



Citizen Security Research Initiative

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Call for Proposals

Citizen Security Research Initiative | Round 1

Information Session

March 2026



Citizen Security Research Initiative (CSRI)

Call for Proposals Information Session



Paulina Ornelas and Cecilia Suescún

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Housekeeping

- This is a pre-recorded session designed to provide information on our Call For Proposals
- Participants will have access to the transcript of this presentation in multiple languages
- These slides will be made available along with the pre-recording
- Please reach out to justice@poverty-action.org for further questions
- Our landing page can be found at <https://poverty-action.org/citizen-security-research-initiative>
- We will also be holding CSRI office hours where we will be answering questions. For more information, please sign up to our [mailing list](#)



Meet the CSRI Team



Paulina Ornelas



Cecilia Suescún



Ricardo Morel



James Marcultis



Christopher Blattman

Academic Lead
University of Chicago



Rodrigo Canales

Academic Lead
Boston University



Questions we will answer

- What is the Citizen Security Research Initiative?
- What types of projects are eligible for funding?
- Who is eligible for funding?
- What advice do we have for successful proposals?
- What are the funding restrictions?
- When are the upcoming deadlines?
- Where should I direct my questions?

01

Introduction

Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA) | Citizen Security Research Initiative

IPA works to reduce poverty

by ensuring that policy is informed by scientific evidence



Generating evidence

- 16 country offices worldwide, evaluations in 50+ countries
- Conducted 1000+ rigorous impact evaluations in partnership with hundreds of researchers
- Supports research addressing key policy and practice questions by awarding research funding
- Fosters partnerships between implementers and researchers

Supporting evidence use

- Synthesizes and disseminates research results for use in decision making
- Strategically support partners to apply results, by equipping practitioners and policymakers to strengthen their production and use of evidence



A meeting with the Mexican police during fieldwork © 2022 IPA

What is the Citizen Security Research Initiative?



A research initiative, supported by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau for International Narcotics & Law Enforcement Affairs (INL), that generates and shares new evidence to inform policies and programs related to countering organized crime, combating drug trafficking, preventing crime and violence, and strengthening law enforcement & justice institutions.



CSRI Activities

Two core activities:

- **Synthesizing existing evidence:** distill key findings into accessible guidance for policymakers, translating complex research into clear, practical recommendations
- **Supporting novel research:** generating high-quality research through our competitive fund on priority topics for more effective policymaking

02

Call for Proposals

Scope | Grant types | Evaluation criteria | Funding Restrictions

Scope

The Citizen Security Research Initiative supports projects that:

- Contribute to innovation and generalizable learning on program effectiveness
- Identify mechanisms underpinning programming
- Address potential barriers to impact
- Build contextual research in understudied areas

Research themes:

- Countering Organized Crime
- Combating Drug Trafficking and Production
- Preventing Crime and Violence
- Strengthening institutions in Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Systems
- Cross-cutting area: measurement and design

Read our [Call for Proposals](#)
for details



Grant Types

Categories:

- **Pilot studies:** for refinement of evaluation design or measurement in advance of an impact evaluation; requires clear research questions and committed implementing partners (US\$75,000 max)
- **Full impact evaluations:** rigorous impact evaluations that assess the causal effects of an intervention, program, or policy. Both experimental and quasi-experimental approaches are eligible (US\$400,000 max)
- **Infrastructure support and public goods creation:** creation of data or tools that can support future impact evaluations, research, interventions, or policies (US\$250,000 max)
- **Contextual & theoretical research:** build foundational, empirical, or conceptual understanding of emerging or understudied issues in citizen security through qualitative research, quantitative analysis of primary or secondary data, or mixed-method designs (US\$75,000 max)



Evaluation Criteria

Academic Contribution

Does the study make a significant contribution toward advancing the literature in the field?

Policy Relevance

Is there demand from policymakers for more and/or better information to influence their decisions in this area?
Will results generalize?

Technical Design

Does the design appropriately address the proposals questions? If an evaluation, is the study sufficiently powered?

Project Viability

Are there political, partner, or logistical obstacles that may threaten the implementation of the study or intervention?
What are the proposed mitigation strategies?

Value for Money

Is the cost commensurate with the study's expected contributions to science and policy?

Other Considerations

Ethics

Team Quality



Funding Restrictions

We generally cannot fund...

- Program or intervention implementation costs
 - This includes any costs the partner would have otherwise incurred to implement the program or intervention being tested, including costs associated with refining or developing new approaches that will be adopted by the implementer if proven effective
- Lab in the field or survey experiments, except in rare circumstances or within the context of a broader impact evaluation
- Costs labeled as incidental, miscellaneous, or contingency
- Remember, all teams should review the terms & conditions in our [application instructions](#) before submitting
- **Note:** researchers may submit any number of proposals!

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Tips & Tricks

Project development | Proposals

Proposal Tips (all projects)



- Highlighting academic contribution and generalizability
- Explaining policy relevance
- Selecting the appropriate funding category
- Highlighting thematic relevance
- Geographic scope: There is no particular geographic scope for the call for proposals. We welcome proposals that highlight how their study has implications for broader regional and transnational security dynamics, particularly those that affect the United States

Proposal Tips (all projects)



- **Connecting with IPA Country Offices:** IPA COs have locally-grounded research expertise and partnerships and can contribute to proposal development.
- Reviewing available documents, such as the [Proposal Tips document](#).
- Consulting the CSRI team: We are available to answer written questions via email (justice@poverty-action.org) and holding 30-minute calls to discuss potential proposals upon request.

Proposal Tips (Pilots and Full Impact Evaluations)



- Outlining the program or policy's theory of change
- Selecting and clearly presenting an appropriate research design
- Full Impact Evaluation proposals must include power calculations and clearly outline their identification strategy

Matchmaking

CSRI will also act as a matchmaking resource for implementing partners looking for researchers to evaluate their programs.

Considerations

- Relevance to CSRI scope
- Timeline
- Commitment to running research
- Team capacity
- Number of program participants or other “implementation units”

Process

- We will reach out to our research network
- We may not be able to find a match for every project



Fill in the matchmaking form [here](#)

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Resources & Timelines

Timeline



Round I Timeline

- Call opens: March 2nd 2026
- Full proposals due: April 15th 2026
- Decisions announced: July 2026



Apply!

Next steps:

- Reach out for **matchmaking support** (do so early on)
- **Apply for funding**

Reach out to us for:

- Questions about the call for proposals
- Support identifying and connecting with relevant researchers or IPA country offices
- Help thinking through project designs
- Determining whether your project is a good fit for our fund or other affiliated initiatives
- Partnering on policy or dissemination work



Resources

CSRI Initiative

- [Initiative website](#)
- [Call for Proposals](#)
- [Application Instructions](#)
- [Matchmaking form](#)

Other Resources:

- [About IPA](#)
- [IPA's knowledge hub](#)
- [Designing Scalable and Generalizable Evaluations guide](#) for designing evaluations that produce scalable evidence
- [Read more](#) about randomized impact evaluations
- [Course offerings](#) to learn about randomised evaluations
- Subscribe to our [newsletter](#)
- Follow us on social media ([Twitter](#) / [LinkedIn](#))



Contact Us

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