate, J-PAL's donors are making an effort for J-PAL's Education Research and Scale for COVID-19 Recovery round to study heterogeneity in program impacts by beneficiary/participant gender more systematically. 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 post-primary education. Our reporting template will include a question on this, which researchers are encouraged to fill it 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 J-PAL team.

Overall, to ensure that studies take these themes into account where appropriate, J-PAL's Education Research and Scale for COVID-19 Recovery RFP will consider gender, equity, and public/private schools as part of the formal evaluation criteria included in the RFP and sent to Review Board members.

For *scale-up projects*, J-PAL's Education Research and Scale for COVID-19 Recovery round is particularly interested in funding technical assistance to governments to adapt, pilot, and scale evidence-informed innovations in education that have been previously evaluated with a randomized evaluation(s) and found to improve the lives of people living in poverty. Innovations can be new programs or changes to existing programs, processes, or delivery systems. Funding can be used to support technical assistance to governments at various stages in the scaling process. We will prioritize partnerships that explore one or more of the following cross-cutting themes that we believe are important for effectively implementing programs at scale and drawing general lessons for others working to scale up evidence-informed social programs with governments:

- Technology- and data-enabled program delivery and monitoring: Phones, tablets, digital transfers, and other technologies have the potential to improve and reduce the costs of program delivery and monitoring.
- Implementation science: Piloting and pressure-testing different implementation models before selecting one for scale-up can help identify models that are both feasible to implement well and lead to sufficient take-up and use among program participants.
- Cost analysis: The costs of various program options are critical inputs for policy decisions, so collecting cost data early and systematically is critical.

Research and scale-up proposals that address the themes outlined above will be prioritized, but other proposals dedicated to responding to the COVID-19 pandemic using alternate lenses will also be considered. If a researcher is uncertain about whether a research project is eligible for funding, please contact Priyanka Varma, PPE Initiative Manager, at [PPE@povertyactionlab.org](mailto:PPE@povertyactionlab.org) and/or Gaëlle Conille, IGI Manager, at [IGI@povertyactionlab.org](mailto:IGI@povertyactionlab.org).

**Funds:** In the fall round, J-PAL's Education Research and Scale for COVID-19 Recovery expects to award funding across four types of proposals:

1. ***Full Research Projects:*** These grants will generally be for a maximum amount of \$200,000 for research projects at a mature level of development. Not only must the research question be clear, but the applicants must also demonstrate a commitment from implementing partners, a method of randomization, well-defined instruments, and power calculations. The expectation is that these projects will result in a publicly available paper that is eventually submitted to a top economics or education journal.
2. ***Pilot Research Projects:*** These grants will be for a maximum amount of \$75,000. They are for studies with a clear research question and for which the design and implementation of an evaluation requires further testing and pilot data. These grants may also be for descriptive work that aims to inform future randomized evaluation development. However, in these cases, the budget should be closer to \$25,000 rather than \$75,000. Applications in this category should be for exploratory work and not simply inexpensive randomized evaluations. If a researcher applies for pilot funding from more than one J-PAL initiative, the proposal should justify (i) why the project spans both initiatives and (ii) why more than \$75,000 in funding is needed for the pilot. The expectation is that these projects will ultimately develop into full-scale randomized evaluations. For projects that do not result in a full-scale evaluation, the expectation is that these projects will produce a publicly available paper documenting insights from the pilot.
3. ***Proposal Development Projects:*** These grants will be for a maximum amount of \$10,000 for J-PAL affiliates, post-doctoral fellows, PPE invited researchers, and graduate students. They cover exploratory work (i.e., background research, partnership development, virtual visits to field sites, preliminary data collection, etc.) related to preliminary research ideas, with the eventual aim of generating full-scale randomized evaluations. The expectation is that these funds will be used to develop a proposal that addresses key open questions outlined in the Education Research and Scale for COVID-19 Recovery RFP overview document and which then could be submitted for pilot funding (up to \$75,000) during a subsequent call for proposals.
4. ***Scale-up Projects:*** These grants will generally be for a maximum of \$200,000. Awards greater than \$200,000 will be considered in special cases. These grants are for projects that adapt, pilot, and scale evidence-informed innovations that have been previously evaluated with a randomized evaluation(s). Innovations can be new programs or changes to existing programs, processes, or delivery systems. Funding can be used to support technical assistance to governments at various stages in the scaling process. For a more detailed list of activities that IGI funds, please see the general [IGI RFP overview](#). Only projects with a specific government partner(s) will be considered, and proposals should focus on priority issues that the government partner has identified. The applicants must demonstrate a

commitment from the government partner, and from any other implementing partners through letters of support. IGI prioritizes projects that are demand-driven and have high potential to contribute to evidence being used in policy decisions to scale up programs that have clear benefits for people living in poverty. In particular, we welcome applications from the government implementing partners on completed or ongoing randomized evaluations to scale up their innovations that are found to be effective. We also welcome applications to adapt, pilot, and scale evidence-informed innovations in new contexts, when appropriate.

**Eligibility:** For *full research projects*, the pool of eligible applicants is comprised of J-PAL affiliates, J-PAL post-doctoral fellows, and PPE invited researchers outside of the network who work on post-primary education and are approved by the Executive Committee of the J-PAL Board.

For *pilot research projects*, the pool of eligible researchers includes those eligible for full research projects and PhD students who have a J-PAL affiliate on their thesis committee at their host university. This adviser must provide a letter of support that indicates his/her willingness to remain involved in a supervisory role throughout the lifetime of the project and provide an objective assessment of the project's merits and likelihood of success. The Review Board also expects the adviser to provide the applicant with guidance on the proposal prior to submission.

For *proposal development grants*, eligibility includes those eligible for full studies and PhD students who have a J-PAL affiliate on their thesis committee at their host university. This adviser must provide a letter of support for the proposed exploratory work and provide an objective assessment of the project's merits and likelihood of success. The Review Board also expects the adviser to provide the applicant with guidance on the proposal prior to submission.

For *scale-up projects*, the pool of eligible applicants is comprised of J-PAL affiliates, J-PAL regional offices, and IGI invited researchers. Researchers must apply in collaboration with a government partner. For all scale-up projects, the implementing partner must be a government body or a non-governmental partner delivering services through government infrastructure (e.g. government schools, clinics, etc.) with the government actively involved in the partnership. Government partners can be national, state, regional, provincial, city, etc., including individual ministries or agencies. Governments must be the main recipients of technical assistance, but governments cannot be the receiving institutions of funds. Receiving institutions can include J-PAL offices, IPA offices, and other non-governmental partners working with J-PAL affiliated and IGI invited researchers.

All proposals may include other collaborators outside of this group, as long as the principal investigator (PI) is among those invited to participate in the RFP.

Please note that all proposal teams that are working in a country with a regional J-PAL office (see list [here](#)) or IPA country office (see list [here](#)) are encouraged to reach out to that office at least three weeks in advance of the Education Research and Scale for COVID-19 Recovery deadline in order to help prepare their application and provide a letter of office support.

**Evidence requirements for scaling projects:** *Scaling projects* must be based on evidence from one or more randomized evaluations, at least one of which should have been conducted by a J-PAL affiliate or invited researcher and/or funded by a J-PAL initiative.

The RCT results must be available in writing in a paper or other write-up. To ensure that the IGI Board has all the information needed to understand the basis for your scale-up request and to assess the quality and strength of the underlying RCT evidence that is being scaled up, we request that applicants include details on the randomized evaluations on which the project is based in their application, in any of the following formats (in order of preference):

1. Peer-reviewed published paper
2. Working paper that was released publicly at least six months prior to the date on which a project proposal is submitted to a J-PAL initiative for funding and/or the date on which a J-PAL office initiates a request to relevant decision-makers for approval to provide substantive scale support.
3. Working paper that is meaningfully publicly available
4. Working paper not yet meaningfully publicly available
5. Any other document in any format (E.g., a policy memo, a detailed PowerPoint presentation, a donor report with a convincing explanation as to why a working paper has not yet been written, and a clear and reasonably short timeline for when it will be produced)

Regardless of format, the written document should provide **sufficient detail on the design and results** of the one or more randomized evaluations on which the project is based to enable the relevant decision-makers to understand and assess the quality and strength of the evidence base underpinning the proposed scale project, including both internal and external validity.<sup>8</sup>

**Applications:** Applications for full/pilot grants, proposal development grants, and scale-up projects must be [submitted online](#) by **Sunday, December 20, 2020 at 11:59 pm ET**.

In addition, when submitting a proposal to the Education Research and Scale for COVID-19 Recovery RFP, applicants should:

- Attach a letter of support from their partner (intervention-implementing organization). Letters of support from all implementing partners should indicate willingness to work with the research team, and for full/pilot projects only, willingness to share program cost data with J-PAL (through the PI) for the purpose of conducting the program's cost analysis.
- Attach a letter of support from their J-PAL regional office or IPA country office, when applicable, indicating willingness to work with the research team to provide support on their project.

---

<sup>8</sup> Contents that would be useful for the relevant decision makers to make their decisions include: (i) Description of context, intervention, RCT design, and data sources, (ii) Balance tables, (iii) First stage regression results (if design requires strong first stage), (iv) ITT regression results for at least one primary outcome, robust to different specifications, including standard errors for construction of confidence intervals, (v) Checks for and responses to any threats to randomization: differential attrition, spillovers, etc. , (vi) Interpretation of results, (vii) An assessment of and considerations relevant to the generalizability of the evidence to the context (broadly defined) in which the proposed project is to take place, (viii) Policy implications/recommendations.



- For full/pilot research projects only, concurrently apply for approval from their respective Institutional Review Boards (Human Subjects Committees). The award of any grant is contingent on approval from the host institution's IRB (unless that IRB defers to the judgment of MIT's IRB), as well as the IRB at MIT, the Committee On the Use of Humans as Experimental Subjects (COUHES).
- For full/pilot research projects only, submit the application to their office of sponsored programs or contracts department, as MIT will need official acceptance of the proposal and budget by the applicant's institution to process the sub-award. Applicants can do this after submitting to the Review Board, but doing so before the award decision will lessen delays.

**Grants Conditions:** Recipients of **full or pilot research funds and scale projects** will be asked to:

1. Peer-review proposals in future RFP rounds in which they are not applying for funding.
2. Collect and report to J-PAL cost data that are sufficient to conduct a cost-effectiveness analysis. J-PAL's Education Research and Scale for COVID-19 Recovery team will provide a cost-collection template to projects selected for funding, and applicants are encouraged to budget for these activities at the outset.
3. Publish de-identified data to a trusted digital repository. For more information and the timeline for publication, please see the [J-PAL Data Publication Policy](#). J-PAL's research team will work with you to clean, label, and document datasets collected as part of a randomized trial before publishing them in the [J-PAL dataverse](#) or another data repository of your choice. Requests for data publication services can be submitted [here](#).
4. Share data collection instruments and methodologies.
5. For full and pilot projects only, register the trial with the AEA RCT Registry (<https://www.socialscienceregistry.org/>) prior to beginning RCT fieldwork. Registration includes 18 required fields (such as applicant's name and a small subset of applicant's IRB requirements), with the entire process taking less than 20 minutes if all documentation is in order. There is also the opportunity to include more information, including power calculations and an optional pre-analysis plan. The Initiatives will contact grantees at the start of fieldwork to request the assigned registration number. For questions and support with the registry, please contact Keesler Welch at [keesler@mit.edu](mailto:keesler@mit.edu).
6. Provide brief annual progress reports and a final narrative and financial report within 60 days (for pilot projects) and 120 days (for full projects) of completion of the award period. The Education Research and Scale for COVID-19 Recovery team will follow up one year after the award is made to provide the necessary narrative and financial reporting templates.
7. For full and pilot projects only, produce a publicly available paper describing the intervention, study design, analysis, and results that can be posted on the J-PAL website, ideally within six months of the project end date.

8. Participate in one of J-PAL’s activities on a mutually agreed date and place. This activity could be an evidence workshop, a webinar, a matchmaking conference, or a presentation to one of J-PAL’s donors.
9. Credit the J-PAL’s Education Research and Scale for COVID-19 Recovery fund in any presentations and publications, including academic papers, policy briefs, press releases, blogs, and organizational newsletters that emerge from the project.

Recipients of **proposal development funds** will be required to submit a brief progress report after completing scoping<sup>9</sup> and participate in one of J-PAL’s activities.

**Review Process:** Selection of awardees for all applications will follow a two-stage process:

1. Proposals will be distributed for peer review to referees selected from a roster of researchers and donors focused on education research and policy. Each application will be reviewed by at least three referees. Reviewers will remain anonymous to applicants. Reviewers may use their own judgment when contacting others for assistance with proposal content.

To avoid conflicts of interest, those submitting proposals will not be part of the review roster for the round. However, they may be asked to volunteer in subsequent rounds, whether they are awarded the funds or not. No spouse, partner, or immediate family member 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.

2. Proposals will be scored using the evaluation criteria and then ranked by members of the Review Board. Funding decisions will be made in a meeting of the Review Board.

If an applicant would like to appeal a decision of the Review Board, he/she may contact Priyanka Varma, PPE Initiative Manager, at [PPE@povertyactionlab.org](mailto:PPE@povertyactionlab.org) and/or Gaëlle Conille, IGI Manager, at [IGI@povertyactionlab.org](mailto:IGI@povertyactionlab.org) within one week of the funding decision. This appeal will then be communicated to the Review Board.

**Timeline**

Week of November 9, 2020	Education Research & Scale for COVID-19 Recovery RFP Released
Sunday, December 20, 2020	Proposal Submission Deadline
Week of January 29, 2021	Peer Review Deadline
Week of February 8, 2021	Review Board Meeting
Week of February 15, 2021	Funding Decisions Announced
Week of March 1, 2021	Revise and Resubmit Deadline
Week of March 15, 2021	Revise and Resubmit Decisions Announced

---

<sup>9</sup> If the proposal development grant leads to the development of a pilot research project, grantees will be requested to submit annual progress reports.

**Administrative Notes: Budgets, Requirements, and Process**

Full and pilot research grants are provided under an award from MIT to the grantee's host institution. Proposal Development grants and scale-up grants are generally paid as reimbursements. For more information on budget, requirements, and process, along with related application materials, please visit [here](#).