MIT Job Description

Job Title: Research Manager 2	**Position Title:** Senior Manager
Reports to: Global Executive Director	**% Effort or Wkly Hrs:** 40 hours
Department: Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab	**Prepared by: Human Resources**
Date: 9/16/2026	

Organization Overview:

The Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL) is a global research center working to reduce poverty by ensuring that policy is informed by scientific evidence. Anchored by a network of over 200 affiliated professors at universities around the world, J-PAL conducts randomized impact evaluations to answer critical questions in the fight against poverty.

The Senior Manager will play a central role in launching and growing the Lighthouse Collaborative, a new initiative developed by J-PAL and The Agency Fund. The Collaborative seeks to help proven AI and other social-sector innovations move beyond pilots to strengthen public systems, thereby improving outcomes, equipping policymakers with better tools, and reaching millions of people.

The Lighthouse Collaborative will bring together partners to identify and help massively scale high-impact NGOs / social enterprises in low- and middle-income countries. These “Lighthouses” will combine demonstrated impact and cost-effectiveness with strong learning systems and delivery models that can work through government.

Position Overview:

The Senior Manager will lead the development and launch of the Lighthouse Collaborative. They will work closely with Lighthouse organizations, governments, funders, academic institutions, and other partners to help proven organizations scale through public systems. Early priorities will include developing government partnerships that enable Lighthouse organizations to reach new populations at scale and building partnerships with academic institutions (e.g., graduate, business, and/or public policy schools) to source entrepreneurial talent that could help bring Lighthouse organizations to new geographies. The Senior Manager will lead key workstreams, manage the team, and be accountable for driving the initiative’s execution and results.

J-PAL is recruiting a Senior Manager to contribute to this mission of promoting evidence-informed policy. The preferred location for this role is Cambridge, MA, based at MIT, with at least two in-person workdays per week. We will also consider candidates based in New York City or the San Francisco Bay Area. Exceptional candidates in other locations may be considered, provided they can maintain at least four hours of overlap with both Pacific and Eastern Time working hours.

Visa sponsorship is not available for this position. Only applications following all instructions at the bottom of this page will be considered.

Responsibilities:

Lighthouse leadership and operations (75%):

- **Lead government partnerships and pilots**: Set the strategy for engaging governments, particularly government partnerships within J-PAL's network, and work with Lighthouse organizations to convert opportunities into well-designed pilots and pathways to scale.
- **Lead fundraising**: Develop and execute the fundraising strategy for the Collaborative and its portfolio, in collaboration with leadership from J-PAL and The Agency Fund. Build funder relationships, shape compelling proposals, lead donor engagement, and manage the opportunity pipeline and stewardship.
- **Support for Lighthouse organizations:** Serve as a strategic partner to Lighthouse organization leaders, identify their most important barriers to scale, and mobilize targeted support from governments, researchers, funders, and technical experts to help organizations build robust internal systems for learning and iteration, "go-to-market" capabilities with government, and capacity for scale.
- **Build the talent pipeline**: Lead partnerships with policy and business schools to recruit high-potential talent for Lighthouse organizations, and replicate proven models in new contexts.
- **Build and manage the team:** Recruit, manage, and develop a high-performing team, including likely additional regional / country hires as Lighthouse grows. Set clear goals, allocate work effectively, coach staff, and create a strong culture of ownership, collaboration, and delivery.

Other (25%): This role will also contribute to J-PAL's overall mission in a number of ways. This includes support high-priority projects led by J-PAL's Global Executive Director and Chief of Staff to the Global Executive Director, and collaborating with teams across J-PAL Global and its regional offices covering Africa, Europe, Latin America, Middle East and North Africa, North America, South Asia, and Southeast Asia. Other tasks may include leading strategic and cross-organizational initiatives, recruitment, onboarding, training, and knowledge management, as well as pursuing professional development opportunities.

Supervision Received:
Senior Manager will report to the Global Executive Director of J-PAL.

Supervision Exercised:
None.

Professional Development

Learn: J-PAL supports a culture of learning with opportunities to attend weekly MIT–Harvard Development Seminars and take classes for credit with MIT's generous tuition assistance program. All J-PAL staff are also eligible to take the innovative online MITx MicroMasters credential in Data, Economics, and Development Policy (DEDP) free of charge.

Engage: Managers have the opportunity to work with J-PAL-affiliated researchers, as well as interact with J-PAL's partners, including decision-makers and practitioners, alongside senior staff. As core content creators, Managers' publications are distributed to development stakeholders worldwide.

Travel: Managers have the opportunity to occasionally present at J-PAL's regional offices, attend policy events worldwide, and participate in a unique "Manager-to-Field" international experience supporting on-the-ground research during their time at J-PAL.

Grow: Managers can expect to join a peer group eager to build institutional knowledge and pass on lessons learned. Managers receive one-on-one mentorship from senior staff.

Benefits
As a member of the MIT community, you benefit from more than just your salary.

J-PAL hires highly qualified staff and rewards them accordingly. Total compensation packages are competitive for the non-profit international development field with excellent MIT benefits, including comprehensive health insurance, a 401(k) match and pension-based retirement plan, tuition assistance, commuter benefits, MIT community discounts, a generous vacation policy, and more. We like working at MIT and think you will too. J-PAL also values work-life balance and offers flexible work days throughout the year; Cambridge-based staff are required to work in-person at least two days per week.

Qualifications & Skills:

Qualifications
Your technical expertise, strong communication and organizational skills, passion for translating research into action, and interest in international development make you an ideal candidate for Senior Policy Manager.

Education: You hold a master's degree in business, economics, social sciences, public policy, management, or a related field.

Experience: You have 7 years of relevant professional experience. Ideal candidates will have experience in one or more of the following: launching or scaling an early-stage social venture; working in or with nonprofits or social enterprises; building partnerships with governments, philanthropic donors, or multilateral institutions; managing complex initiatives in international development; supporting evidence-informed policy and scale; or working in a specific policy sector or cross-cutting area such as climate, gender, health, education, social protection, or AI for social good.

Experience working in international development and/or low- or middle-income countries is strongly preferred. Experience working directly with government partners, social ventures, or philanthropic funders is a plus.

Entrepreneurial execution: You are a self-starter who is comfortable building in ambiguity. You can take a broad mandate, create structure, identify priorities, and move work forward without waiting for detailed instructions. You are excited to be an intrapreneur within a larger institution.

Communication: You are detail-oriented and have advanced writing skills. You understand how to communicate policy lessons from technical academic research in ways that policymakers and practitioners understand. You are precise, clear, and creative.

Organization: You are a strategic thinker. You can handle multiple projects at once, meet deadlines, and effectively manage your time.

Cultural competencies: You are comfortable and adept at working in a diverse and multicultural work environment, with colleagues, partners and policymakers from around the world. You display sensitivity, adaptability, and inclusivity in your engagement with people from diverse backgrounds including age, ability, culture, gender, nationality, race and ethnicity, religion, sexuality, socioeconomic status, and other identities. We appreciate candidates who have familiarity with concepts and frameworks such as racial equity or gender analyses.

Attitude: You love learning. You are passionate about international development policy and the rigorous research that informs it. You are agile, adaptable, self-motivated, hardworking, and collaborative.

Compensation Compensation: Please note that salaries for most new employees are set at the starting point / lower end of this range. - Pay Range Minimum: $128,000

Pay Range Maximum: $149,000