



Social and Behavioral Interventions for Vaccination Acceptance: Small Grants Program

Request for Proposals

Deadline for Submission: 16th June 2019

Overview:

Vaccine hesitancy is broadly understood as delays and/or refusal to accept vaccination. The World Health Organization (WHO) designated vaccine hesitancy among the top 10 health threats for 2019. Many studies have contributed to the characterization of this global phenomenon, including in low and middle income countries.¹ Their findings have indicated multi-level (individual, community and national) factors that are both born of and shaped by contextual nuances. These factors include problems such as lack of trust in the people and institutions associated with vaccination programs; inadequate responses to concerns about the safety of vaccines and side-effects following vaccination; the spread of rumors and myths around vaccines; and challenges in communication between health care providers and patients. The complexity of these problems have inspired calls for social science perspectives in understanding and addressing the problem.²

Although many studies have and continue to characterize the problem of vaccine hesitancy, few have designed and tested interventions to address it. A review of strategies for addressing vaccine hesitancy found that most interventions aimed to increase knowledge and awareness through social mobilizations, health worker training, non-financial incentives and reminder-recalls.³ However, few of these studies assessed impact of interventions. The review also indicated an uneven distribution of intervention studies with little evidence for interventions in lower-income countries. Recent calls for evidence for vaccine hesitancy research in African context have also emphasized the need for research capacity building.⁴

As part of the Sabin Vaccine Institute's commitment to vaccine acceptance and in response to the aforementioned needs, Sabin is implementing a small grants program: Social and Behavioral Interventions for Vaccination Acceptance. The primary goal of the program is to identify promising social and behavioral interventions for addressing vaccination hesitancy and improve acceptance in low and middle income countries. The program provides an opportunity for bottom-up approaches to designing and piloting interventions and contribute to generating evidence. With a focus on interventions that increase vaccination

¹ Larson HJ, Jarrett C, Eckersberger E, Smith DM, Paterson P. Understanding vaccine hesitancy around vaccines and vaccination from a global perspective: a systematic review of published literature, 2007–2012. *Vaccine* 2014;32(19):2150–9. doi:10.1016/j.vaccine.2014.01.081

² The Lancet. Looking beyond the Decade of Vaccines. *Lancet*. 2018 Nov 17;392(10160):2139. doi: 10.1016/S0140-6736(18)32862-9

³ Jarrett C, Wilson R, O'Leary M, Eckersberger E, Larson HJ. Strategies for addressing vaccine hesitancy – A systematic review. *Vaccine* 2015;33(34):4180–90. doi:10.1016/j.vaccine.2015.04.040.

⁴ Cooper S, Betsch C, Sambala EZ, Mchiza N, Wiysonge CS. Vaccine hesitancy - a potential threat to the achievements of vaccination programmes in Africa. *Hum Vaccin Immunotherapy*. 2018;14(10):2355-2357. doi: 10.1080/21645515.2018.1460987

uptake, this program will help to identify promising interventions to advance goals of equitable outcomes in health service delivery and meeting International Health Regulations (IHR). Under this program, three small grants of 24,000USD each will be awarded for intervention research projects, which can be conducted over a period of 8 months beginning August 2019. The secondary goal of this program is to build collaborative relationships for social and behavioral research between academic researchers and immunization program managers at the country level. This project aims to contribute to evidence-based discussions of interventions to improve vaccination acceptance while demonstrating local capacities for social and behavioral research.

Key Elements of Proposal:

Target Group - Proposals for social and behavioral interventions for vaccination acceptance may address one or more factors driving vaccine hesitancy, delay or refusal of vaccination within a specific group. As Sabin is focused on vaccine equity and working towards immunization across the lifespan, target groups may include adolescents, pregnant women, caregivers of children under age 5, adults, healthcare professionals or vulnerable populations. The choice of a target group must be supported by documented evidence of vaccination hesitancy, refusals or low vaccination uptake for the group. Research proposals cannot be formative with respect to establishing baseline understanding of factors driving vaccination hesitancy for the target group. Proposals should also demonstrate the research team's extensive knowledge and established relationships with the target group by way of previous research, health service provision or other means.

Intervention- Proposals should reflect key aspects of social and behavioral intervention design such as defining a target group, gaining a multi-level understanding of their barriers and motivations around vaccination acceptance, and identification of potential pathways for intervention. Proposed interventions may target social context and/or behaviors by addressing an array of factors, such as social influence, social media, availability of information and relationship with health care provider, that contribute to vaccination decision-making.⁵ Interventions may also focus on health care providers such as physicians, nurses and community health workers, who are integral to creating an enabling environment for vaccination acceptance. Participatory approaches to design and tailoring interventions are encouraged. Proposed interventions should align with the goals of the country's health system, and priorities for immunization programming. Applicants are also encouraged to leverage local partnerships for community engagement between immunization program managers, NGOs, and CSOs, including faith-based organizations.

Proposal Review Process and Selection Considerations:

The deadline for research proposal submissions is Sunday, 16th June 2019, EDT.

A committee will review each proposal submitted for funding. The proposal review committee will comprise persons from the Sabin Vaccine Institute and global public health researchers who are not affiliated with Sabin. All members of the review committee will sign agreements to protect the confidentiality of proposals.

The review committee will select three proposals to receive small grant awards. Sabin Vaccine Institute will notify all applicants of a funding decision with respect to their proposal by the week of 1st July 2019. Sabin will clarify outstanding questions with potential grantees prior to provision of the award letter.

⁵ Williams SE. What are the factors that contribute to parental vaccine-hesitancy and what can we do about it? Hum Vaccin Immunother. 2014;10(9):2584-96. 10.4161/hv.28596.

Successful proposals will demonstrate collaborations between registered universities, NGOs and/or ministries of health. Proposed interventions must take place in lower and middle income countries in sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, Southeast Asia, Eastern Europe or the Middle East.

Proposals will also be considered with respect to the following criteria:

- Demonstrated collaboration between academic researcher and an immunization program manager
- The proposed intervention is evidence-based, locally appropriate and addresses vaccination hesitancy/improving acceptance
- The proposed intervention targets a social and/or behavioral dimension of vaccination acceptance
- The context for the proposed intervention has a history of/ or is currently experiencing outbreaks or humanitarian emergency
- Evidence of participatory approach to designing and/or refining an intervention is considered an advantage
- Robust data collection and analysis plan alongside the proposed intervention is provided
- Proposed project is feasible and achievable within timeline and budget
- Ethical considerations are made prior to submission to IRB (Internal Review Board)
- Evidence of successful conduct of research projects by members of collaborative team

Research Budget and Payment Schedule:

Each small grant project will be allocated up to \$24,000USD to cover associated costs, including project implementation, dissemination of research findings and meeting reporting deliverables.

A detailed budget of activities and expenditures for the project will be required as part of the application. Illustrative budget expenditures include: training of research assistants/data collectors, cost of designing intervention, communication costs, travel to data collection site, cost of piloting of data collection tools, data analysis software, cost of conducting interviews/group discussions, translation & transcription, cost associated with IRB submission (as applicable), fee for one journal submission.

Sabin will work with in-country partners to determine and agree upon the final project budget, including exchange rate. Sabin will make *three* payments to each grantee to cover approved expenses. The payment schedule will include an initial payment of up to 10,000USD, a second payment of up to 10,000USD and a final payment of up to 4,000USD for participation in monitoring teleconferences, final report submission and financial reconciliation.

The terms of the Letter of Agreement will meet the following conditions:

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%.
3. Funds will not be earmarked for any government agency, individual public official, government employee or healthcare professional.
4. If travel is necessary for trainings workshops, the lowest price ticket in economy class will be purchased. Workshop costs, including meeting space, hotel (if necessary) and amenities will be modest.
5. A detailed budget summarizing expenditures will be provided at the close of the project.

Funds not used in support of the project activities will be returned to Sabin at the close of the project.

Research Proposal Requirements:

In order to be considered for the Social and Behavioral Interventions for Vaccination Acceptance Small Grant Program, you must submit a complete application by the deadline via the following link: [Small Grants Application Form](#)

- Proposal narrative – max or 1500 words
- Proposal Budget
- Timeline of activities
- List of key personnel (PI and/Co-PIs, Technical Advisors, Finance Manager)
- References

Research Proposal should include:

- A robust narrative:
 - Background section: target population, intervention, rationale, references to key literature
 - Methodology section: details of intervention and how it will be carried out; note potential risks to target population
 - Data collection & analysis: description of data to be collected alongside intervention; description of data analysis plan and how impact of intervention will be assessed
 - Dissemination plan: sharing results with target population; presentations to government and local health stakeholders, meetings with international NGOs, draft abstract, draft journal article
- Clear statement of partnership between registered academic research institution and immunization program (academic & program implementer)
- Timeline of research project activities should include all activities, e.g., obtaining IRB/ethics approval, data collection, analysis, write up.
- Activity timelines should not exceed 8 months, including submission of final report and financial reconciliation

Project Monitoring and Reporting:

Sabin values the opportunity to learn from the process of implementation as well as results of the small research grants. We also see the potential for other grantees to learn from each other. A collaborative monitoring process will therefore be adopted for the duration of the projects. Successful applicants will need to commit to the following:

- Bi-monthly progress teleconferences w/Sabin and other grantees (every other month)
- Mid and end line financial reports
- A monitoring visit from Sabin staff at Sabin's own cost
- The end line report will be in the format of a draft journal article, including abstract, background, methods, results and conclusion
- Sabin will request access to anonymized data in form of a spreadsheet

All proposals will be kept confidential.

Eligibility:

This small grants program is an opportunity to identify and highlight locally designed, social and behavioral interventions to address vaccination hesitancy and improve acceptance. The program is geared towards

individuals and institutions with limited opportunities for research funding. For this reason, proposals from high-income countries will not be considered. Proposals from those currently serving on Sabin Advisory or Steering Committees, or currently employed in any capacity with Sabin Vaccine Institute will not be considered.

Timeline & Activities:

Small Grants Program: Promising Interventions for Vaccination Acceptance		
Theme	Activities	Date
Review Process	Submit completed application by deadline	June 16 th , 2019
	Proposal selection and review	June 17 th - 28 th , 2019
Award Process	Notification to successful applicants and share Letters of Agreement	Week of July 1 st , 2019
	Receive co-signed Letters of Agreement from applicants	Week of July 8 th , 2019
Project Implementation	Data collection tools and IRB approval	August 2019 – February 2020
	Data collection training	
	Begin data collection, submission of mid line report to Sabin and host Sabin monitoring visit	
	Complete data collection	
	Data analysis and write-up	
Final Reports	Grantees to send final financial report and draft journal article to Sabin	March 2020
Final Payment	Grantees receive final payment	April 2020

How to Submit a Proposal:

To apply, please complete an application at the following link: [Small Grants Application Form](#)

Any questions regarding proposal submission can be addressed to: smallgrants@sabin.org.

Applications must be submitted by Sunday, June 16th, 2019. Documents submitted outside of this timeline will not be considered in the review process.

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.

The Sabin Vaccine Institute's Vaccine Acceptance Program is a new initiative which aims to advance the application of social and behavioral science research to improve immunization programs globally. The program has three pillars:

- *Vaccination Acceptance Research Network (VARN) as an entity for global leadership in the application and advancement of social and behavioral science insights, research and expertise to address vaccine hesitancy, strengthen vaccine confidence, and foster vaccine acceptance and demand among healthcare workers, parents and caregivers, people for whom vaccinations are recommended and the broader public. VARN provides space for researchers and immunization program managers to convene and set research priorities in relation to vaccination acceptance. Learn more and sign up at: <http://www.vaccineacceptance.org/>*
- *Sabin Synergies strategically integrates vaccine acceptance into Sabin's ongoing initiatives, including the International Association of Immunization Managers (IAIM) Network and Sabin's growing expertise in working with journalists to ensure that they have the information they need to cover vaccine and vaccination science and policy.*
- *Vaccination Acceptance for Health Security recognizes that vaccination acceptance is essential in domains beyond routine immunization programs. Vaccination acceptance is also highly relevant to Sabin's efforts to build new research partnerships with organizations who are developing new vaccines, preparing to or providing vaccines in public health emergencies (e.g., clinical trials involving Ebola vaccines or other emerging infectious diseases) and vaccination in humanitarian settings.*