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INNOVATIONS FOR
POVERTY ACTION



Frequently Asked Questions

Human Trafficking Research Initiative Competitive Fund

What is HTRI?

The Human Trafficking Research Initiative (HTRI) at Innovations for Poverty Action is a five-year project funded by the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (the TIP Office) at the U.S. Department of State that brings together implementing organizations, policymakers, and researchers to build the body of evidence on interventions to reduce human trafficking and protect victims and survivors of trafficking. HTRI fosters partnerships between researchers and practitioners; innovates on and improves the research methods for studying human trafficking; initiates formative pilot testing of programs; and conducts large-scale studies on the efforts to prevent trafficking, prosecute crimes, and protect trafficked persons. You can find more information at: <https://www.poverty-action.org/human-trafficking-research-initiative>

What is the HTRI Competitive Fund?

In order to expand the evidence on human trafficking, IPA will fund new research that advances the understanding of what works to reduce trafficking and improve current policies and practices. The priority themes and guiding questions for the competitive fund are being developed through a consultative process with leading policymakers, practitioners, and researchers that will culminate in an HTRI Learning and Research Agenda. This Learning and Research Agenda will identify gaps in current research and priority research questions that HTRI intends to answer through its competitive award funding.

HTRI's competitive fund will include several rounds of requests for applications for two types of funding opportunities:

- Seed funding – 2-3 rounds. 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 \$10,000 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. The goal of these funds is to develop larger-scale studies.

- Full-scale randomized controlled trials (partial and full funding) – 2-3 rounds. IPA will invite expressions of interest (EOIs) for rigorous research that aims to generate credible impact information. EOI applicants will be reviewed and select applicants will then be invited to submit a full proposal for funding. HTRI's strong preference is for research designed as randomized control trials (RCTs), though quasi-experimental methods (e.g., matching, difference-in-difference, regression discontinuity) will also be considered.

Funding cycles:

- Completed: First round of seed funding was closed in March 2021.
- Upcoming: Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for RCTs is expected to be released in early September 2021.
- Expected: Another round of seed funding is expected to be available in January 2022.
- Additional rounds of both seed and RCT funding will be available in the next two years.

Where can I find the NOFO, and how do I apply?

Potential applicants can find active NOFOs on IPA's website: <https://www.poverty-action.org/human-trafficking-research-initiative/competitive-fund>

Is there a predetermined funding amount for awards?

- Large RCTs: We anticipate funding between \$200,000 to \$400,000 per award, with the potential for up to \$500,000 in extraordinary circumstances.
- "Add-ons" for an existing RCT, additional survey rounds, survey modules, or treatment arm: We anticipate funding between \$50,000 to \$150,000 per award.
- Small research pilots of promising interventions: We anticipate funding between \$10,000 to \$35,000 per pilot.
- Seed money for a travel grant or staff time to build on nascent research ideas: We anticipate funding between \$5,000 and \$15,000 per award.

- Small grants for data work using existing sources to examine program impact: We anticipate funding between \$5,000 and \$10,000 per award.

What is the duration of HTRI research projects?

Applicants are encouraged to propose a timeline that is appropriate for completing the proposed research. More details on the expected period of performance will be included in the NOFO.

Are research projects funded in their entirety at the beginning of the project or in installments throughout the research?

HTRI provides incremental funding based on milestones, set out in detail in sub agreements with the lead implementing organization/university. Applicants selected for funding must agree to the U.S. Department of State terms and conditions (laid out in the NOFO) and must use an established U.S. Government Negotiated Indirect Cost Recovery Agreement (NICRA) rate or maximum 10% rate for any overhead costs.

What is a Negotiated Indirect Cost Recovery Agreement (NICRA)?

A NICRA is a document published to reflect an estimate of indirect cost rate negotiated between the U.S. Federal Government and a Grantee/Contractor's organization, which reflects the indirect costs (facilities and administrative costs) and fringe benefit expenses incurred by the organization that will be the same across all United States agencies. Generally, a NICRA is not warranted unless an organization has many U.S. government awards at one time. If applicants do not have a NICRA, they can include up to 10% as indirect costs. Organizations that do not have a NICRA will not be disqualified or penalized.