

# Vaccine Acceptance & Demand

 SABIN VACCINE INSTITUTE

## Social and Behavioral Research Grants Program

### Call for Proposals

**Submission Period Opens:** Wednesday, May 19, 2021

**Deadline for Submission:** Monday, July 5, 2021 11:59PM EST

**Apply:** please complete [the application](#)

#### Overview

As the COVID-19 pandemic unfolds globally, vaccines and the process of vaccinating communities have dominated front page headlines demonstrating not only the potential for COVID-19 vaccines but also reiterating the role of routine immunization in controlling disease. While essential public and global health work researching and modeling COVID-19 occurs, the social and behavioral dimensions of the pandemic, and vaccination in particular, require further understanding in order to inform responses and best serve local communities. Research-informed solutions are needed to understand and address vaccination dynamics in low- and middle-income countries, as scholarship to date has largely focused on high-income settings. Additionally, vaccination research has traditionally focused on “hesitancy” in the global health field, making the interdisciplinary nature of the grant call conducive to conceptual innovation and multidisciplinary collaboration to best understand the topic. The Social and Behavioral Research Grants Program provides an opportunity to conduct research and inform locally suitable solutions to improve vaccine uptake and eliminate disease.

What are the social and behavioral dimensions of COVID-19 vaccination or routine immunization that contribute to vaccine uptake in low- and middle-income countries, and what are the solutions that might address them? Sabin’s grant program will fund innovative projects that utilize appropriate and rigorous research methods to illuminate the social dimensions of vaccination at multiple levels and then examine potential solutions to address those dimensions. Project topics might include, but are not confined to the role of:

- public/community-level trust
- information (including mis- and dis-information) and contested scientific truths
- pandemic-induced social distancing, quarantines and isolation
- social inequalities and group marginalization
- patient/provider interactions; clinical settings; health care worker attitudes and practices
- memory of past pandemics or previous vaccination efforts and their impact on present day vaccination
- religious, government, other institutions’ role in vaccination and pandemic response
- influence of media and social media in vaccine knowledge, perceptions, and/or decisions

Applicants may present other topics for consideration. **Proposals focused on the COVID-19 pandemic and on communities acutely impacted within low- and middle-income settings are particularly encouraged.** Such proposals will allow for the most impact since the research has potential to inform responses by communities, governments, international aid organizations and other responding actors.

#### Eligibility and Criteria

The grant offers funding for projects to conduct research and implement solutions for up to twelve (12) months beginning in August 2021. Awards will be made up to \$50,000, dependent upon the project’s proposed budget.

The Social and Behavioral Research Grants program is open to researchers and implementers from interdisciplinary fields exploring vaccination amongst communities in low- and middle-income country settings. Proposals for projects in high-income settings will not be considered. Project teams must be interdisciplinary and comprised of principal investigators (PIs) originating from both the social and behavioral sciences (e.g., medical anthropology) and global public health fields. Partnership with a local immunization program is strongly encouraged.

Since the grants program is geared toward individuals and institutions with limited opportunities and resources for funding, proposals from for-profit entities will not be considered. Proposals from those currently serving on Sabin's Vaccine Acceptance Research Network (VARN) leadership committee, or currently employed at Sabin, will also not be considered.

Proposals are expected to design a research project, translate research findings into a locally-informed solution or implementation strategy that constructively addresses socio-behavioral dynamics contributing to vaccine uptake, test that solution or strategy, and produce a written output (e.g., policy brief, intervention strategy paper, etc.) directed at a relevant audience. Applicants should also identify the intended audience(s) for the output (e.g., Ministry of Health; faith-based community organization, etc.) and create a dissemination plan of their project findings amongst key stakeholders.

This grant centers local community engagement. Therefore, applicants must demonstrate existing partnerships with local stakeholders. To disseminate knowledge and findings amongst local stakeholders and directly benefit communities, applicants are expected to partner with local community organizations and to engage with immunization program managers, non-governmental organizations, and civil society organizations.

Due to the ongoing pandemic and ethical constraints on human subjects research to protect both researchers and research participants, we require applicants to consider remote research and solution pathways. Applications proposing in-person pandemic research must make a strong ethical argument for non-remote research that demonstrates how the team's findings will be used to protect/provide strong benefits to individuals in the middle of the pandemic emergency (e.g., insights that will lead to community vaccination). All research must comply with local health authorities and Institutional Review Board (IRB) regulations. Ethical considerations must be made in advance of an IRB application, centered in the grant project's design, and included in the grant application. IRB ethics approval from a local IRB institution for the project will be required for successful applicants.

Applications are not to exceed 2000 words and/or three (3) written pages, including budget and project timeline. Grant proposals should include and will be evaluated upon the following:

1. A research proposal including: list of key personnel (PIs, technical advisors, financial advisors), narrative background demonstrating contribution to the field and existing scholarship, methodology and analysis plan, proposed implementation/solutions plan, a project timeline (activity and proposed timeframe), and bibliography
2. Established collaboration between a social and behavioral science expert and global public health expert conducting an interdisciplinary research and solutions-based project
3. A research question/topic and proposed solution that explores and addresses the social/behavioral dynamics underlying vaccine acceptance
4. Local relevance of the research question/topic, with demonstrated collaboration between PIs, local immunization/public health programs and local community organizations
5. Quality and suitable research methods and analysis approach
6. Translation of findings into a research-informed solution or implementation strategy addressing vaccination dynamics with a clear methodology for analyzing the solution/strategy
7. Project output (e.g., policy brief, intervention strategy plan, case study)
8. Audience for the solution output (e.g., immunization program, Ministry of Health) and dissemination plan
9. Explanation of feasibility of project within grant timeframe
10. Ethical considerations of pandemic research, implications/constraints of remote research, and risk mitigation and consent obtaining measures; ethical considerations are made prior to IRB submission
11. Annotated budget proposal with explanation of anticipated costs

12. Proposal and resultant outputs to be written in English, while research is expected to be conducted at a proficient level in the language of the local population under study

### **Requirements and Opportunities**

Applicants are expected to produce a solution-oriented output(s) resulting from the research (e.g., policy brief, intervention strategy paper, case study, etc.) and identify the relevant audience(s) for the output(s).

Funded applicants will be invited, but not required, to participate in and present their project at the annual (virtual) VARN conference, as well as contribute at least one 500–700-word blog/essay for the Vaccine Acceptance resource hub, at the completion of their project.

In addition to project outputs, successful applicants will provide mid-line (6 month) and end-line project reports, including financial reports to the grant officer. Grant partners are encouraged to reach out to the grant officer and VARN members for technical advising throughout the 12-month grant period.

Grant outputs for Sabin will be written in English with the expectation that local-level research and dissemination will be conducted in the local language.

### **Review and Selection Process**

Proposals will be evaluated for the above criteria both by Sabin grant officers and by a multidisciplinary external review committee based on their relevance to the proposal's topic. Applications will be evaluated for the relevance of their topic, interdisciplinary approach, potential for innovation, fit between their research questions and methods, ethical approach given the pandemic and current ethical guidelines on research, and potential impact of their study and proposed output(s).

Sabin will notify applicants of funding decisions by late August.

### **Budget and Payment Schedule**

Sabin will structure the dispersal of grant funds in three (3) wire transfer payments, broken down as follows:

- initial 10% of funds upon selection and agreement signature
- 80% of funds upon receipt of IRB approval
- final 10% of funds upon receipt of written output and end-line budget report

Budgets will comply with the following criteria:

1. Budgets cannot be used for vaccine procurement, delivery, mass vaccination campaigns nor other aspects of routine immunization programming
2. Indirect costs are allowed at a rate not to exceed 15 percent
3. Funds will not be earmarked for any government agency, individual public official, government employee or healthcare professional

**Any questions regarding proposal submission can be addressed to: [VaccineAcceptance@Sabin.org](mailto:VaccineAcceptance@Sabin.org).**

All proposals will be kept confidential and securely filed.

*The Sabin Vaccine Institute is a leading advocate for expanding vaccine access and uptake globally, advancing vaccine research and development, and amplifying vaccine knowledge and innovation. Unlocking the potential of vaccines through partnership, Sabin has built a robust ecosystem of funders, innovators, implementers, practitioners, policy makers and public stakeholders to advance its vision of a future free from preventable diseases. As a non-profit with more than two decades of experience, Sabin is committed to finding solutions that*

*last and extending the full benefits of vaccines to all people, regardless of who they are or where they live. At Sabin, we believe in the power of vaccines to change the world.*