



**Announcement**  
**Human Trafficking Research Initiative**  
**Seed Grants Round 4 Request for Proposals**  
**October 2025**

IPA's [Human Trafficking Research Initiative \(HTRI\)](#) has launched its fourth round for seed grants to generate a more expansive pool of high-quality research proposals focused on human trafficking and support early-stage activities to develop partnerships, carry out exploratory research, and demonstrate the feasibility of larger-scale studies evaluating the effectiveness of current or planned counter-trafficking interventions. Proposals are due by **11:59 pm US Pacific time on Thursday, December 4, 2025** through the [online application portal](#).

HTRI was established in 2020 to support practitioners, policymakers, and researchers in strengthening the evidence base on effective interventions to reduce trafficking and protect victims. It 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 and is guided by the academic leadership of Dr. Cecilia Hyunjung Mo and Dr. Guy Grossman.

IPA invites proposals from researchers and organizations that intend to design and carry out impact evaluations exploring interventions 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. Through grants ranging from \$10,000 to \$75,000 HTRI is funding concrete early-stage activities such as piloting promising interventions, conducting exploratory data work, or supporting travel and collaboration time. These grants are intended to strengthen project design and lay the foundation for full-scale impact evaluations in the future. 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 quasi experimental studies). **Research that is primarily qualitative or descriptive will NOT be considered for funding under HTRI.** For more information on impact evaluations, please visit <https://poverty-action.org/rigorous-research>.

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, 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 \$75,000 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 \$30,000 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 \$15,000.

All research grants must focus on one or both forms of trafficking in persons as defined by the Trafficking Victims 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.

Applicants should submit their completed application and all supporting materials using our [online portal](#) by **11:59 pm US Pacific time on Thursday, December 4, 2025**.

To learn more, please read our [application guidelines](#). If you need additional assistance, get in touch by emailing the HTRI team to [ipa\\_htri@poverty-action.org](mailto:ipa_htri@poverty-action.org).