

Request for Proposals: Research

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Introduction

An estimated 70-100 million American adults have a criminal record.¹ While most states allow individuals to petition the court to have certain records cleared, this process is often too costly and complex for most individuals to pursue and be granted relief.² As a result, many Americans who are legally eligible for record clearance continue to face barriers to employment, housing, education, and countless more of the nearly 43,000 collateral consequences of a record.³

The Clean Slate Initiative's mission is to pass and implement laws that automatically clear eligible records for people who have completed their sentence and remained crime-free, and expand who is eligible for clearance.

An important aim of the Clean Slate Initiative is to foster independent research to measure the short- and long-term impacts of Clean Slate legislation for individuals, families, and communities. An important part of this goal is to determine to what extent various factors, such as individuals' awareness of their eligibility and relief under the law, impact the effectiveness of Clean Slate legislation, as well as to determine whether Clean Slate policies are being implemented with fidelity.

Twelve states have already passed Clean Slate laws: Pennsylvania (2018), Utah (2019), New Jersey (2019), Michigan (2020), Connecticut (2020), Delaware (2021), Virginia (2021), Oklahoma (2022), Colorado (2022), California (2022), Minnesota (2023), and New York (2023), and four states (Pennsylvania, Utah, Michigan, and Connecticut) have begun automatically clearing eligible records.

Each state's laws and implementation procedures are different, and it is imperative that research projects are designed with these nuances in mind. In addition, studies examining the impacts of Clean Slate should strive to ensure the policy has been implemented with fidelity whenever possible.

This RFP outlines key research questions that The Clean Slate Initiative has identified as pivotal to generate insights that can inform future policy decisions

¹ Rebecca Vallas and Sharon Dietrich, "[One Strike and You're Out: How We Can Eliminate Barriers to Economic Security and Mobility for People with Criminal Records](#)" (Washington: Center for American Progress, 2014).

² See: Chien, Colleen. "[America's paper prisons: The second chance gap.](#)" *Mich. L. Rev.* 119 (2020): 519.

³ See: [National Inventory of Collateral Consequences of Conviction](#) (2024).

and expand the evidence base around the impact of Clean Slate laws, as well as the timeline and process for submitting proposals.

Background

In 2020, CSI released a research RFP that solicited proposals in two categories: 1) studies on the campaign process, implementation, and outcomes, specifically research on the campaign process for state legislative campaigns, and 2) impact studies to examine the individual, community, and societal impacts of criminal records and Clean Slate automatic record clearance.

CSI funded 9 projects under this RFP in total including quantitative impact studies in Pennsylvania, Utah, California, and Michigan, and qualitative impact studies in Pennsylvania, Utah, New Jersey and California.

CSI's current research portfolio includes a mix of methodologies: causal quantitative research, qualitative and community based participatory action research, and mixed methods studies.

To date, the research funded by CSI has shed light on the formation and implementation of Clean Slate laws, campaign processes, coalition-building, the impacts of records and challenges under petition-based record clearing processes, as well as some early findings around the impacts of Clean Slate legislation on individuals, families, and communities.

However, key gaps in knowledge remain. With this RFP, CSI is seeking to fund rigorous research that expands the evidence base around the impacts of Clean Slate legislation- in terms of the variety of outcomes under consideration over the short- and long- term, as well as within and across more states and populations.

In addition, we recognize the need to gather evidence about individuals' awareness of their eligibility and receipt of automatic record clearance. It is unclear how individuals are best notified of the benefits of Clean Slate and what strategies are most effective for ensuring they receive and understand this information.

Finally, no research to date has examined the fidelity of implementation to Clean Slate policy design. This RFP aims to address this by funding research that assesses how closely the implementation of our policies aligns with their intended design and goals.

Considerations for Future Research

Expanding the Evidence Base Around Impacts of Clean Slate

Pennsylvania was the first state to pass a Clean Slate law, in 2018, and began implementation in 2019. The subsequent COVID-19 pandemic posed a challenge for researchers examining the causal impacts of the law on economic outcomes, given the early years of the pandemic were associated with widespread job loss⁴ and increased platform-mediated gig employment.⁵

A research team led by Rutgers University, funded by CSI, examined the impact of Pennsylvania's Clean Slate law on individuals' employment and tax-filing rates. This study found no statistically significant impact on employment and wage outcomes for 18-25 year olds⁶ whose *non-conviction* records were automatically sealed under the law, compared to those who did not have their records cleared due to owing fines and fees.⁷ Gig platform work was an exception, however, as the authors found a marginally significant increase in gig work for those with more recently cleared charges.⁸

While this study used a differences-in-differences model to estimate the causal effect of Clean Slate record clearance, the study was limited to a sample of young adults and examined outcomes during the height of the pandemic job loss. In addition, the study did not examine the impact of clearing *conviction* records, which may yield much different results.

Pennsylvania has now passed Clean Slate 3.0 which will clear some low level drug and property-related felony convictions automatically.⁹ Future research should examine the short- and long-term impacts of clearing both non-conviction and conviction records among adults of all ages. In addition, employment and wages

⁴ Bureau of Labor Statistics, "[COVID-19 ends longest employment recovery and expansion in CES history, causing unprecedented job losses in 2020](#)," June 2021.

⁵ National Bureau of Economic Research, "[The evolving role of gig work during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)," August, 2023.

⁶ This subsample was selected to ensure the individuals' entire record was cleared, and that no conviction records may have existed prior to the earliest entry in the researchers' dataset obtained from the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC).

⁷ Pennsylvania has since removed the requirement that fines and fees be paid in order to be eligible for Clean Slate relief. Restitution payment is still a requirement.

⁸ Agan, Amanda, Andrew Garin, Dmitri Koustas, Alexandre Mas, and Crystal S. Yang. "[The Impact of Criminal Records on Employment, Earnings, and Tax Filing](#)," September 29, 2023.

⁹ See [House Bill 689](#). See also [My Clean Slate PA: A Project of Community Legal Services](#).

are just two of the numerous pertinent outcomes that may be impacted by record clearance.

Qualitative research funded by CSI and led by researchers at Santa Clara, San Jose State and Rutgers Universities examined outcomes among eligible individuals in Utah, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and California. This body of work found that impacted individuals reported Clean Slate was beneficial due to the cost, ease, and efficiency of automatic vs. petition-based clearance. Impacted individuals also reported improved access to licenses, higher quality jobs, housing, mitigated stigma, family reunification, and transformation in self-perceptions and identity following Clean Slate record clearance.¹⁰

However, people were often unaware of their eligibility under Clean Slate and the research itself served as a form of notification. In addition, partial record clearance didn't yield the same benefits as full record clearance, individuals found that long waiting periods were discouraging, in some cases implementation was delayed, and eligibility criteria were perceived as overly complex.¹¹

Notification Processes and Effectiveness

A CSI-funded research team led by West Chester University utilized a community-based participatory action research (CBPAR) model,¹² interviews, and surveys to evaluate the impacts and perceptions of Clean Slate in Pennsylvania

¹⁰ An overview of findings was presented by the research team, Drs. Elsa Y. Chen, Ericka Adams, and Sarah Lageson at a quarterly meeting of CSI research grantees on October 24, 2023.

¹¹ To date the research team has presented their findings regarding Clean Slate outcomes as well as research derived from interviews with various stakeholders who work with impacted populations on topics including policy development and coalition-building at numerous conferences including: Chen, Elsa Y., Sarah E. Lageson, and Ericka Adams, "Passage and Implementation of Automatic Criminal Record Expungement," American Society of Criminology (2023); Lageson, Sarah E. and Carolina R. Caliman, "The Immigration Consequences of Criminal Record Expungement," American Society of Criminology (2023); Adams, Ericka, Elsa Y. Chen, and Sarah E. Lageson, "The Relationship between Criminal Record Expungement and Family Relationships," American Society of Criminology (2023); Chen, Elsa Y., Ericka Adams, and Sarah Lageson, "Automated Criminal Record Expungement: Challenges and Opportunities," Law and Society Association (2023); and, Chen, Elsa Y., Ericka Adams, and Sarah Lageson, "Impacts of Automated Record Clearance on Individuals, Families, and Communities," American Society of Criminology (2022).

¹² Huger-Burton, T., Carroll, T., Williams, K., Warren Glenn, L., Plummer, J., Ocean, M., Young, D., Prince, T., Spencer, E., Minch, V., Montas, N., Valencia, J., Murphy, J., Humphries, M., Saporito, A., Voithofer, N., Condliffe, S., & Saboe, M. "Building and maintaining an anti-oppressive, community-based participatory research alliance: Practical action steps." The Qualitative Report Annual Conference (2023).

among individuals eligible for clearance and stakeholders who work with impacted populations.¹³

A major finding of this body of work was that the majority of subjects had no knowledge of Clean Slate, eligibility criteria, nor whether eligible records had been cleared.¹⁴

Given the early findings out of the first state to pass Clean Slate legislation, there remain significant gaps in research concerning notification processes. First, understanding the most effective methods to reach individuals whose records are eligible for clearing is a critical component of Clean Slate implementation.

Equally important is the impact of such notifications and resulting awareness on individuals' behavior, as awareness may mediate the overall effectiveness of automatic record clearing measures. The lack of insight into effective notification processes and the consequences of notification presents an important area for future research.

To address notification, several states have considered developing portals where individuals can look up their own records to determine eligibility and timing of automatic clearance. In Utah, a public-benefit corporation, Rasa, provides a portal, and Michigan is in the process of developing one (although the timeline for completion is unclear).¹⁵ It remains to be determined whether eligible individuals are aware of these portals and to what extent they are or will utilize them.

¹³ Huger-Burton, T., Williams, K., Ocean, M., Warren Glenn, L., Plummer, J., Seawright, E., Carroll, T., Prince, T., Young, D., Spencer, E., Valencia, J., Montas, N., & Minch, V. "Calling in public administrators: Rethinking embedded inequity and reimagining expansive public service." The Northeast Conference on Public Administration (2022).

¹⁴ In addition, this research examined how racism and inequities are embedded across intersecting social systems and that in many cases the impacts of systemic racism endure even after record clearance. The research team and CBPAR advisory body presented an overview of their findings at a quarterly meeting of CSI research grantees on August 9, 2023, and have produced numerous conference presentations including: Murphy, Joseph, Angelo Saporito, Matt Saboe, Simon Condliffe, "Living with a Criminal Record in Pennsylvania and the Impact of Clean Slate (Automated Sealing)," Northeastern Association of Criminal Justice Sciences (2023); Saboe, Matt and Simon Condliffe, "A Not-So-Clean Slate: A Progress Report of Pennsylvania's Automated Criminal Record Sealing Law," Western Economics Association Annual Conference (2023); Murphy, Joseph, Angelo Saporito, Matt Saboe, Simon Condliffe, Mia Ocean, "Living with a Criminal Record in PA and the Impact of Clean Slate," American Society of Criminology (2023); Carroll, Tekila, Tekia Huger-Burton, Lashira Warren Glenn, Kenneth Williams, Trichia Prince, Mia Ocean, "Reinventing community-based participatory research to investigate Pennsylvania's Clean Slate law: A research alliance dialogue," American Society for Criminology (2023).

¹⁵ See: <https://www.rasa-legal.com/>

Moreover, there is a significant need for research into the most effective forms of public education and outreach. This includes evaluating the impact of various communication channels, such as social media campaigns, community workshops, and targeted advertisements, in raising awareness about Clean Slate legislation, eligibility requirements, and the resulting benefits.

Identifying the most effective strategies for notification and public education is crucial for ensuring individuals can take full advantage of the opportunities presented by record clearance, facilitating their reintegration and access to employment, housing, and education.

The challenges identified in early evaluations of Clean Slate legislation underscore the importance of notification and awareness. Future research should focus on identifying the most effective notification methods and public education strategies to ensure those eligible for Clean Slate record clearance are not only aware of their rights, but empowered to act on them.

As more states pass Clean Slate laws, the lessons learned from this body of research will be invaluable in shaping policies that effectively address the needs of impacted individuals and communities.

Implementation Fidelity

SEARCH, the National Consortium for Justice Information and Statistics, was funded by CSI to examine the design, scope, implementation and costs of automated record clearing in 11 states at varying stages of the legislative process,¹⁶ and to review existing statutes to determine what updates may be necessary to accommodate automated record sealing.

The analysis of each state included a review of petition-based eligibility and process requirements, the automated sealing eligibility and process, when applicable, terminology used in the law, limitations and exceptions to sealed records access, operational practices and impacts and the timeframe to implement automated record sealing.

¹⁶ This research examined New York, Missouri, Texas and Washington which had not yet passed legislation at the time the research was conducted; Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Michigan, and Oklahoma which had passed legislation but not yet started implementation, and Pennsylvania and Utah which had started Clean Slate implementation. David J. Roberts presented findings via a Webinar hosted by The Clean Slate Initiative on March 30, 2023.

This research identified potential challenges including states' data systems being siloed and data quality and accessibility issues that could impede implementation, and offered several policy recommendations to rectify the challenges.¹⁷

Given the potential challenges to Clean Slate implementation, an area that needs to be evaluated further is the accuracy and efficiency of record clearance across various platforms and databases. This includes not only ensuring that government databases reflect the correct status of cleared records, but also verifying that third-party background check companies update their databases in a timely manner.¹⁸

Research on Clean Slate implementation fidelity should explore the variability in the effectiveness of record clearing automation across different states wherever possible given variations in legislative mandates.

RFP Structure and Research Questions

In the Fall of 2023, CSI convened a group of researchers, experts and stakeholders in the field to advise on the content and scope of this RFP. Based on guidance from this group, this RFP solicits applications under three categories:

- **Category 1- Assessing the Impacts of Clean Slate Legislation:** We are seeking to fund projects that diversify and expand our existing portfolio of projects to examine the impacts of Clean Slate on individuals, families, and communities. We particularly value rigorous, quantitative research that can uncover nuanced insights into the social, economic, and health impacts of these laws, while also including and centering the experience of those directly impacted.
- **Category 2- Notification of Individuals Eligible for Clean Slate Record Clearance:** This category focuses on understanding and improving the notification processes for individuals eligible for Clean Slate record clearance. Research under this category should explore effective strategies

¹⁷ David J. Roberts, Karen Lissy, Becki Goggins, Mo West, and Mark Perbix. "Technical and Operational Challenges of Implementing Clean Slate" [Research Findings](#) and [Technical Appendix](#). SEARCH. April, 2023.

¹⁸ See for example: Lageson, Sarah, and Robert Stewart. "[The problem with criminal records: Discrepancies between state reports and private-sector background checks.](#)" *Criminology* (2023).

for reaching and informing eligible individuals, evaluate the effectiveness of varying communication methods, and assess the impacts of notification on individuals' understanding of and utilization of the benefits of record clearance. We particularly value causal research designs including randomized controlled trials (RCTs) and quasi-experimental designs in order to provide insights that can maximize the reach and impacts of Clean Slate legislation.

- **Category 3- Clean Slate Implementation Fidelity:** We are seeking to fund a single research entity or consortium of researchers with a designated lead to conduct research on the implementation fidelity of Clean Slate laws. This research should investigate how closely implementation is aligned with the intended policy design, identify any discrepancies and challenges in the implementation process, and suggest actionable solutions to enhance the fidelity of Clean Slate implementation.

The Clean Slate Initiative is committed to deepening our understanding of our policy reforms, how they are implemented and their impacts on individuals, families, communities, and society at large. Within the three categories, we aim to fund a diverse portfolio of projects that not only build on existing knowledge, but also explore new areas of research on Clean Slate legislation.

Given the wide range of research questions that could be addressed, we anticipate a wide range of budgets. We anticipate funding multiple projects in Categories 1 and 2. Smaller studies (e.g., cost-benefit analyses of one state's Clean Slate law) may cost less than \$100,000, while other projects are likely to range from \$100,000-\$500,000 depending on the scope. For Category 3 we aim to fund a single entity or consortium up to \$1 million. These estimates should not limit your study design and we will entertain proposals at any budget level that address the priority questions.

Proposals should include a detailed timeline, explicitly stating the anticipated duration of the project. We anticipate funding projects with timelines ranging from 1 year to several years, depending on the state(s) under study and their implementation timelines.

We are particularly interested in funding research that examines outcomes in Colorado, New Jersey, Minnesota, Oklahoma, Virginia, and New York, as these states do not have quantitative impact studies currently in the pipeline to our

knowledge. In addition, projects can examine outcomes in states that have already begun implementation, although we anticipate lower funding levels for projects in states that have already been studied.

We are primarily seeking to support rigorous quantitative research, particularly quasi-experimental designs (e.g., regression discontinuity, comparative interrupted time series, synthetic control, or differences-in-differences (DiD) that disaggregate findings by race, ethnicity, and gender. We value research that pays particular attention to the impacts of Clean Slate on racial equity, and centers the voices of directly impacted individuals and people of color.¹⁹ We also welcome cost-benefit analyses.

CSI is committed to advancing research that is deeply informed by a diversity of perspectives, particularly valuing contributions from researchers and teams with direct lived experiences in the criminal legal system and those who have historically been underrepresented in research. We strongly encourage researchers who are people of color and those who have been directly impacted by the legal system to apply, as well as individuals and teams that have not previously received funding from CSI.

CSI values the inclusion of researchers with direct lived experience and those from underrepresented backgrounds because these teams may bring unique viewpoints, question long-held assumptions, and contribute to more nuanced and comprehensive research findings. The insights of these researchers are critical for uncovering and addressing systemic biases and for researching innovative solutions that are grounded in the realities of those most affected by the criminal legal system.

Core research questions for each category are outlined below, but we are also open to additional ideas proposed by applicants. Applicants do not need to address every question within a category in a single proposal.

Category 1: Assessing the Impacts of Clean Slate Legislation

CSI is soliciting research in this category to determine the impacts of Clean Slate legislation across multiple outcomes and units of analysis. Studies with a longer

¹⁹ Centering directly impacted people and people of color can involve incorporating qualitative or mixed methods research designs, community-based participatory action research models, and/or leveraging a diverse advisory body to weigh in on the research design and execution.

timeline (e.g., 5-6 years) should focus on states that have longer implementation timelines with consideration to studying outcomes over a shorter period, while shorter-term, lower-cost studies can examine the impacts of Clean Slate in states that have already begun implementation.²⁰

The following are core research questions in this category:

- What are the impacts of Clean Slate legislation on individual, family, and/or community outcomes, including but not limited to, employment, housing, public safety, recidivism, public assistance, physical and mental health, family reunification, quality of life, civic engagement, and education?
- What are the impacts of Clean Slate across multiple outcomes for children and families?
- How do outcomes vary across states with different Clean Slate policy features? What policy elements are associated with the largest impacts?
- How do outcomes vary by population (for example: by age, race, gender)?
- What are the unintended consequences, if any, of Clean Slate legislation?
- What is the lifetime return on investment (ROI) for states' Clean Slate policies, taking into account multiple outcomes and units of analysis?
- What factors mediate and/or moderate the relationship between automatic record clearance and various outcomes?

Category 2: Notification of Individuals Eligible for Clean Slate Record Clearance

CSI is seeking to fund researcher partner(s) in this category to address the following core research questions:

- Do impacted individuals know how to answer the question, “Do you have a criminal record?” when asked on an employment, housing, or other application after they have received record clearance?
- How does individuals' awareness of their record clearance impact their outcomes? Does the type of notification individuals receive impact outcomes (e.g., employment, housing, etc.)?
- Are impacted individuals aware that their records have been cleared via Clean Slate automatic record clearing?

²⁰ We anticipate that California, Colorado, and Delaware will join Pennsylvania, Utah, Michigan, and Connecticut as states implementing Clean Slate in 2024, Oklahoma, Minnesota and Virginia will begin implementation in 2025.

- What are the most effective ways for impacted individuals to find out about their eligibility for and receipt of Clean Slate automatic record clearance?
- What are the most effective strategies to increase awareness among impacted individuals (e.g., social media, television, newspaper advertisements)? How impactful are these broad-scale educational campaigns, and how do they compare to targeted individual notification?

Category 3: Clean Slate Implementation Fidelity

We expect to fund one research entity or consortium of researchers with a designated lead to examine the following research questions:

- Following implementation, are the correct records cleared from government databases?
- Following implementation, are the correct records cleared from third-party record-holding companies' databases such that the correct record status is reported to employers, landlords, etc., by background check companies following clearance?
- How quickly are cleared records updated in record-holding companies' databases?
- How does the validity of record clearance and timeliness of third-party companies' data updates vary across states?

Application Process - Phase One: Letters of Interest (LOI)

As a first step, respondents should submit a Letter of Interest (LOI). Applicants who intend to conduct multiple studies must submit a separate LOI for each study. If applicants are invited to submit full proposals, they must submit separate proposals that align with the separate LOIs, if applicable.

To satisfy the research objectives, project teams may involve partnerships among universities, researchers, scholars, policymakers, practitioners, and/or subject matter experts to ensure a highly qualified team as long as there is a project lead/fiscal sponsor.

All partnerships do not have to be formalized by the time you submit your LOI or proposal, but please include information about any intentions you have to establish partnerships that will be important for the research and your capacity to do so. These partnerships should be supported by letter(s) of support whenever possible.

If appropriate for the project, CSI may be helpful in facilitating connections needed to best achieve particular research objectives.

It is not necessary for a research institution or researcher to initiate the study or response to this RFP. Legal system policymakers or practitioners, community-based organizations, and subject matter experts are also highly encouraged to initiate a potential research study, coordinate the formation of the research team, and apply for funding.

Please submit your LOI by 11:59 pm EST on **March 25, 2024** to research@cleanslateinitiative.org.

All LOIs must adhere to the criteria below. Failure to meet any of these criteria within the specified timeframe will result in disqualification.

LOI Submission Criteria

Page Length	LOIs are not to exceed three single-spaced pages with 12-point font and 1-inch margins
Project Category	Please indicate the category under which the proposed research falls
Research Objectives	Specify the most important research objectives, why the objectives are important to advance knowledge in the field, as well as the direct implications for Clean Slate policymaking
Study Design	Provide a brief summary of the study design to address the research objectives and questions. Describe how you obtain data, whether you already have data use agreements in place, ²¹ independent and dependent variables (where applicable), and an overview of the analytical strategy. Explicitly address whether and how your study will include data that is racially disaggregated, and if not, explain why that is not possible.
Deliverables	Provide a brief list of project deliverables (e.g., peer-reviewed journal articles, technical reports, policy briefs, webinars, implementation guides, and ancillary materials)

²¹ Data use agreements are not required nor expected to be in place at the LOI or proposal stage.

Team Capacity	Summarize the team’s capacity to achieve the project goals, including experience working with communities impacted by the criminal legal system, and the partnerships ²² you have identified as important for this project. Please indicate where applicable whether any team members are directly impacted, historically underrepresented in research, or have not previously received funding from CSI ²³
Primary Contact	Provide the name, title, organization, email address, and telephone number for the primary project lead or principal investigator (PI), and the same information for the administrative/financial contact
Budget	Specify the overall cost for the scope of work proposed

We may reach out to the primary contact with questions following the LOI submission, and may also solicit additional research projects and invite proposals for projects not considered during the LOI phase depending on the volume and scope of applications received.

Application Process - Phase Two: Full Proposals

Project teams selected to submit proposals will be contacted by **April 26, 2024**. Proposals will then be due by 11:59 pm EST on **June 21, 2024**.

All proposals must adhere to the criteria listed below. Failure to meet any of these criteria within the specified timeframe may result in disqualification.

Proposals must clearly label the research objective(s) and research questions under study.

We are strongly committed to the principles of research transparency and integrity. To ensure the utmost in rigor, we require all research involving statistical inferences be pre-registered, and that all non-confidential materials including, but not limited to, survey instruments, computer code, articles, and reports be open and freely available online without a subscription or license fee.

²² Partnerships do not need to be secured or formalized by the time of submission.

²³ A directly impacted person is someone who has first hand experience with the criminal legal system or second hand experiences through a family member or close loved one.

In the case of confidential data, proposals need to briefly discuss whether it would be permissible to create a de-identified dataset for public use, and if so, how much additional labor and expense that would entail.

Proposal format: The proposal length is limited to 15 pages, single-spaced, with 11-12 point font and one-inch margins. A table of contents, cover page, references or bibliography, brief team biographies, resumes and/or curricula vitae (CVs) are required but do not count toward the 15-page limit.

Proposal content: The following sections need to be clearly defined and labeled within the proposal. We suggest the table of contents include these sections.

- **Executive summary:**
 - A concise overview of the project, including the main research objectives, research questions, and expected impact. Include a brief description of how the research will center people directly impacted by the legal system and people of color.
- **Background and policy relevance:**
 - Contextualize the research within the literature, highlighting the relevance and urgency of the study as well as how it addresses key knowledge gap(s) and will inform Clean Slate policymaking and/or implementation.
- **Research objectives and questions:**
 - Clearly articulate the research objectives and questions the project will address, detailing their significance to Clean Slate policymaking and the field at large.
- **Methodology:**
 - Provide a detailed description of the research design including data sources, data collection methods, and analytical strategies. Distinguish between independent and dependent variables and include anticipated sample sizes and statistical power, where applicable. If conducting an RCT or quasi-experimental design, specify the characteristics of the treatment and control or comparison groups.
- **Potential study limitations:**
 - Describe potential study limitations and how the research team intends to mitigate these challenges. This may include ongoing

challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. Wherever possible indicate what adjustments might be made accordingly.

- **Project timeline, milestones, and deliverables:**
 - Within a table, clearly identify the project timeline, proposed dates to accomplish project milestones, and project deliverables. Research teams need to consider how to disseminate research results to multiple target audiences, including policymakers, practitioners, and researchers. Applicants are encouraged to develop papers for both peer-reviewed publication and companion briefs that highlight study results and policy implications. The potential deliverables will likely vary based on the research objectives and questions addressed. Applicants are encouraged to identify which tools, guides, policies, and related materials would be helpful for the field when identifying the project deliverables.
- **Institutional Review Board (IRB) protocol:**
 - If the proposed study needs to be submitted to an IRB for review, briefly describe the steps that will be taken to accomplish this and what documentation or data will be required of the project team. All steps to satisfy IRB protocol need to be integrated within the project timeline table. If the research is undertaken by a consortium of researchers, please specify if IRB submission must go through all participating institutions.
- **Data management:**
 - Project activities are expected to involve handling of sensitive personal data subject to data privacy legal obligations. Provide a brief summary of the mechanisms (e.g., encryption methods, user access controls such as two factor authentication, etc.) that will be used to protect sensitive data, both in transit and in storage, in accordance with applicable laws and/or agreements.
- **Research Team**
 - Summarize the research team's roles and how each team member will contribute to achieving the project goals, including experience working with communities impacted by the criminal legal system, and the partnerships you have identified as important for this project. Please indicate where applicable whether any team members are directly impacted by the legal system, from historically

underrepresented groups, or have not previously received funding from CSI.

- **Sustainability and Future Directions:**
 - Discuss plans for sustaining the research outcomes beyond the grant period and any potential avenues for future research or collaborations.

- **Budget and Justification:**
 - Please download and use the [Budget and Financial Reporting Template](#) to complete the budget and budget narrative. This and any accompanying documentation, if necessary, do not count toward the total page length. All budgets need to specify the costs associated with the primary project activities, personnel responsible for completing the project activities, and the hours necessary by project team members to complete the project activities. Budgets also need to include associated costs for any necessary travel and administrative costs. If the prime applicant enters an indirect cost rate that is greater than 25% of your direct costs, you are required to upload to your application any documentation that you believe provides a sufficient rationale as to why you are requesting that percentage. You may also use the budget narrative to further explain that rationale.
 - The narrative justification section serves to offer additional detail about the primary project activities, project timeframe, and project deliverables.

- **Letters of support:**
 - Letters from jurisdiction stakeholders or community-based programs should be included in the proposal materials. These letters should indicate a commitment to the research and the ability and willingness to provide the necessary data to complete the project. Letters of support do not count toward the total page length.

- **Appendices:**
 - Include brief project team biographies that specify the roles and responsibilities for all project team members, and organizational chart (if appropriate), references or a bibliography. Appendices do not count toward the total page length.

- **Proposal attachments:**
 - Resumes and curricula vitae for project team members need to be included as separate attachments. This documentation does not count toward the total proposal page length.
- **Outcomes and Milestones Template**
 - Please download and complete the [Research Grantee Outcomes and Milestones Template](#). This does not count toward the total proposal page length.

Project and Award Timeframe

The relevant dates for this RFP include:

March 25, 2024	Deadline for LOI submission
April 26, 2024	Applicants notified as to whether a full proposal is requested
June 21, 2024	Deadline for submission of full proposal
August 9, 2024	Applicants notified as to final awards

If you have any questions about the application process, please email research@cleanslateinitiative.org.

FAQ Document

Respondents are welcome to submit questions by emailing research@cleanslateinitiative.org. As questions are received, CSI will publish and update a Frequently Asked Questions document that will be available on the RFP website page. Respondents are encouraged to check the site and adhere to any changes made to the RFP.

Review Process

Each proposal will be assessed based on the following criteria (listed in order of importance) ensuring a thorough review process that values quality, impact, team

capacity, and cost-effectiveness. Our goal is to fund projects that are not only methodologically sound, but also aligned with our strategic objectives

.(1) Research Objectives/Study Design and Feasibility

Clarity of Research Objectives: Does the applicant clearly state the research objectives for the project? Applicants should clearly articulate the objectives of their research.

Methodology: Projects employing quantitative methods will be more heavily weighted due to their potential to produce robust, scalable insights crucial for policy reform.

Analytical Strategy and Feasibility: Even if more details are needed, does the analytical strategy proposed to address the selected research questions make sense and appear feasible?

Inclusion of Directly Impacted People: Does the applicant take steps to center the experiences and knowledge of directly impacted people? Proposals should detail steps taken to prioritize the perspectives of individuals directly impacted by the criminal legal system. This may include, but is not limited to, advisory boards or participatory research methods where the PI is not directly impacted themselves.

Data Disaggregation: Across outcomes, it is a key goal of the research to understand any differential impacts by race, sex, age, and other demographics. We understand this may not be possible in every research study, but whether data collected can be racially disaggregated should be explicitly addressed.

(2) Impact To The Field and Policy Relevance

Potential for Significant Understanding: Does the proposed research have the potential to significantly improve our understanding of the outcomes of Clean Slate laws, notification/awareness of Clean Slate laws, or implementation fidelity?

Contribution to the Field: How will the research contribute to knowledge and policy in the field beyond the project?

Alignment with Strategic Policy Goals: In recognition of the urgent need for data-driven policy decisions, projects whose timelines and deliverables are more closely aligned with our strategic goals for policy wins will be scored higher. We

will prioritize research projects that are designed with a clear understanding of the policy landscape and have the potential to deliver timely insights that can inform immediate and future policy decisions.

(3) Team Capacity

Expertise and Engagement: Does the team conducting the research project demonstrate the skill sets and specific expertise required to achieve the project's goals and successfully engage the range of partners and stakeholders necessary for success, including communities impacted by incarceration where appropriate? For research consortium applications, we will assess whether the proposed organizational structure and approach to partnerships will help achieve the stated research objectives.

Direct Lived Experience: We highly value and will score more highly, teams that include members with direct lived experience within the criminal legal system. Such experience brings unique insights that can significantly enrich the research, ensuring it addresses relevant challenges and opportunities in impacted communities. Proposals will be assessed on how these perspectives are integrated into the research approach and methodology, and the extent to which they inform the project's goals and strategies for engagement, in addition to strengthening the team's capacity to achieve the project's goals.

Diversity and Representation: We also highly value teams that include researchers who are underrepresented in the field and overrepresented in the criminal legal system. This commitment to diversity enhances the depth and breadth of the research and promotes equity. We will evaluate the diversity of the team not just in terms of demographics, but also in terms of the variety of experiences and perspectives they bring to the project.

First-Time Applicants: We will score projects more highly that include team members that have not previously received funding from CSI.

(4) Cost Effectiveness

Budget Justification: Is the cost of the project reasonable relative to the proposed research objectives, deliverables, and study teams? Applicants should provide a clear budget justification that outlines how funds will be allocated to meet project goals efficiently.