MEL Award Requirements and Set Up Process

Last updated May 2025

This document lays out how, if your proposal is accepted for award, the funding will be provided under an award from UM6P to your institution to receive the award (ITRA). Please review these requirements in detail as part of preparing your submission. MEL expects applicants to budget sufficient time and money to meet these grant conditions and processes. If funds are disbursed directly through MEL-UM6P without involving your host institution, certain steps in the following process may not apply.

For further questions or support, please email mel\_morocco@povertyactionlab.org.

# Process

The procedure for processing awards is as follows:

1. MEL-UM6P staff send an official award notification letter.
2. If funds are not disbursed directly through MEL, UM6P will issue the funds to your institution. You will need to provide the following materials in order to receive the funds:
   1. Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval or exemption; the IRB protocol that was reviewed; and copies of any IRB approved consent forms and/or survey instruments.
      1. The protection of human subjects is of prime concern when implementing research projects. As such, appropriate protocol IRB approvals or exemptions are required to be in place prior to a subaward being issued and research commencing. 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). It is strongly recommended that, in anticipation of receiving an MEL award, applicants secure approval from an IRB Organization ([IORG](https://ohrp.cit.nih.gov/search/search.aspx?styp=bsc)) for any human subjects protocol required to implement your project. MEL requires that the reviewing IRB have [IORG status](https://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/register-irbs-and-obtain-fwas/irb-registration/irb-organizations/index.html) with the US Office of Human Protections. An IRB’s status can be found by consulting the database of IORGs [here](https://ohrp.cit.nih.gov/search/search.aspx?styp=bsc).
         1. For commercial IRBs, MEL recommends [Heartland](https://heartlandirb.org/) and [Solutions](https://www.solutionsirb.com/), which provide review of international research and satisfy MEL's IRB requirements; fees can be found on their respective websites. If the project is exempt from IRB approval, we will need the exemption status but no other action is required.
         2. If you will need to secure IRB review through a commercial IRB, you may include these costs in the budgeted request to MEL.
   2. A concise 1-2 page summary of the research, tailored for a general audience, should encompass key details about the research location, project timeline, and alignment with MEL’s objectives.
   3. A letter of transmission from your ITRA on formal letterhead.
      1. Please use the following language in the letter: *The <name of ITRA> is pleased to support the <title of research> proposal and will plan on carrying out the work in accordance with the submitted budget. <name of PI> will serve as <name of ITRA>’s Principal Investigator for this work. The <name of ITRA> takes full responsibility for the actions and well-being of the <name of PI> 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 <name of PI> at <email of PI>. For administrative or contractual issues, please contact <name of ITRA’s grant manager> at <email of ITRA’s grant manager>.*
   4. Curriculum vitae for each member of the research team.
   5. Copy of the institute's commercial registration, dated within the last 3 months.
   6. Bank details of the ITRA.
3. MEL requests the subaward agreement from UM6P’s legal team.
4. UM6P’s legal team establishes a subaward with your institution.

We aim to complete this process within 60 days of receiving all your materials, but delays on the part of UM6P or your host institution may delay the process. We can backdate, if feasible, 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 after receiving an award, and we may in some cases be able to cover those costs (post-award, but pre-IRB) under the award.

# Expected deliverables submission timeline

The deliverables and reports described below will be due based on the following timeline.

* **Before submitting the proposal:** Read the [Code of Conduct for the J-PAL Community](https://www.povertyactionlab.org/page/code-conduct-j-pal-community).
* **Six weeks after the project’s start date:** Grantees submit a brief start-up report, describing the initial stage(s) of the funded project and whether there are any delays in the implementation of the project activities.
* **Annually:** Grantees submit (1) a financial update on spending relative to the project budget, and (2) a brief narrative report on project implementation. The annual narrative reports require costing data if applicable and feasible.
* **Within 60 days of project concluding:** Grantees submita final financial report and a final narrative report. Where appropriate and feasible, considering local contexts, legal frameworks, regulations, and other potential restrictions, grantees may be required to share administrative data, including gender data (if applicable), obtained during the project with the MEL. Any confidential data for which the data provider or relevant stakeholders do not authorize sharing will not be requested by the MEL. Any submitted data to MEL should be cleaned and anonymized, in line with J-PAL’s [Data\_code\_availability\_policy\_2020.pdf](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1RICnpeB48Zvyd4AxbuSV7gwUcTxPNem1/view?usp=drive_link).

**Timely submission of reports is very important.** MEL staff will send reminders to you one month in advance of reporting due dates. **Please note that researchers whose projects are more than 30 days late on any reports or other deliverables to any J-PAL Initiative or Lab, including MEL, and who have not received an approved extension, will not be eligible to have new projects funded by J-PAL.**

As the need arises, we may ask MEL-funded researchers to:

* Share data collection instruments and methodologies with other grantees, if non confidential.
* Participate in one of the lab’s policy outreach activities on a mutually agreed date and place. This activity could be an evidence workshop, a matchmaking conference, or a presentation to a MEL partner.

# Institute To Receive the Award (ITRA) requirements

MEL requires that, for any new subaward issued by UM6P, there be a PI on the project who is employed by the organization receiving the funds (also known as the Institute to Receive the Award, or ITRA). 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.

# Trial registration

For pilots involving randomization, before starting work, researchers must register the project with the [AEA RCT Registry](http://www.socialscienceregistry.org). Registration includes 18 required fields (such as your name and a small subset of your IRB requirements), and the entire process should take 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. Grantees are required to submit proof of AEA registration with their six weeks Start-up Report. Please note that registration is only required for pilots involving randomization. For questions and support with the registry, please contact the help desk (support@socialscienceregistry.org).

# 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 internal narrative reports that J-PAL grantees provide to J-PAL and does not extend to any academic (working) paper or online J-PAL summary.

Many studies funded by J-PAL initiatives and labs 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 narrative 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 determining potential pooled statistical analyses to conduct across studies and generate gender-related policy lessons. 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.

# Data publication

Where appropriate and feasible, considering local contexts, legal frameworks, regulations, and other potential restrictions, grantees may be required to submit data to J-PAL within 3 years of the completion of data collection. J-PAL has services you can access, such as preparing the data and code, replicating results and tables, and uploading data for publication. In special circumstances, such as a delay in publication, researchers may request J-PAL embargo the data for up to five years, with the understanding that it will be released simultaneously at paper publication. If data is held by J-PAL under an embargo agreement, we will ask researchers each year whether the dataset has been made available. If there is no response, J-PAL will keep the embargo. In the fifth year following data collection, the presumption is that J-PAL will share the data. J-PAL will again ask the researcher if the dataset can be made public. If there is no response, the dataset will be made public. Further details outlining when a dataset should be published and which data should be published are available in [J-PAL’s Guidelines for Data Publication](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1RICnpeB48Zvyd4AxbuSV7gwUcTxPNem1/view?usp=drive_link), adopted September 2020.