WORKER PROSPERITY INITIATIVE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)
PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS

This document outlines the steps to submit a proposal. Please also review the "Evaluation Criteria" document for how we make funding decisions, and the "Grant Requirements" document for what's required if the proposal is funded.

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RFP OVERVIEW

FOCUS OF THE RFP

J-PAL North America's Worker Prosperity Initiative RFP (formerly called the Work of the Future Initiative) supports randomized evaluations of strategies and innovations to increase opportunities for workers, reduce the economic barriers and social challenges in labor markets, and address the problems associated with the changing nature of work. These strategies and innovations may be related to:

- Retraining, reskilling, and sectoral employment;
- Alternative approaches for certifying skills and vouching for worker quality
- Supporting worker transitions and displaced workers;
- Organizational best practices that benefit workers, e.g. by improving skills, earnings, or employment prospects;

- Interactions between the gig economy and workers, including the impact of gig work on well-being and the provision of benefits and protections in the gig economy and other non-traditional work arrangements;
- The role of caregivers in the economy and the impacts of care work on economic mobility;
- Policies and practices that can aim to support entrepreneurs from all backgrounds and/or increase economic resiliency of entrepreneurs and small businesses.

This list is not exhaustive: any proposal that explores forward-looking mechanisms for facilitating skills acquisition, job finding, employment stability, earnings and productivity growth, individual entrepreneurship, or work-life balance is potentially in scope. If you have questions about the scope of the RFP, please contact Toby Chaiken (tchaiken@povertyactionlab.org).

RFP Timeline

Worker Prosperity Initiative RFP Opens	March 30, 2022
Worker Prosperity Initiative RFP Full Proposals Due	June 8, 2022
Funding Decisions Announced	August 8, 2022

Send all proposal materials to workerprosperity@povertyactionlab.org by 5pm ET on June 8, 2022
Questions? Email initiative staff, workerprosperity@povertyactionlab.org

PROPOSAL TYPES

J-PAL North America funds randomized controlled trials (RCTs) or early stage projects with strong potential to lead to RCTs within North America. If your study does not take place within North America, you may be eligible to apply to initiatives based at other J-PAL offices. If you have any further questions about the eligibility of your project for J-PAL North America funding, please contact workerprosperity@povertyactionlab.org.

FULL RESEARCH PROJECTS

Full research projects are typically awarded $150,000 to $250,000, with a **maximum budget of $400,000**. **The award period may be up to three years.** A full project proposal is one where applicants:

- Can propose a clear and well-developed research question
- Can provide detailed randomization design and power calculations (see below)
- Can indicate outcomes of interest
- Can provide proof of commitment from partner organizations (in the form of letters of support)

Full project proposals may be submitted for an ongoing study that has already begun without J-PAL North America funding.

PILOT STUDIES

Pilot studies may be awarded a **maximum of $50,000**. **The award period may be up to three years.** A pilot proposal is one where applicants:

- Seek to answer a particular research question but the design and implementation require further testing and development before a full project launches
- Can clearly explain how the pilot will lead to a randomized evaluation in the future, although random assignment does not necessarily need to occur during the pilot
- Pilot funds may also be used for activities intended to facilitate access to administrative data for designing or conducting an RCT.

RESEARCH MANAGEMENT SUPPORT (RMS) [FORMERLY SHORT TERM RESEARCH MANAGEMENT (STREaM)]

Researchers are strongly encouraged to apply for Research Management Support (RMS) when submitting their proposals. This program provides **around six months of research management support** from experienced J-PAL North America staff **for either full studies or pilots.** Support may include activities such as coordinating communication across stakeholders; refining randomization design and consent procedures; piloting design and implementation; and study implementation monitoring. More information can be found on the website, or by contacting NA_RMS@povertyactionlab.org.

TRAVEL/PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

Researchers may be awarded a **maximum of $5,000 for one year.** Grants are to be used for early-stage research activities which may include travel, exploring access to administrative data, or other costs incurred while conducting field work. Travel/proposal development grants are **paid by direct reimbursement to the PI and cannot cover any activity that requires review by an IRB.**

To apply, please submit the J-PAL North America Travel/Project Development Grant Application.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

J-PAL affiliates, J-PAL post-doctoral fellows, and researchers invited by J-PAL North America (invited researchers) to participate in the initiative are eligible to apply for funding of any type. Applicants may submit a maximum of three proposals per 12-month period to a single initiative. PI and co-PI status are counted towards this limit.

GRADUATE STUDENTS

To apply, graduate students must meet the following criteria:

- They have a J-PAL affiliate on their thesis committee. The affiliate does not need to be based at the same university as the student. Note: having an invited researcher on a student's thesis committee **does not** satisfy this criterion.
    - Pre-thesis PhD students may apply if they anticipate an affiliate will be on their thesis committee and the affiliate will supervise the proposed project.
- To apply for full funding, graduate students must have previously received a grant from J-PAL for the same evaluation or have documented evidence of successful piloting activities. Note, for graduate students the total amount of funding they may receive across time is capped at $50,000 per initiative, regardless of the number of projects funded

1. Cover sheet

2. 5-page narrative
- The narrative should address each of the points listed in the "Proposal Evaluation Criteria" document. If necessary to fully address the guiding questions on Ethics and Risks, please include an addendum (details under 2A).
- The narrative should begin with an abstract of 150-200 words. The abstract should include information on the research question, hypotheses, intervention, (potential) sample size, and outcomes.
- The narrative may not exceed five pages in length. References are not included in page count.
- Please save the narrative as a Word document, titled *[PI Name]_[Topic Name].doc(x)*.

2A. Optional: Potential Ethical Risks
- If included, please respond to the following questions found **here**.
- Please save the addendum in the same document as the full narrative, using the same formatting conventions. Label the relevant section, "Addendum on Ethics and Risks."
- The addendum may not exceed 1 page in length, for a total combined document of no more than six pages.

3. Budget
- Please upload as an Excel workbook, titled *[PI Name]_[Topic Name].xls(x)*
- Please carefully review the "instructions" tab of the budget template for guidance on what to include in the proposal budget.

4. Budget narrative
- Please provide justification for the expenses requested in your budget.
- Please save the budget narrative as a Word document, titled *[PI Name]_Budget Narrative_[Topic Name].doc(x)*.

5. Letter(s) of support
- Full projects are required to provide a letter of support from implementation partners. Applicants for pilot funding are encouraged, but not required, to submit letters of support.
- Letters of support should indicate willingness to share cost data, when appropriate.

6. Optional: Questionnaire for Research Management Support (RMS)
- Fill out the questionnaire here if you are interested in working with a research manager through Research Management Support.

7. [Graduate students only]: Letter of support from the J-PAL affiliate on your thesis committee

- Pre-thesis students are required to submit a formal letter of confirmation from an affiliate that explicitly states: "I am actively responsible for supervising this project/research and anticipate being on the student's thesis committee."
- Students with a thesis committee in place should submit a letter in which the J-PAL affiliate attests to being on the committee.
- Pilot or full proposals submitted by graduate students must also reference the student's prior travel/proposal development grant and /or document successful piloting activities.

REVIEW PROCESS

Proposals are reviewed by two peer reviewers from J-PAL's academic network. After peer review, the Worker Prosperity Initiative Review Board reviews each proposal and makes all funding decisions. All applicants will receive redacted comments from the referees.

IMPORTANT NOTES

- The same proposal (or different versions of the same proposal) may **not** be submitted to multiple J-PAL North America RFPs simultaneously unless given explicit permission to do so.
- Applicants **must have IRB approval or exemption** before MIT can establish a subaward agreement to set up funding.
- MIT requires an **official acceptance of the proposal and budget by your institution to set up the subaward.** Applicants are encouraged to submit the proposal to their office of sponsored programs or contracts department prior to the award decision to avoid delays and ensure that your institute will accept your proposal and proposal budget.
- Please see the Grant Requirements document for more detailed information about post-award requirements.

ADDITIONAL STEPS FOR OFF-CYCLE PROPOSALS

In rare cases, proposals facing time constraints due to factors outside their control may apply to the RFP off-cycle. Off-cycle proposals will face the same scrutiny as proposals submitted during the RFP round, and must include a justification for off-cycle submission.

SPECIAL NOTE: COVID-19

1. Proposals should discuss any COVID-related risks to the ethics and feasibility of the project, and share how the team will mitigate these risks in the proposal narrative. If significant amounts of the proposal budget include in-person activities (such as travel), please include a discussion of potential changes to how and when funds will be spent if the proposed project is paused, modified, or dissolved because of Covid-19 related disruptions.
2. If funded, J-PAL expects PI to proactively consult and comply with all local, state, and federal guidelines to ensure the safety of study personnel and participants.