**Application Form and Instructions**

Travel/Project Development Grants

*J-PAL North America (J-PAL NA) funds randomized evaluations of social policies in the region, and has two regular funding cycles per year for full research projects and pilot studies. J-PAL NA is announcing additional funding dedicated to exploratory work that shows promise for developing into a randomized evaluation.* ***Applications for travel/project development grants are due by 5PM EST on Friday, February 12, 2016.***

**Background:** The creation and dissemination of rigorous empirical evidence is an essential ingredient for high-quality academic research and effective public policy. Policymakers at all levels of government, as well as in the private sector, are constantly proposing or considering new policies. Yet they are often hampered by a lack of evidence on the efficacy of existing programs or the potential for alternatives. Numerous policy solutions may be proposed that appear to be based on sound theory, but few are based on credible empirical research.

J-PAL NA supports randomized impact evaluations that can provide valuable insights for learning which policies work best, and which are most cost-effective in achieving their goals.

**Focus:** This request for proposals (RFP) welcomes proposals in any sector that, broadly defined, relate to J-PAL’s mission: reducing poverty by ensuring that policy is based on scientific evidence. This could include randomized evaluations across a wide range of sectors, including consumer finance, crime, education, environment, government efficiency, health, labor, employment and training, etc.

The geographical scope for this RFP is Canada and the United States.

If a researcher is uncertain about whether a research project is eligible for this grant, please contact J-PAL NA Senior Policy Associate Steven Ryan (stevenr@mit.edu).

**Funds:** J-PAL NA will fund project development grants of up to $5,000. The expectation is that the funds will be used for project development with the goal of launching a randomized evaluation in the U.S. or Canada. All applicants may re-apply for additional travel/project development grants in subsequent funding cycles.

Expenses covered under this award are intended for travel and other reimbursable expenses incurred while doing fieldwork (e.g. direct contact with potential study participants through focus groups) and building relationships with policymakers that could lead to a future randomized evaluation. These include:

* Domestic travel\* (flights, ground transportation, etc.)
* Accommodations\*
* Computing services (hardware/software)
* Survey administration
* Printing and mailing
* Incentives for focus group participants

\*Travelers are expected to seek the lowest available fares and rates. Luxury travel and accommodation will not be reimbursed.

Expenses that cannot be covered by these grants include:

* Expenses without receipts
* Salaries or wages for any party (neither for the applicant nor anyone else)
* Travel expenses for conferences or academic meetings
* Costs of purchasing datasets

**Eligibility:** J-PAL NA is expanding eligibility for this additional funding to include graduate students who have a J-PAL affiliate or invited researcher on their thesis committee at their host university. J-PAL affiliates, J-PAL post docs, and invited members of J-PAL North America’s initiatives are also eligible to apply.

**Applications:** Travel/project development grant applications are due by **5PM EST on Friday, February 12, 2016**. To apply, please complete the cover sheet (see below) and write a short narrative (no more than two pages) that includes:

* Concise statement of topic (Note: These grants are intended to facilitate very preliminary, exploratory research. Proposals need only address the general topic of interest and current ideas on how the question might be explored. They do not need to include a detailed program or evaluation design)
* Proposed partners (if available)
* A budget for up to $5,000 using the template at: [www.povertyactionlab.org/na-rfp](http://www.povertyactionlab.org/na-rfp)
* For graduate students: a letter of support from an advisor who is a J-PAL affiliate or invited researcher

Please submit these documents to NA\_RFP@povertyactionlab.org.

**Grant Conditions:**

1. Grantees are required to submit a progress report after completing project development work, no later than 6 months following award receipt.
2. Grantees must be willing to participate in one of J-PAL NA’s activities on a mutually agreed date and at a mutually agreed place. This activity could be an evidence workshop, a matchmaking conference, or a presentation to donors.

**Review Process:** Applications for travel/project development grants will be reviewed and scored by the members of the J-PAL NA Review Board. Proposals will be scored based on their academic contribution and relevance, policy relevance, and viability of the project.

**Timeline:**

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| December 2015 | RFP is issued |
| Friday, February 12, 2016 | Travel/project development grant submission deadline |
| Week of April 2, 2016 | Travel/project development grant decisions announced |

**Off-cycle Funding:** For time-sensitive opportunities, applicants are welcome to submit proposals prior to the deadline. These proposals will be reviewed on a rolling basis, with funding decisions expected within two weeks of application submission.

**Administration:**

Expenses covered under any award will be reimbursed upon submission of an expense report.

If you receive an award:

* Expenses should be supported by receipts whenever possible, and all expenses over $50 must be supported by receipts.
* A per diem for travel ($60 per day, includes food and misc. expenses) is available
* Most exploratory research should not require IRB approval, but the exact requirements will be determined on a case-by-case basis.
* **All expenses must be claimed within 30 days.**

**Coversheet**

**Travel/Project Development Grant**

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| Principal Investigator and Institutional affiliation |
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| CO-Investigator(s) and institutional affiliation |
|       |
| Title of Proposal | Country |
|       |       |
| PROPOSED DATES of exploratory work  |
| Start Date:(mm-dd) |       | End Date:(mm-dd) |       |
| PROPOSED Partner(s)  |
|       |
| Requested | **$**      |