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Open Call for Proposals 2026

The Jacobs Foundation is pleased to announce the 2026 Call for Proposals for its LEVANTE framework. The Jacobs Foundation is devoting up to USD 6 million to support project proposals to become part of the LEVANTE network.

[Apply here](#) ↗



Deadline for submission: June 10, 2026.

The overarching objective of LEVANTE is to identify **how individual variability, group heterogeneity, and contextual variability influence children's learning and development**. By including data collection of common measures on these different areas longitudinally and at a global level, LEVANTE will help researchers, educators, and policymakers understand child development within individuals, within groups, and across contexts, thus improving future learning outcomes for diverse groups of children worldwide. The focus of the Jacobs Foundation is fostering scientific excellence and building a strong network of internationally active researchers in the field of child and youth development with a strong focus on variability of learning and to foster long-term collaboration with other researchers and the Jacobs Foundation.

Background and Rationale

The Jacobs Foundation is devoting up to USD 6 million to support project proposals to become part of the **Learning Variability Network Exchange (LEVANTE)**.

LEVANTE seeks to understand how children grow, learn, and develop across different times, places, and contexts so that they can be supported to thrive in the multitude of experiences they will encounter throughout life. LEVANTE was conceptualized as the research mechanism that enables scientists around the world to address the transformative questions posed by the [Jacobs Foundation Research Agenda](#). It brings together researchers from around the world to create the first cross-cultural, multidisciplinary open dataset aiming to capture the richness and diversity of child development and learning.

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This third call aims to expand the network's developmental scope and deepen its methodological ambition. In particular, this call will give special consideration to research proposals that enable causal inference and capture fine-grained, dynamic processes of learning through dense measurement approaches. Projects may be conducted in diverse global contexts, with particular encouragement for work in underrepresented regions.

Below are outlined the details of the Call for Proposals process, including requirements, general priorities, objectives for this call, budget guidance, add-ons, and types of projects eligible for submission.

Overview

1. Embracing and understanding variability in learning across the three dimensions described in the [Jacobs Foundation Research Agenda](#): within-subject, within-group, and contextual variability.
2. Focus on typically developing children within the age range 3-12 years
3. Use of LEVANTE core measures, which are currently available in **English, Spanish and German** and being adapted to French, Dutch, Arabic, Hebrew, Kannada, Daccani, and Tamil. Sites may propose plans for further adaptation.

High level objectives of this Call

This call seeks proposals for research projects that collect **longitudinal data using the LEVANTE battery across ages 3-12**. Within this framework, special consideration will be given to proposals that

- 1) Contribute to **causal inference** on mechanisms underlying learning and development, and/or generate insights into how **environmental and contextual factors shape learning**
- 2) Strengthen the use of **innovative, high-resolution measurement approaches and/ or** advance our understanding of **within-child variability and developmental trajectories**

More details

Priorities for the call

1) Causal Inference: proposals are encouraged to incorporate designs that enable **credible causal identification**, including:

- Randomized Controlled Trials (RCTs)
- Quasi-experimental designs (e.g., regression discontinuity, difference-in-differences, instrumental variables)
- Natural experiments leveraging **exogenous environmental variation**. Examples of relevant sources of variation include:
 - Environmental exposures (e.g., pollution, climate events)
 - Neighborhood and socio-economic conditions
 - Policy changes or institutional reforms
 - Administrative or geospatial datasets

Applicants should clearly describe their **identification strategy** and its contribution to advancing causal understanding.

2) Dense Sampling and Measurement: projects are strongly encouraged to include **dense, high-frequency data collection**, such as:

- Intensive longitudinal designs capturing **within-child variability over time**, including via repeated administration of the LEVANTE measures or integration of other measures
 - Measurement approaches linking **short-term dynamics to long-term outcomes**
- Stay updated →
- Rich environmental data collection, with examples including:

- Wearables and actigraphy
- Neuroimaging or psychophysiology measurement (e.g., behavioral, EEG, fMRI, eye-tracking, etc.),
- Genetic data
- Classroom or school observations
- Home environment observations
- Qualitative or mixed-method approaches

Proposals should demonstrate how these approaches enhance insight into learning processes.

Selection Criteria and Eligibility

Main applicants should:

- Have obtained a PhD or equivalent degree at least 5 years (excluding career breaks) prior to the application deadline;
- Be employed by and be part of a research lab at an institution of higher education or research institute;
- Be conducting high-quality research in the area of variability of learning and development;
- Be committed to engaging with and contributing to the activities of both LEVANTE and the Jacobs Foundation.

The following selection criteria are considered in the selection process:

- Scientific quality of methods and data
- Publication record and experience on similar collaborative projects
- Feasibility of the proposed project
- Availability of resources and capacity of the lab
- Innovativeness, uniqueness, and value proposition of the proposed project
- Geographic localization of the proposed project and demographic representativeness of the sample
- Conceptual alignment and integration of planned project with the LEVANTE framework
- Collaboration and/or multidisciplinary character of the proposed project
- Inclusion of young scholars in the team
- Inclusion of additional measures with no/limited additional funding request

Requirements

The following requirements must be met by all submitted proposals to be considered for funding within the LEVANTE scheme:

- Sampling, recruitment, and administration must follow the [guidelines](#).
- All age appropriate [LEVANTE Core Assessment Measures](#) must be administered to children, caregivers, and (where appropriate) teachers. There is some flexibility in grouping and style of administration as specified above.
- Data on core LEVANTE measures must be collected using the [LEVANTE infrastructure](#) tools. Any potential customization must be discussed, approved, and implemented by the Data Coordin **Stay updated** → Just include a budget for such customizations.

- Proposals should administer the complete LEVANTE Core Assessment Measures in one of the available languages (see [Internationalization guidance](#)), or should have a plan for working with the Data Coordinating Center to translate/adapt the measures to other languages.
- Proposals must comply with the [LEVANTE Ethics, Privacy and Data Use Policies](#) and all data from these measures must be covered under the [LEVANTE Data Submission Agreement](#)
- Proposals must be submitted in English. Proposal submitted in other languages will not be reviewed.

Evaluation of Proposals

Proposals will be evaluated using the following priorities:

- Scientific merits of the articulated research questions
- Alignment of the proposed project to the [LEVANTE Key Scientific Aims](#).
- Feasibility of the study
- Site has the resources and expertise necessary to carry out the proposed data collection.
- Proposals from low-resource contexts might want to budget for capacity building to ensure study feasibility.
- Sample Characteristics
- Diversity of population being sampled, with the goal of collecting data from a broad set of cultural and linguistic contexts.
- Representativeness of the sample within the particular context of recruitment (e.g., representativeness of a particular local or national community).
- Sample size – larger samples add greater value to the dataset and will be preferred all else being equal.
- Value of additional measures
- Previously collected or planned collection of data that enhance the value of the core LEVANTE measures, including other measure types, and prior or subsequent longitudinal tracking.
- Sharing feasibility and policies for additional data
- Resulting dataset will be shared in a manner that facilitates easy harmonization with LEVANTE core measure data.
- Coordination opportunities beyond the LEVANTE measures
- The effort is co-supported through another study or initiative.

Funding and Budget

The Jacobs Foundation is devoting up to USD 6 million to support project proposals to become part of the LEVANTE network. Proposals can be submitted within the following three categories:

1) Regular projects

Maximum budget: USD 250,000 over a minimum of 2-3 years (*data collection at baseline, followed by two annual waves*)

Regular projects are expected to support, for example:

- the follow up of an existing, deeply characterized cohort as participants enter the school age window relevant to the LEVANTE battery.
- efficient, high value data collection (potentially over multiple waves) that leverages prior investments without requiring the full suite of analyses or infrastructure envisioned in larger awards
- a narrow, well-defined scope, focused on a single cohort or site

2) Large projects

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Maximum budget: USD 500,000 over a minimum of 4 years (*data collection at baseline, followed by three annual waves*)

Large projects are expected to support:

- Collection of LEVANTE measures in new samples
- Addition of LEVANTE measures to ongoing or planned studies
- Supplementation of LEVANTE data collection with other measure types

3) Infrastructure projects

Maximum budget: USD 1,000,000 over a minimum of 4 years (*data collection at baseline, followed by three annual waves*)

Some examples of infrastructure projects:

- Collection of LEVANTE measures in new samples of greater size or with specific population characteristics of interest that require greater resource expenditure

The final portfolio allocation across grant sizes will be determined based on scientific merit and strategic balance. Review of the extended proposals will take into account the scope of the proposed budget relative to the proposition value of the project with grants of USD 1,000,000 only provided for exceptional proposal that require a lot more technical infrastructure and effort.

Timeline of Application Process

The LEVANTE application process is hosted by SurveyMonkey and consists of three stages:

Stage 1: Initial Application (April 13 – June 10, 2026- midnight GMT)

The initial application comprises three parts:

- General Information: You will be asked to submit general information about yourself, your team and your background.
- Application Form: Submit details of your study, including the project description, geographical focus, and target population age range.
- Upload your CV and a list of publications.

Your proposal will be reviewed by the review panel.

Stage 2: Extended Proposal (July 29 – September 25, 2026- midnight GMT)

If your initial application is successful, you will be asked to submit an extended proposal, which includes:

- Extended Proposal Form: Submit in depth description of your study.
- Timeline.
- Budget.

Following submission, your application will be reviewed by the external and internal review panel, as well as relevant members of the LEVANTE Advisory Committee.

Stage 3: Interview (November 9-18, 2026)

After your extended proposal is reviewed, you might be invited to an interview with the review panel. The final candidates will be presented for approval to the Jacobs Foundation Board.

Learn more about [LEVANTE](#) and the [Jacobs Foundation Research Agenda](#).

Jacobs Foundation

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