



REQUEST FOR LETTERS OF INTEREST

The Laura and John Arnold Foundation's (LJAF) core objective is to address our nation's most pressing and persistent challenges using evidence-based, multi-disciplinary approaches. LJAF is seeking Letters of Interest from organizations wishing to conduct research projects focused on public retirement policy.

Background information

Millions of workers across the country depend on public pension plans for their retirement. However, many state and local governments have failed to responsibly manage their pension systems, and governments currently owe public workers at least \$1.7 trillion for benefits they have already earned. As pension debt has grown, cities and states have been forced to cut benefits, raise taxes, or reduce services in order to cover their rising pension costs. In many places, it's not too late to make changes to fix the problem. However, if governments continue to kick the can down the road, the situation could escalate to a full-scale crisis.

LJAF is requesting Letters of Interest regarding research that will help to inform state and local retirement policy. Proposed research may be empirical or theoretical but must address an important question with meaningful policy implications. Key areas of interest are: (1) the impact of plan design, funding policy, and investment policy on retirement cost and cost uncertainty; (2) how rising retirement cost has impacted government budgets and workers' benefits, salaries, and jobs; (3) how various benefit designs affect workers and plan sponsors; (4) best practices for pension plan governance; and (5) best practices for transparent and useful pension plan reporting.

Selection criteria

Letters of Interest should address the following criteria:

- Policy relevance
- Specific research questions to be answered
- Data sources and availability
- Work products (*e.g.*, academic paper, policy brief, website, etc.)
- Dissemination strategy.

Submission guidelines

Letters of Interest must focus on issues of domestic importance and should meet the following guidelines:

- Be no more than **five** pages
- Be single- or double-spaced and use an 11-point font or larger
- Specify the proposed recipient of the grant award, which LJAF generally expects to be a tax-exempt organization (*e.g.*, public charity or governmental unit).
- Specify the amount of funding required to conduct the proposed initiative.

Letters should be submitted by Dec. 15, 2016, to PublicRetirementLOI@arnoldfoundation.org. If LJAF determines that your Letter of Interest meets the criteria outlined above, you will be asked to submit a full proposal.

Additional information

LJAF grant funds may only be used for charitable, educational, and/or scientific purposes. LJAF does not fund efforts to influence legislation, to intervene in political elections or campaigns, to promote propaganda, or to conduct voter registration drives. LJAF does not make grants or loans to individuals and does not directly fund scholarships, fellowships, or prizes.