



The Ronald and Maxine
Linde Center for Science,
Society, and Policy

SCIENCE for BIOPOLICY SEED PROJECTS - CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Due: August 30, 2025

It is widely acknowledged that policymakers struggle to make effective use of scientific research. One reason this occurs: many questions prioritized in academic publications lack immediate relevance in the context of government action. While this disconnect is expected in the case of basic research, it can also arise in contexts where scientists are providing seemingly practical information. For example, according to the EU Commission's working group on evidence-informed policymaking, "Scientific knowledge often does not reach the right policymakers in the right time, or in the right format. Likewise, policymakers may not always know how to use the input they receive."

As a center dedicated to effective collaboration between science and public policy, an important part of the Linde Center for Science, Society, and Policy's mission is to support the creation of *usable* knowledge for decisionmakers. **With the launch of our new BioPolicy Initiative, LCSSP is currently seeking proposals for seed projects aimed at addressing outstanding information needs of government stakeholders involved in the governance of biotechnology.** Support of up to \$170k/year in direct costs will be provided for 2 to 3 years, with initial funding allocated as soon as October 1, 2025. Eligibility is limited to individuals who can serve as a Caltech PI (i.e., professorial faculty, research faculty, and faculty associates).

LCSSP's position is that science-for-policy applications must be based on more than an educated guess as to the information needs of policymakers. Eligibility for this funding will also require a written demonstration of buy-in from a government representative. Practically, this means that applications must be accompanied by a signed letter of support from an individual whose public sector role qualifies them to speak to the usability of the proposed research.

Applicants who feel they have a compelling idea but are unsure about identifying an appropriate government supporter should contact Sara Kassir at LCSSP (skassir@caltech.edu). Applicants are also strongly encouraged to reach out to discuss the appropriateness of research idea(s) prior to submitting. All questions and informal inquiries are welcome.

Submission Instructions

1. Briefly outline the research plan for your project, without getting into the policy relevance (i.e., purpose, context, methodology, etc).
2. Justify the size, duration, and proposed starting date of the award. (Allowable costs include graduate student stipends, postdoctoral salaries, staff salaries, and materials and supply costs. Indirect costs will be computed separately and need not be included in the budget.)
3. Provide a statement regarding the policy relevance that touches on at least some of the following questions:
 - a. What aspect(s) of public policy have you identified as relevant to this project?
 - b. What are the most common criticisms of decision-making under the status quo?
e.g.,
 - Entrenches process that is slow, inconsistent, or unpredictable
 - Ignores considerations like sustainability, conservation, or social justice
 - Ignores or downplays known harms
 - Fails to account for relative benefits and risks
 - Fails to account for costs of inaction
 - Imposes inflexible assumptions on dissimilar circumstances
 - Relies on outdated science or data
 - Lacks verification, trustworthiness, or credibility
 - Incentivizes perverse outcomes or attempts to game the system
 - c. Why has other scientific research / evidence not improved the quality of policy decisions in this domain?
 - d. What new knowledge will your project create? / How do you envision this information being used?
 - e. What conversations have you had with people in government about this topic?
 - f. Why do you think this topic matters for science / society?
 - g. How will this topic engage members of the Caltech community in thinking about science-for-policy?

Total length of application materials should not exceed 3 pages. The deadline for proposals is August 30, 2025. Please email submissions to skassir@caltech.edu.

Recommendation for funding will be made by a subcommittee of the LCSSP Board as well as selected external experts in biopolitics and sent to the LCSSP directors for final selection.