



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 funds 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 were developed through a consultative process with leading policymakers, practitioners, and researchers, culminating in HTRI's Research and Learning and Agenda. This Research and Learning Agenda identifies gaps in current research and priority research questions that HTRI intends to answer through its competitive award funding.

HTRI's competitive fund includes 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 \$50,000, 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 controlled trials (RCTs), though quasi-experimental methods (e.g., difference-in-difference, regression discontinuity) will also be considered.

When will HTRI release its next calls for funding?

- Seed funding: the first and second rounds of seed funding have been completed; a third call for applications for seed funding is expected to be announced in early 2023.
- Full research funding: the first round of full research funding has been completed; the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the second round of full research funding is being released in early June 2022.

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?

- Full research projects: We anticipate funding between \$200,000 to \$450,000 per award.
- "Add-ons" for an existing research project/RCT, additional survey rounds, survey modules, or treatment arm: We anticipate funding between \$50,000 to \$250,000 per award.
- Small research pilots of promising interventions: 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: We anticipate funding between \$10,000 and \$15,000 per award.
- Small grants for data work using existing sources to examine program impact: We anticipate funding approximately \$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 subaward agreements with the lead implementing organization/university.

I am not an expert in designing and running randomized controlled trials (RCTs). Does HTRI have any references to help guide me in designing an RCT?

J-PAL has some excellent resources and courses on designing and implementing randomized controlled trials. We recommend starting [here](#). You should also plan to include someone on your research team with experience conducting RCTs. Even if the subject of their RCTs is not strictly related to human trafficking, your team will benefit greatly from their experience running this type of evaluation, and your application is much more likely to be recommended for funding.

How can I make sure my proposed research study is fully powered?

To understand what power is and why it is key in the design of RCTs, [this article](#) is a good place to start. There are a number of ways to calculate statistical power, as the article notes. [This resource](#) from J-PAL goes a bit more in-depth, and we also find this [quick guide](#) to power calculations to be useful to reference. For applicants that are invited to submit full proposals in HTRI's full research funding rounds, you will be required to submit a commented Stata log or something similar to show your calculations. At the seed grant and EOI stages, however, you can use something like [this online power calculator](#) to estimate whether your proposed research design will yield sufficient power, given factors such as your sample size.

How much can organizations include in their budget for overhead costs?

Applicants selected for funding must use an established U.S. Government Negotiated Indirect Cost Recovery Agreement (NICRA) rate for overhead costs. 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 the organization receiving the subaward does not have an established NICRA, the organization can request the *de minimus* rate (10%) for overhead costs. Organizations that do not have a NICRA will not be disqualified or penalized.