

## K-CAI FALL 2021 RFP

Full and Pilot Research Proposals Application Form and Instructions

### INSTRUCTIONS

Proposals for K-CAI research funding for full-scale randomized evaluations<sup>1</sup> and pilots<sup>2</sup> consist of (i) basic contact and logistical information; (ii) a proposal narrative; (iii) a budget; and (iv) letters of support. Please note that full proposals are due by **11:59 pm ET on October 19, 2021**. Applicants are **required to submit a letter of interest** by 11:59 pm ET on September 21 before submitting a full proposal.

**Please note:** J-PAL initiatives, including K-CAI, have transitioned to using an online portal system for all proposal submissions and reviews, as well as for grantee reporting. All registration and application instructions can be found on [K-CAI's webpage](#). The K-CAI team will notify you via our online portal once we have received your letter of interest and you are clear to submit a full proposal. In the interim, to facilitate your proposal development, we have provided reference documents, like this one, that outline in detail all required information that applicants will be asked to provide when submitting a research or scaling proposal to K-CAI. You are welcome to begin drafting your proposal materials using these forms, as the fields and content included in these reference documents will be required in the portal system. Please do not complete or submit these reference documents to K-CAI for consideration.

Questions? Please reach out to [kcai@povertyactionlab.org](mailto:kcai@povertyactionlab.org).

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that the total amount awarded to a single project, including any K-CAI funding for full or pilot studies, will not exceed \$400,000.

<sup>2</sup> Please note that full evaluations requesting less than \$75,000 are considered full research projects and evaluated accordingly. The criteria for pilot funding apply only to proposals requesting funds to conduct piloting, or pre-randomization, activities.

## COVERSHEET AND NARRATIVE

### SECTION: COVERSHEET

Please note that all fields are required.

TITLE OF PROPOSAL		COUNTRY
J-PAL AFFILIATED OR K-CAI INVITED RESEARCHER(S)		
INSTITUTION TO RECEIVE FUNDS (J-PAL REGIONAL OFFICE, IPA COUNTRY OFFICE, OR ANOTHER RESEARCH OR NGO PARTNER)*		
NON-J-PAL CO-PI(s) (Institutional Affiliation)		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><i>By checking this box, all J-PAL affiliates and K-CAI invited researchers who are co-PIs on this project certify that they will be active, engaged, and responsive PIs dedicated to guaranteeing the quality control on all aspects of this project; and that their participation in this project is not merely to provide access to J-PAL resources and funding to anyone else working on this project who is neither a J-PAL affiliate nor K-CAI invited researcher.</i></p>	
IMPLEMENTING PARTNER(S)	CONTACT (NAME, EMAIL, PHONE)	
CO-FUNDER(S)	FUNDED AWARD (PI, Project Title, Amount)	
Have you submitted this or a related proposal to any other J-PAL funding initiative?		

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No [Select One]		If yes, which initiative and when? [Look-Up]	
<b>K-CAI FUNDING REQUEST</b> <b>Focus Area:</b> Mitigation <input type="checkbox"/> Adaptation <input type="checkbox"/> Pollution Reduction <input type="checkbox"/> Energy Access <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Award Type:</b> Pilot (up to \$75,000) <input type="checkbox"/> RCT (up to \$400,000) <input type="checkbox"/>			
Requested	\$	Total co-funded	\$
<b>GRANT PERIOD</b>			
Start date: (yyyy-mm-dd)		End date: (yyyy-mm-dd)	
Institution to receive award*		Contact for contracting issues	
<i>Some projects will not be conducting research involving human subjects. However, if this project will involve research on human subjects, please fill out the two boxes below.</i>			
IRB OF RECORD		IRB CONTACT	
We are also in touch with other funders and occasionally share proposals that are relevant to their interests. If you <b>do not</b> want this proposal shared with them, please check this box: <input type="checkbox"/>			

\* Please indicate the institution that will actually receive the grant funds. If this project is taking place in a country that has a J-PAL or an IPA office but these organizations are not the host institutions, please provide a comment detailing why in your proposal narrative.

### SECTION: NARRATIVE

**Instructions:** Please include a short response (12pt font, single spaced) to each of the following sub-sections. Questions with asterisks (\*) are required.

**Abstract:** Please provide an abstract of the proposed research project(s). This will be added to K-CAI's webpage if the project receives funding. \*

**The problem and opportunity:** A summary of the context and policy problem/opportunity that motivates this research, including the available evidence of the problem in this context, and how it fits with the research priorities at the nexus of climate change and poverty identified in the K-CAI RFP Overview. \*

**The innovation:** A description of the intervention to be evaluated and how it could potentially improve one or more of the K-CAI priority outcomes and benefit people living in poverty. Innovations can be introducing new or making changes to existing programs, processes, technologies, or delivery systems. \*

**Research design:** Please describe how this research will advance the academic literature such as potential market failures this research seeks to address, or the underlying economic model you will use/analyze. Describe the evaluation design, including how you intend to measure one or more of the K-CAI priority outcomes. \*

**K-CAI outcomes:** Which of the four K-CAI focus areas does this project under? \*[*Select one:* climate change mitigation, climate change adaptation, pollution reduction, energy access]

**The target population and context:** A brief description of the target population to be reached and any comments on the alignment with K-CAI's goals to target either communities most vulnerable to climate change or those responsible for the highest emitters. \*

**The partnership:** A brief description of the implementing partner (or partners), the history of the partnership, the partner's involvement in project activities, and any in-kind or financial support they have committed or provided to the project. Please include any potential risks to the partnership. \*

**Power calculations (required of full studies only):** \* *full studies only*

**Potential risks:** Please answer the following questions below in detail.\*

- Are there any technical, logistical, or political obstacles and risks that might threaten the completion of the study (for example, implementation capacity, government authorization, or other funding) and how does your team plan to address/overcome them?
- Are there any COVID-related risks to the feasibility of the project? How will your team prepare for and mitigate these risks?
- Are there any risks of unintended negative consequences of the intervention and/or research for program participants and/or staff and if so, what are they? What proactive measures has your team taken to assess, monitor, and mitigate/prevent any such potential risks?

**Gender:** A comment on whether the research proposal addresses gender issues in any way, including analysis disaggregated by gender. Please note that funded projects will be required to collect and report on gender-disaggregated data, as outlined in K-CAI’s RFP Overview under the “Grant Conditions” section. \*

**Potential to inform policy decisions and/or scale-ups (required of full studies only):** A comment on whether the project has the potential to inform policy or program design, expansion, and/or implementation decisions and whether the program costs and impacts may be suitable for a cost effectiveness analysis. \**full studies only*

**Data publication (required of full studies only):** A comment on whether you plan to publish data collected in an open-access, online database at the end of the evaluation. Note that data publication is required for any project funded by a J-PAL initiative. \**full studies only*

**Additional information:** A discussion of the other evaluation criteria (listed at the end of this document), if not already addressed in the narrative.

## BUDGET

**Instructions:** Please submit a detailed project budget using the Excel template [available online](#). To reduce the processing time, please keep the following in mind when developing your budget: \*

1. If there is co-funding for the project, you must complete both the “Total Project Budget” and the “K-CAI Budget” sheets in the budget template.
2. Awards are normally paid on a cost-reimbursable basis.
3. Applications must include budget notes in the column provided in the budget template, detailing the major costs within the budget. For example, “Travel Costs” should include a breakdown of how many trips are planned, the estimated cost per trip, etc. “Field Costs” should include a breakdown of the number of respondents, cost per respondent, etc.
4. Universities in high-income countries, generally defined as OECD member countries, can charge up to 10% in indirect costs, applied to total direct costs. Independent non-profits from any location and universities from mid- or low-income countries may charge up to 15% in indirect costs, applied to total direct costs.
5. We understand that the cap on overhead or indirect costs under K-CAI is low and that grantees may have reasonable project support costs included in budgets as direct costs. Such costs should be reasonable and explained in the budget notes.
6. Any computer/equipment purchases should include a breakdown of what is being purchased, (e.g. how many laptops), as well as the project staff that will be assigned to the equipment.
7. Unallowable costs include those labeled as “incidental,” “miscellaneous,” or “contingency.” Any costs for rent should be explained in the budget notes.
8. Please note that K-CAI does not cover PI salaries.
9. Project Implementation Costs: For full research projects, program/intervention implementation costs are expected to be borne by the project partners. However, under some circumstances where implementation costs are significantly increased due to the research design, for example a randomized encouragement design, and/or there is high potential for the research to inform a real-world program or policy, K-CAI may fund implementation.

Proposals requesting funds for implementation are required to explain why the implementer cannot bear the costs in their budget.

10. It is your responsibility that your budget follows your host institution's policies for costs. As part of your proposal, you must submit a letter from the institution to receive the award that states that they have reviewed your proposal and accept your budget. Please see detailed instructions under Letters of Support below. If the organization allows you to submit your proposal without such a letter (due to time constraints or some other reason), please note this on the Proposal Cover Sheet (under the "Institution to receive grant funds" field). Please note that this applies to all projects, including those going through J-PAL and IPA offices. You should contact J-PAL and IPA offices in advance to make sure you are aware of their policies for proposal review.

## LETTERS OF SUPPORT

**Instructions:** Please provide the following letters of support, as applicable.

- Full projects are required to provide a letter of support from implementing partners. \*
- Applicants for pilot funding are encouraged to submit letters of support if available.
- If available, applicants should also include letters of support from potential scale-up partners.
- PhD students are required to include a letter of support from a J-PAL affiliate or K-CAI invited researcher who is an adviser on their dissertation committee at their host university. The letter should indicate the adviser's willingness to remain involved over the project's lifetime and should generally come from the same adviser who supported the student's initial K-CAI travel/proposal development grant application if applicable. Graduate students who are applying for pilot or full study funding but have not previously applied for K-CAI travel/proposal development grants must also include documented evidence of successful pilot activities. Please note that in some cases, due to restrictions at the institution that will receive the funding awarded, the adviser may

be asked to add his or her name to the subaward and IRB documents.

- Applicants must provide a letter from the receiving institution of the award to show that they have reviewed your proposal and accept your budget. Please follow the MIT approved language for the Letter of Transmission as follows:
  - a. **Example language for Letter of Transmission when there is a PI at the ITRA:** (On ITRA letterhead)
 

<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. In this role, he/she is responsible for the implementation of this project in accordance with this proposal and with appropriate research and data protection practices. Please contact him/her with any concerns which may arise related to project implementation.
  - b. **Example language for Letter of Transmission when there is no PI at the ITRA:** (On ITRA letterhead)
 

<ITRA> is pleased to support the <Name of research> proposal and submitted budget. <ITRA> takes full responsibility for the appropriate and responsible conduct of the proposed research activities related to the scope of work for this project under the academic direction of the co-PIs: <names of co-PIs plus their affiliation - eg: Jane Doe from Duke University>. Please contact me <this will be the person who signs the letter> with any concerns which may arise related to project implementation.

## ANNEX I: EVALUATION CRITERIA

For full and pilot applications, K-CAI will consider the following general criteria in making funding decisions:

Criterion	Scale	Help text <i>Excellent = 4; Above average = 3; Below average = 2; Poor = 1</i>
Innovation	1-4	<p>Will the research make new contributions to the body of knowledge relevant to the proposed research question? Does it answer new and challenging questions, or introduce novel methods or measures?</p> <p>Is the policy / program being evaluated novel and innovative?</p>



Technical Merit	1-4	<p>Is the research designed effectively to answer proposed questions, and is the research question well-articulated? Are the indicators, timeline, and sample size estimates appropriate, given the outcomes to be measured?</p> <p>Consider the potential threats to the internal validity of the study. Does the proposal sufficiently address those threats?</p> <p>(For full RCTs) Do the power calculations convincingly demonstrate the ability to detect each of the proposed impacts to be measured?</p>
Policy Relevance	1-4	<p>Has the proposal convincingly argued the importance of the evidence gap for policy? And is it likely that the study will engage and provide valuable information to stakeholders to affect change at scale?</p> <p>Is there potential for the study to answer questions relevant for other policymakers and practitioners beyond the implementing partner? (E.g. will the results speak to commonly used approaches?)</p>
	1-4	<p><i>Commitment to speed:</i> Does the proposal instill confidence in the researchers' commitment to timely sharing of interim outputs and final results with implementing and/or policy partners?</p> <p>Does the proposal identify explicit strategies to create opportunities for the partners and others to learn from results quickly? (E.g. use of high-frequency / non-survey data sources, strategies to measure impacts on intermediate outcomes?)</p>
	1-4	<p><i>Path to use of results:</i> Does the proposal discuss potential programming or scale up decisions that the research could inform? Does the partner seem committed to using results?</p> <p>Is there potential for this evaluation to inform a scale-up proposal to K-CAI?</p>
Alignment with K-CAI measures of success	1-4	<p><i>Potential to benefit people in poverty:</i> Does the proposal make a good case for why answering the proposed research question and the proposed intervention has the potential to generate benefits for people living in poverty?</p>

	Yes / No	<p><i>Tracking impacts:</i> Does the proposal discuss which K-CAI metrics will be collected? Is the methodology for calculating these impacts appropriate?</p> <p>K-CAI requires grantees to track one or more of the following: CO<sub>2</sub> emissions; co-pollutant emissions; CO<sub>2</sub> or co-pollutant emissions averted; welfare gains or averted damages from adaptation; affordability and reliability of energy sources.</p>
Logistical Viability	1-4	<p>Do the partners seem appropriate for the project and is the relationship likely to endure through the entire study? Does the proposal convincingly address technical, logistical, or political obstacles and risks that might threaten the completion of the study (for example, implementation capacity, government authorization, or other funding)?</p> <p>Are the risks of unintended negative consequences for program participants and staff minimal? Has the team taken proactive measures to assess, monitor, and mitigate/prevent any such potential risks?</p>
Overall Recommendation for Funding	1-4	<p>Do you recommend this proposal for funding given your overall review, and particularly your assessment of its “value for money?”</p> <p><i>Scoring:</i>  Fund without hesitation = 4  Fund if nothing better (meets the bar, but is not an outstanding value for money) = 3  Would not fund (just below the bar) = 2  Strongly opposed to funding = 1</p>

## ANNEX II: ADMINISTRATIVE NOTES

The process MIT follows for K-CAI awards is:

- The Initiative Board sends an official award notification letter.
- If not already submitted, you will need to provide formal institutional approval of the proposal and your institutional IRB approval.
- For proposals involving Human Subjects, in most cases, MIT will cede oversight to your institutional IRB through an Institutional

Review Board Authorization Agreement (IAA) or through Reliance Smart IRB. In certain cases, approval from MIT's IRB will also be required. We will assist with that process if needed.

- J-PAL informs the MIT contracts office of the award.
- MIT establishes a purchase order with your institution.

We aim to set up the purchase order within 60 days of receiving all your 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 award and we may in some cases be able to cover those costs (post-award, but pre-IRB) under the award.

The full reporting requirements for a K-CAI award will be outlined in detail in your award letter. For all projects, these will include: brief annual progress reports and semiannual financial reports, a final project and financial report including a brief narrative, and any relevant testimony or documents showing whether evidence from randomized evaluations contributed to any decisions, data publication (for RCTs only), crediting K-CAI in publicly available outputs, and participating in one of K-CAI's activities on a mutually-agreed date and place. In addition to these requirements, scale-up and research projects will be required to collect and report (i) program cost data sufficient to conduct a cost effectiveness analysis, and (ii) implementation details sufficient to promote the scale-up of an effective program in a new context.