



Human Trafficking Research Initiative – Request for Expressions of Interest Application Guidelines Fall 2021

Overview

IPA's Human Trafficking Research Initiative (HTRI) has launched its first Call for Expressions of Interest for full randomized controlled trials (RCTs) to assess the impact of counter-trafficking programs. Proposals are due by **11:59 pm US Eastern time on October 15, 2021**.

HTRI welcomes proposals to assess counter-trafficking interventions across the “4 Ps” of trafficking (prevention, protection, prosecution, and partnership). Applicants should review **HTRI's [Learning and Research Agenda](#)**, which outlines key learning questions and priority areas of research. Research should be designed to directly measure impact within specific sectors of counter-trafficking and respond to one or more of HTRI's learning questions. Applicants can request full funding for RCTs, partial funding for RCTs, or funding for new arms of existing RCTs, as described below:

- **Full rigorous studies to assess the impact of a counter-trafficking program.**
These grants are for research projects with a clear research question, committed implementing partner(s), well-defined research designs, and statistical power estimates. While most of the impact evaluations funded will be RCTs, studies that use high-quality natural experiments will be considered in exceptional cases when an RCT is not possible. Grants can also fund the continuation or completion of RCTs that have already started without HTRI funding (including those for which data collection is complete). This includes long-run follow-ups from previously published evaluations, as well as "downstream studies" that use an already-completed randomized trial to answer a human trafficking-relevant question. The expectation is that this work will result in a paper publishable in a top economic, political science, or science journal. Awards are between \$50,000 and \$450,000. Projects should apply for the funds needed to yield the best research, but (all other things equal) lower budgets have a higher probability of being funded.
- **Adding a human trafficking-targeted treatment arm to an existing study.**
These are grants that will support expanding a study by adding a treatment arm explicitly focused on reducing human trafficking to an existing randomized evaluation. Applicants can request funding for the costs of expanding the study



sample and survey as well as the human trafficking-focused intervention. Awards are between \$100,000 and \$250,000.

- **Adding human trafficking-focused survey modules or survey rounds to existing studies.** These are smaller grants that would fund the cost of adding human trafficking survey modules to upcoming data collection rounds for existing studies or add a new survey round to an existing study. They are intended for research studies that are likely to have an impact on trafficking but are not currently collecting human trafficking data. Awards are between \$50,000 and \$125,000.

Application Instructions

A completed expression of interest must be submitted in IPA's online portal, which can be found [here](#), by **11:59 pm US Eastern time on October 15, 2021**. EOIs will be reviewed by an expert group of researchers and assessed against the evaluation criteria noted below. Successful EOIs will be invited by the selection committee to submit a full proposal and will receive detailed application instructions at that time.

Although all applications and research products must be submitted in English, HTRI does have a limited capacity to offer translations of application documents to aid in understanding of the requirements. If you are interested in translated application materials, please contact ipa_htri@poverty-action.org and we will accommodate you if possible.

Eligibility

Applicants

Researchers must be affiliated with a research institution or a university and either hold a PhD or be currently pursuing a PhD in a relevant social science discipline. They must also demonstrate experience in field research and randomized evaluations. HTRI encourages applications from historically excluded researchers in the field, including women, junior scholars, first-generation college graduates, and citizens of lower- or middle-income countries.

Geographic Focus

All projects must benefit people and communities in/from lower- and middle-income countries (LMICs). All intervention sites are subject to review by the US State Department. HTRI is especially interested in applications proposing to evaluate programs in countries



with PEMS (Program to End Modern Slavery)-funded projects: Brazil, Costa Rica, Guinea, India, Kenya, Morocco, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda, and Senegal.

Research

All submissions must present a clear set of hypotheses of why the research is important to the human trafficking research field. Applicants should review HTRI's [Learning and Research Agenda](#), which outlines key learning questions and priority areas of research. Research should be designed to directly measure impact within specific sectors of counter-trafficking and respond to one or more of HTRI's learning questions.

All awardees are expected to disclose all survey modules and project design details to HTRI. HTRI will expect the proposed survey modules to have either been validated in the location of the study or have other indicators of sound assessment capacity. Projects measuring human trafficking prevalence should incorporate guidance from the [Human Trafficking Statistical Definitions Prevalence Reduction Innovation Forum](#).

Studies must also be willing to accommodate best practices for ethical research of human trafficking victims. If selected for funding, projects will be expected to produce both an outline detailing the role of ethics in their research design and a plan for encountering ethical challenges in the field. We expect this plan to reflect the needs of the respondents as well as the safety, security, and wellbeing of the staff.

HTRI strongly encourages 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 to reach out to the relevant IPA Country Office (see "About Innovations for Poverty Action" at the end of this document for full list of country offices and contacts) well in advance of the submission deadline. IPA Country Office staff will discuss your application – including the research design, implementation plan, and project feasibility – and if approved, will work with you on EOI submission and any proceeding budget and application materials. If you need assistance in reaching out to IPA Country Offices, please email ipa_htri@poverty-action.org.

Funding

Funding can be used only for research and research-related programmatic costs. Funding proposed for the salaries and/or time of researchers in developing countries will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the selection committee.

Project Timeline



Project timelines will depend on individual proposals. However, with some exceptions based on COVID-19 pandemic concerns, we expect research projects to launch in early 2022 and to be closed before the end of 2023.

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated by an expert committee of researchers, including HTRI's academic leads, Dr. Cecilia Hyunjung Mo and Dr. Guy Grossman. The committee's decisions will be based on the project's potential to improve evidence around counter-trafficking programs. Projects should propose to respond to one or more of the research gap areas identified in the HTRI [Learning and Research Agenda](#) and shed light on how to substantively reduce the prevalence of human trafficking or improve support for people who have been trafficked. The potential scientific and policy insights will be directly weighed against costs of the amount requested.

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

- 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 (use of rigorous methods to test counter-trafficking strategies that can be used to design evidence-based programs and policies):** Does the study make a significant contribution toward advancing knowledge in the field? Does the research strategy provide a bridge between a practical evaluation and underlying theories about human trafficking? Is the proposal likely to isolate causal mechanisms or contribute to research design for anti-trafficking work more broadly?
- **Project viability:** 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? Are the strategies to disseminate evidence on all levels of decision-making stakeholders relevant to the project?



- **Academic contribution:** Does the study make a significant contribution toward advancing knowledge in the field? Does the research strategy provide a bridge between a practical evaluation and underlying theories about human trafficking? Is the proposal likely to isolate causal mechanisms or contribute to research design for anti-trafficking work more broadly? Are the findings, or elements of the findings, likely generalizable in other settings or with a large scale-up population?
- **Policy relevance:** Is there demand from policymakers for more/better information to influence their decisions in this area? How likely are these results to inform conversations among policymakers, development professionals, and academics?
- **Value of research:** Is the cost of the study commensurate with the value of expected contributions to science and policy?
- **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?

About Innovations for Poverty Action

Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA) is a research and policy non-profit 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 900 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:

Bangladesh: Sneha Subramanian, ssubramanian@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 questions about working with IPA, you may also contact ipa htri@poverty-action.org or 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 normally 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:

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. 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.
5. 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.
6. All international travel charged to this 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.



7. 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.
8. 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.
9. 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.

10. 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/2020/10/U.S.-Department-of-State-Standard-Terms-and-Conditions-10-21-2020-508.pdf>
11. 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.
12. 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.
13. 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.

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.