



Human Trafficking Research Initiative Partnership, Piloting, and Seed Grants – Request for Proposals

IPA's Human Trafficking Research Initiative

Due to the gravity and pervasiveness of human trafficking, it is of vital importance that practitioners, policymakers, and researchers strengthen the evidence on what programs work to reduce trafficking and protect victims. Innovations for Poverty Action established the **Human Trafficking Research Initiative (HTRI)** to work with researchers and partner organizations to expand the evidence base on effective solutions to reduce modern slavery and human trafficking. Over the next five years, IPA aims to facilitate and support meaningful, rigorous, and policy-relevant studies on trafficking to help combat this egregious global problem.

The purpose of this research fund is to build on sound theory and programmatic information for combating human trafficking. This initiative is supported by the U.S. Department of State's Program to End Modern Slavery and academic leadership of Dr. Cecilia Hyunjung Mo and Dr. Guy Grossman. 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.

From IPA's experience developing and carrying out more than 830 randomized evaluations, we know that strong research partnerships and high-impact studies take time and effort to build. IPA plans to release calls for proposals for full-scale field studies in the fall of 2021 and spring of 2022. To be able to generate a more expansive pool of high-quality research proposals, in this funding round, we primarily seek to support early-stage activities to develop partnerships, carry out exploratory research, and demonstrate the feasibility of larger-scale studies.

Call for Proposals for Seed Grants for Partnership Building, Pilots, and Data Analysis

IPA 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. The objective of these small grants ranging between \$2,500 and \$35,000 is to advance early-stage discussion between researchers and implementing organizations to the point where they have viable research project designs and plans. We also provide small grants to work with existing data to provide newer or more refined (theory building or theory testing) insights. Importantly, we are open to providing funding for a wide range of activities that may be necessary to develop or strengthen a partnership or assess the viability of a given project.

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In February 2021, the HTRI launched an open call for proposals for seed grants for partnership building, pilots, and data analysis. This RFP is closed as of March 21, 2021. This announcement document describes the RFP in detail, and the [application guidelines](#) covered specific details on how to apply.

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With this RFP, the HTRI 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.

February 22, 2021