



Human Trafficking Research Initiative Application Guidelines for RFP Seed Funding Round 3 (Winter/Spring 2023)

The Human Trafficking Research Initiative (HTRI) invites proposals from researchers and organizations that intend to design and carry out studies on how to reduce human trafficking or respond to the needs of human trafficking victims but need some additional time and support to push the research project to the next stage. We expect to fund a total of six to nine proposals from research teams interested in expanding the evidence to further investigate this important topic.

HTRI Research Focus

The primary focus of HTRI funding is to strengthen the evidence around potentially impactful programs using rigorous research methods. HTRI will consider human trafficking research projects that fall under any or all of the four Ps (prevention, protection, prosecution, partnership).

All research proposed under these seed grants should be in service of examining data or research plans or piloting studies that lead towards impact evaluations (randomized control trials) or other rigorous experimental research methods. **Research that is primarily qualitative or descriptive will NOT be considered for funding under HTRI.** For more information on impact evaluations, please visit <https://www.poverty-action.org/rigorous-research>. Quasi-experimental and natural experiment designs will be considered, but preference will be given to seed grant applicants that focus on building future randomized evaluations.

Funding priorities for the partnership, piloting, and seed grants are guided by HTRI's [Research and Learning Agenda](#), which outlines key research gaps under the 4 Ps. Applicants are instructed to read HTRI's Research and Learning Agenda and refer to specific research questions in the Research and Learning Agenda that their research project intends to address.

In this round, the HTRI will consider proposals that include:

- **Small research pilots of promising interventions:** These are grants that would fund the cost of a small pilot to assess the feasibility and value of a larger research project. These grants are intended to be the first step of formal research for promising interventions and anti-trafficking activities. Programs with monitoring and evaluation data, administrative data, and/or sound theories of change that indicate promising impact would be a good fit for this grant. We anticipate funding between \$10,000 to \$50,000 per pilot.
- **Seed money for a travel grant or staff time to build on nascent research ideas:** These grants are to develop preliminary research ideas and help researchers develop subsequent proposals for pilots or full randomized evaluations. Activities may include travel, relationship development, descriptive analysis, observational analysis, and data development or collection. These grants are primarily meant for junior faculty, PhD students, and other researchers who do not have other sources of funding for travel and exploratory work. We anticipate funding between \$10,000 and \$15,000 per award.
- **Small grants for data work using existing sources to examine program impact:** These are small grants that will support researchers to use a partner's administrative data or other existing data sets, conduct desk research to deepen previous research analysis, or create new analysis to help inform research project design and viability. We expect to see applications either explain how existing analysis could be improved or potentially be used to draw additional conclusions. Preference will be given to applicants who chart how their results can influence future research (specifically impact evaluations). We anticipate funding awards of up to \$10,000.

Application Instructions

A completed proposal consists of: (1) a completed online application form; (2) a detailed budget and budget narrative; (3) CVs of researchers; and (4) if applicable, letters of support from implementing partners. Please submit all materials through our [online portal](#) by **Friday, March 31, 2023 by 11:59 pm EDT**.

Online Application form: Please complete the form through our [online portal](#).

Budget and budget narrative: Please use [this template](#) for the budget and [this template](#) for the budget narrative.

Letters of Support: Applicants for pilot funding are strongly encouraged to submit letters of support. If available, applicants should also include letters of support from potential scale-up partners.

Submission Instructions: Submit the following materials by **Friday, March 31, 2023 by 11:59 pm EDT** through our online portal at: https://innovationsforpovertyaction.formstack.com/forms/htri_seedround3.

1. Application form completed in the online portal
2. Budget saved as a single .xlsx file titled [PI last name] [Proposal title] Budget.xlsx
3. Budget narrative saved as a single .docx or .pdf file titled [PI last name] [Proposal title] budget narrative
4. CVs for all researchers on project as single .docx or .pdf files titled [PI last name] CV [Researcher last name].pdf
 - a. *If Applicable:* Signed letter(s) of support from implementing partners saved as .pdf files titled [PI last name] Letter of Support [Partner name].

Eligibility

Applicants

Researchers must either hold a PhD or be currently pursuing a PhD in a relevant social science discipline. **Applications that do not include at least one researcher actively pursuing or holding a PhD will be disqualified.** Teams should include at least one member with demonstrated experience in field research and randomized evaluations. Researchers should also have knowledge and/or expertise in human trafficking or adjacent fields.

The Human Trafficking Research Initiative will give preference to underrepresented researchers in the field. We encourage applications from minority researchers, such as women, junior scholars, first-generation college graduates, and citizens of lower- or middle-income countries. Local researchers and local organizations are necessary for the success of many human trafficking programs and assessments; this will be incorporated into our proposal assessment.

Geographic Focus

All projects must benefit people and communities for lower- and middle-income countries (LMICs). Please note that project activities and interventions can take place anywhere, but the intended beneficiaries must be from LMICs.

HTRI is funded by the Program to End Modern Slavery (PEMS) in the U.S. Department of State's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons. Given current PEMS investments in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, HTRI will pay special attention to applications that benefit the people of the following countries: Bangladesh, Brazil, Costa Rica, Ethiopia, India, Kenya, Morocco, Malawi, Nigeria, Pakistan, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tanzania, Tunisia, and Zambia.

Research

All submissions must present a clear set of hypotheses of why the research is important and relevant to the field of human trafficking, as laid out in the [HTRI Research and Learning Agenda](#). All applications must describe how this seed funding will help set the stage for a large future research project.

Applications that do not intend to use randomized control trials (RCTs) or other rigorous experimental designs as their methodology for causal inference will NOT be considered for funding. Special consideration will be paid to applicants that propose RCT pilots and/or focus on examining criminal justice interventions.

All awardees are expected to disclose all survey modules and project design details to HTRI. Studies must also be willing to accommodate best practices for ethical research of trafficking (for more information, please refer to the Ethical Considerations section of HTRI's Research and Learning Agenda). Submissions proposing to conduct field-based data collection should specify the research implementing partner organization that will assist the research team with the management and implementation of the randomized evaluation. For those applying for funds to travel and build relationships, we expect to see a list of potential partners.

We strongly encourage current and upcoming IPA projects and/or affiliated researchers to apply. If you are not affiliated with IPA but are interested in working with an IPA country office, please make sure that you reach out to the local IPA Country Office well in advance of the deadline to discuss your application, including the research design, implementation plan, and project feasibility. Pending review and approval of your proposed project(s) by the country office staff, they will work with you on the budget and application materials. If you need assistance in reaching out to IPA Country Offices, please email us at ipa_htri@poverty-action.org.

Funding

HTRI research awards do not fund:

- Program or intervention implementation costs, except as necessary to support funded research. Applications that include all or most of the implementing costs for programs in their budget will be disqualified.
- Salary costs for researchers from institutions in high-income countries whose salaries are covered by their institutions. Reasonable salary costs can be considered by the review committee on a case-by-case basis. Funding for the salaries and/or time of researchers from institutions based in LMICs is allowable and will not be included in budget comparisons with other projects.
- Purely qualitative research that does not contribute to the development of quantitative impact evaluations.
- Lab in the field experiments, except as components of pilots or within the context of a broader impact evaluation.
- Research using historical datasets, except in the context of a broader impact evaluation or technical assistance engagement for policy support.
- Research in high-income countries, unless the research is focused on LMIC beneficiaries.

Funding for this project is subject to federal rules and regulations in line with the Code of Federal Regulations (eCFR Chapter VI, Part 600). Please note that this includes restrictions on the use of U.S. Government funding for salary compensation or direct payments to foreign government officials or sub-awards or sub-contracts to foreign government entities. If you have questions about allowable costs, please reach out to the HTRI team at ipa_htri@poverty-action.org.

Project Timeline

Project timelines should be between three and twelve months. Projects are expected to launch in mid-2023; submit a substantive progress report by December 31, 2023; and close no later than June 1, 2024.

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated by a committee of academic researchers. Their decisions will be based on the project's potential to improve evidence around anti-trafficking programs. There is no specific "type" of intervention that will be favored, but projects should shed light on how to substantively reduce the prevalence of human trafficking. The potential scientific and policy insights will be directly weighed against costs of the amount requested. Special consideration will be paid to applicants that propose RCT pilots and/or focus on examining criminal justice interventions.

All research grants must focus on one or both forms of trafficking in persons as defined by the Trafficking Victim Protection Act:

- Sex Trafficking – when a trafficker uses force, fraud, or coercion to compel a person to engage in a commercial sex act or when a trafficker causes a child who has not attained 18 years of age to engage in a commercial sex act.
- Forced Labor – when a trafficker recruits, harbors, transports, provides, or obtains a person for labor or services by using force, fraud, or coercion.

The selection committee will consider the following factors in evaluating proposals:

- *Relevance to HTRI priorities:* Does the study address specific knowledge gaps identified in HTRI's Research and Learning Agenda? Does the research strategy provide a bridge between a practical experiment and underlying theories about human trafficking?
- *Project viability:* Are the research question(s) and theory of change clear and realistic? Will results from the project be usable for building and designing future research projects? For pilots, do researchers describe how piloting activities would inform a full-scale randomized evaluation? For evidence analysis, what is the strategy to disseminate results and how likely are these results to inform conversations among policymakers, development professionals, and academics? Are there any logistical or political obstacles that might threaten the completion of the study (for example, government authorization or Human Subjects review)?
- *Academic contribution:* Does the study make a significant contribution toward advancing knowledge in the field? Is the proposal likely to isolate causal mechanisms or contribute to research designs for anti-trafficking work more broadly?
- *Policy and survivor relevance:* Is there demand from implementing organizations and policymakers for more/better information to influence their decisions in this area? Will this research be "usable" by decision-makers? Are the research activities built on survivor-centered and survivor-informed principles, and will they ultimately contribute to the empowerment of survivors of trafficking?
- *Research funding and value for money:* Are the proposed costs reasonable and realistic? Is the cost of the study commensurate with the value of expected contributions to science and policy? Are the proposed costs allowable under U.S. Department of State rules and regulations?
- *Relevant experience:* Does the research team have a track record of implementing successful projects similar to the one being proposed? Is the composition of the research team well-suited to carry out research on this sensitive topic, and is the level of effort proposed sufficient? Is the project adequately staffed to meet all deliverables?

About Innovations for Poverty Action

Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA) is a research and policy nonprofit that discovers and promotes effective solutions to global poverty problems. IPA brings together researchers and decision-makers to design, rigorously evaluate, and refine these solutions and their applications, ensuring that the evidence created is used to improve the lives of the world's poor. Since its founding in 2002, IPA has worked with over 600 leading academics to conduct over 830 evaluations in 52 countries. This research has informed hundreds of successful programs that now impact millions of individuals worldwide. IPA is present in 22 countries with permanent offices.

Country Program Primary Contacts:

Burkina Faso/Mali/Côte d'Ivoire: Andreas Holzinger, aholzinger@poverty-action.org

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Latin American Countries without Country Office: Juan Manuel Hernandez-Agramonte, jmhernandez@poverty-action.org
Multi-country projects: Rachel Steinacher, rsteinacher@poverty-action.org

To connect with one of our country offices or ask questions about working with IPA, you may also contact the HTRI team at ipa_htri@poverty-action.org or IPA's Project Development team at pd@poverty-action.org.

Grant Terms and Conditions

If your proposal is accepted for award, the funds will be provided under a subaward from IPA to the research implementing institution. Please refer to the terms and conditions below for more details about the conditions of the award. Awards are typically paid on a cost-reimbursable basis.

Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval is required for all studies that intend to publish. This approval may come from your host institution's IRB or from IPA's own IRB.

General Terms and Conditions

If an applicant is awarded funding by IPA, the grant agreement may include clauses similar to the following, and the Grant Recipient must comply with them:

1. SPONSOR may review and approve materials produced for program implementation that concern respondent or beneficiary safety or wellbeing, including any training materials, awareness raising materials, and communications materials.
2. SPONSOR may review and comment on materials that are part of the design of the research project but do not directly concern respondent or beneficiary safety or wellbeing, including research plans, survey instruments and data analysis, and documents and materials on research analysis and findings, which will be made publicly available.
3. SPONSOR reserves the right to conduct a baseline assessment and/or rigorous independent evaluation of grant performance, to include the collection and analysis of timely and reliable data and information. SPONSOR has full responsibility for oversight of these evaluations to ensure an unbiased assessment of the grant activities. GRANT RECIPIENT is expected to cooperate to the fullest extent possible if selected for an assessment. No additional funds will be made available for your participation, but a SPONSOR evaluation should not add to GRANT RECIPIENT costs. IPA will notify the GRANT RECIPIENT in advance if their project is selected for an evaluation. To facilitate review and evaluation related to the performance activity, GRANT RECIPIENT shall, whenever appropriate, disclose relevant data and information. The results of the assessment may be used for the development of SPONSOR best practices, to document program impact, assess return on investment, and to assure accountability for the American people.
4. Information which might require special consideration with regard to the timing of its disclosure may derive from studies or research, during which public disclosure of preliminary invalidated findings could create erroneous conclusions, which might threaten public health or safety if acted upon. IPA may identify (based on agreement with SPONSOR) specific information and/or

categories of information which the SPONSOR will furnish to IPA and GRANT RECIPIENT or that the GRANT RECIPIENT is expected to generate which is confidential. Such confidential information may be identified from time to time during the performance of the award. If it is established that information to be utilized under the award is subject to the Privacy Act, the GRANT RECIPIENT will follow the rules and procedures of disclosure set forth in the Privacy Act of 1974, and implementing regulations and policies, with respect to systems of records determined to be subject to the Privacy Act. Written advance notice of at least 55 calendar days will be provided to IPA of the recipient's intent to release findings of studies or research, which have the possibility of adverse effects on the public or SPONSOR, as described above. If IPA (based on response from SPONSOR) does not pose any objections in writing within the 55-calendar day period, the GRANT RECIPIENT may proceed with disclosure. Whenever the GRANT RECIPIENT is uncertain with regard to the proper handling of material under the award, or if the material in question is subject to the Privacy Act or is confidential information subject to this Provision, the recipient shall obtain a written determination from IPA (based on written determination from SPONSOR) prior to any release, disclosure, dissemination, or publication.

5. Any publications or articles resulting from the award must acknowledge the support of the SPONSOR and include a disclaimer of official endorsement as follows: "This [article] was funded [in part] by a grant from the SPONSOR. The opinions, findings and conclusions stated herein are those of the author[s] and do not necessarily reflect those of the SPONSOR." The GRANT RECIPIENT must ensure that this disclaimer be included on all brochures, flyers, posters, billboards, or other graphic artwork that are produced under the terms of the award.
6. SPONSOR reserves a royalty-free, non-exclusive and irrevocable right to reproduce, publish, or otherwise use the work for SPONSOR purposes, and to authorize other entities, including other non-Federal entities, to do so. In addition, the SPONSOR has the right to obtain, reproduce, publish, or otherwise use data produced under a SPONSOR award.
7. All international travel charged to this an award must be on an American flag carrier. If travel was on a foreign flag carrier, a statement justifying the use of a foreign flag carrier, which meets one of the exceptions cited in the "Fly America Act," must be included with the financial report. Travel on foreign flag carrier, which does not meet one of the exceptions of the Act, will be disallowed.
8. None of the funds made available herein may be used to promote, support, or advocate the legalization or practice of prostitution. Nothing in the preceding sentence shall be construed to preclude assistance designed to combat trafficking in persons, including programs for prevention, protection of victims, and prosecution of traffickers and others who profit from trafficking in persons, by ameliorating the suffering of, or health risks to, victims while they are being trafficked or after they are out of the situation that resulted from such victims being trafficked.
9. GRANT RECIPIENT certifies that, to the extent practicable, persons or entities providing legal services, social services, health services, or other assistance have completed, or will complete, training in connection with trafficking in persons.
10. Funds provided under an award are subject to Section 620M of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, a provision titled "Limitation on Assistance to Security Forces" (the "Leahy Amendment"). Accordingly, none of the funds under this award may be used to provide training or other assistance to any unit or member of the security forces of a foreign country if the Department of State has credible information that such unit or individual has committed a gross violation of human rights. In signing an award, the GRANT RECIPIENT agrees to exercise due diligence to ensure compliance with the Leahy Amendment provision and Department of State policy, and to cooperate with the Department of State in implementation of the requirement. The Department of State implements the Leahy Amendment requirements by vetting units or individuals proposed for training or other assistance to check for credible information of a gross violation of human rights by such units or individuals. To facilitate Department of State vetting, the Recipient must provide a set of information for proposed participants at least sixty (60) calendar

days prior to commencing award activities. The GRANT RECIPIENT must collaborate with the relevant U.S. embassy on a case-by-case basis to determine if the Leahy requirement applies to specific activities or proposed participants. Individuals who are not members of the security forces but who participate in activities under the award (e.g., politicians, academics, etc.) generally do not need to be vetted. Submission Deadline: Each candidate must be cleared under Leahy vetting in advance of participation in activities funded under this award. The vetting process typically takes approximately one month but may take longer if there are a large number of candidates or if issues arise. Thus, all information on proposed candidates must be received by the embassy at least sixty (60) days in advance of the training event or other activity. The GRANT RECIPIENT agrees that it will not include any security forces candidate in training or other activities funded under this award until the State Department advises that the candidate has cleared Leahy vetting and is approved for participation.

11. GRANT RECIPIENT shall comply with the Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions for Federal Awards, as applicable. Electronic copies containing the complete text are available at: <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/U.S.-Department-of-State-Standard-Terms-and-Conditions-10-01-2019508.pdf>
12. GRANT RECIPIENT will be responsible for reporting on progress as in a format to be provided by the HTRI Program on a schedule to be determined by mutual agreement. Progress reports must contain a comparison of actual accomplishments to the objectives of the award established for the period. This should include information on how costs are tied to accomplishments, the reasons why established goals and targets were not met, if any, and additional pertinent information including an analysis and explanation of cost overruns or high unit costs.
13. GRANT RECIPIENT will submit a budget in detail along with a written justification sufficient to determine the need and reasonableness for the proposed costs. Indirect costs will not be allowable charges against the award unless specifically included as a line item in the approved budget for the award. Indirect cost recovery for any actual indirect costs incurred by the recipient which are greater than the indirect cost line item in the approved award budget is limited up to the award amount. A non-profit organization which has not previously established an indirect cost rate with a Federal agency, that believes the Department of State should be its cognizant agency, shall submit its initial indirect cost proposal immediately after the organization is advised that the award will be made and, in no event, later than three months after the effective date of the award. For all NICRA and indirect rate inquiries please contact AQM-NICRA@state.gov.
14. GRANT RECIPIENT may charge to the award only allowable costs as incorporated in the approved budget. Reporting of expenses will be at the major category level with a frequency to be determined by mutual agreement between the parties. Any variance between major categories of 10% or greater must be explained in writing and approved by the HTRI Program.
15. This list is not exhaustive and subject to change. The Grant Recipient may be required in the grant agreement to comply with other requirements from IPA and IPA's prime donors.