



General Questions

- Should I apply to the *Building Evidence* or the *Strengthening Evidence* Request for Proposals (RFP)?
 - › This depends on i) your proposed study design, and ii) your proposed research question. The *Strengthening Evidence* RFP provides funding for randomized controlled trials (RCTs) across all areas of social policy, while the *Building Evidence* RFP provides funding for quasi-experimental studies in specific policy areas that align with Arnold Ventures' (AV's) strategic areas of interest. These areas are outlined in the *Building Evidence* RFP.
- Are you open to funding evaluations of policies in areas such as infrastructure or state taxes?
 - › Yes, we welcome letters of interest (LOIs) to evaluate policies and practices, not just social programs.
- Can we submit multiple LOIs?
 - › Yes, we welcome multiple research ideas. Please submit a separate LOI for each distinct project.
- How long does your application process take from start to finish?
 - › This varies from project to project. From receipt of LOI to the execution of a grant agreement, our process typically takes around 6 months.
- How are applications evaluated?
 - › Applications are reviewed by the AV Evidence & Evaluation team and external expert reviewers. Reviewers will follow the criteria outlined in the RFP, with a focus on policy relevance, rigor of proposed empirical strategy, implementation feasibility, and the proposed budget.
- Where can I find examples of projects previously funded by AV under these RFPs?
 - › You can review examples of prior AV-funded projects on our existing [grants page](#) and recent grant announcements ([1](#), [2](#), [3](#)). These examples are intended to illustrate the range of policy areas, study designs, and partnerships supported under these RFPs. They should not be viewed as prescriptive or exhaustive.
- What are common reasons LOIs do not advance to the full proposal stage?
 - › LOIs are less competitive when they do not clearly demonstrate alignment with AV priorities, strong policy relevance, or rigorous study design. Common reasons include (note that some reasons are specific to either RCTs or QEDs):
 - Limited alignment with the key questions in AV's priority policy areas.
 - A weak or unclear case for policy relevance, including how the findings would inform real-world decisions.
 - Limited discussion of how the proposed study builds on prior evidence to contribute meaningfully to the evidence base.
 - Proposed sample sizes that are too small to detect policy-relevant effects or answer the primary research questions.
 - Weak or insufficiently specified study designs, such as an unclear identification strategy, lack of a comparison group, or lack of detail on how causal impacts will be estimated (generally only applies to QEDs).
 - Unclear data access, timelines, or contingency planning, including uncertainty around administrative data agreements or feasibility of key study milestones.
 - Limited evidence of implementation readiness, such as the lack of confirmation that the intervention can be delivered as proposed within the study timeframe (generally only applies to RCTs).

- Do I have to pre-register my study on the Open Science Framework? Can I use another platform, such as the American Economic Association or ICPSR pre-registry?
 - › We are committed to prioritizing principles of open science to encourage research transparency and accessibility. Our team requires all grantees to pre-register studies on the Open Science Framework, but if you feel there is a compelling reason to use a different pre-registry, we would be happy to discuss.
 - Can I meet with your team to discuss a potential research idea?
 - › Unfortunately, due to the number of inquiries we receive, our team is unable to schedule a call or provide individual feedback at the LOI stage.
 - I am interested in conducting a study which measures crime or justice system outcomes. How can I apply?
 - › Please see AV's Criminal Justice initiative's [open RFP](#), which accepts applications on a rolling basis for causal research projects evaluating policies, practices, and interventions related to public safety and the criminal justice system.
 - Do you fund studies outside the United States?
 - › We only fund studies that focus on U.S. programs, policies, and interventions.
 - Do my references/citations count as part of the three-page limit?
 - › No, references/citations do not count as part of the three-page limit.
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Strengthening Evidence RFP Questions

- Do you only provide funding for RCTs in certain topic areas?
 - › We are open to funding RCTs in any topic area which seek to measure policy-relevant outcomes. As described in the RFP, we may give preference to funding studies which are in policy areas of focus at AV — such as health care, higher education, employment and training, and infrastructure (see full list [here](#)).
 - What do you mean when you say you want to fund studies that assess long-term outcomes?
 - › Most often, we expect RCTs to measure outcomes at least 12 months after randomization, and longer if possible. This time frame may vary depending on the program duration, population of interest, and constraints with available data or the implementation partner.
 - Do principal investigators (PIs) need prior experience conducting an RCT to apply?
 - › No, our team hopes to encourage all researchers who may be interested to apply. We do encourage applicants to consider the inclusion of at least one project team member with prior experience conducting RCTs, who might provide advice in designing the study to avoid common challenges and pitfalls, or partnering with more experienced research teams.
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Building Evidence RFP Questions

- Will funding be provided to evaluate programs, policies, and interventions outside of the policy areas listed in the RFP?
 - › Not at this time. This RFP is specifically soliciting studies that align with the listed policy areas. Proposed studies should evaluate programs, policies, and interventions and/or measure outcomes that align with the policy areas listed in the RFP.
 - What specific study designs are eligible for funding under this RFP?
 - › The RFP will provide funding to conduct quasi-experimental studies that generate causal evidence. We prioritize the following designs: natural experiments, regression discontinuity, difference-in-differences, and instrumental variables. We do not fund studies that only rely on matching or selection on observables as their primary identification strategy.
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Budget Questions

- Is there a maximum budget or period of performance?
 - › There is no set maximum budget or period of performance. We expect project costs and timelines to vary based on the complexity of the study, data collection methods, and overall scope of work. Budgets should be well-justified and aligned with the project's goals and design. Reviewers will assess the proposed budget and timelines closely as part of the evaluation process. As a general reference, we have previously funded quasi-experimental studies in the range of approximately \$200,000 to \$350,000 with project durations of 1-3 years, and RCTs in the range of approximately \$350,000 to \$450,000 with project durations of 2-4 years. These ranges are intended as guidance only, and proposals outside these ranges will be considered if well-justified.
- What should be included in the budget?
 - › You should specify the amount of funding requested from AV, reflecting the project timeline and the study scope, along with a brief budget narrative. The budget should include the anticipated drivers of project costs (e.g., personnel time, data acquisition, travel, and administrative costs), and indirect costs that are consistent with AV's cost policy (linked in the RFP). If we invite a full proposal, we will share a detailed budget template.
- Is funding available to cover programmatic costs?
 - › Generally, AV funding supports evaluation-related expenses such as research management, sample recruitment, data collection, data analysis, support to programs for research and data costs, etc. In a limited number of cases, budgets may include a nominal amount of funding for programmatic costs that are necessary to enable a sufficiently sized evaluation to go forward — for example, if additional program staff are needed to administer the program as part of the study.
 - › We are more open to considering programmatic support for interventions with a greater existing body of evidence. If you would like to discuss a question about the budget for your application, please reach out to our team at EvidenceTeam@arnoldventures.org.



- Is funding available for implementation research to complement impact evaluations? What about cost-effectiveness research?
 - › While the primary objective of our RFPs is to fund impact evaluation, applicants may seek funding for implementation and/or cost-effectiveness components to complement the core study. Generally, we are more open to considering this work for applications through our Strengthening Evidence RFP. We recommend that applicants take streamlined approaches that do not greatly increase the overall study cost.
- Are for-profit institutions eligible to apply?
 - › Yes, for-profit institutions are eligible for funding, though reporting requirements may differ if a grant is awarded.

[Arnold Ventures](#) is a philanthropy that supports research to understand the root causes of America's most persistent and pressing problems, as well as evidence-based solutions to address them. By focusing on systemic change and bipartisan policy reforms, AV works to improve the lives of American families, strengthen communities, and promote economic opportunity.