

Request for Proposals: Heirs Property and Disaster Preparedness

10/1/2025-10/31/2025

Summary

The Lincoln Institute of Land Policy welcomes proposals for case studies that shed light on issues and practices that sit at the intersection of heirs property and disaster preparedness. By heirs property, this request for proposals (RFP) means a volatile type of land ownership where the title is shared by heirs as “tenants in common,” leading to a precarity exacerbated when external shocks occur.

As climate change leads to weather events that are both more extreme and more frequent, disaster preparedness has become necessary across the United States. Some areas with historically higher cases of heirs property, such as Gullah communities, are in vulnerable coastal areas; the tragic devastation of Hurricane Helene in western North Carolina shows how dramatic impacts will continue to occur across the country, even in areas that have historically been more shielded. In addition to more communities facing a need to rebuild, many more communities are facing a need to prepare for coming disasters.

Adding to the challenges individuals and communities across the country face in preparing for or recovering from disasters, heirs property owners face additional problems. These issues emerge from a collection of causes, including: “tangled title,” lack of access to property insurance, denial of access to government relief post-disaster due to failure to prove ownership, and the inability to finance rebuilding, among others. Therefore, this category of land owners has been uniquely vulnerable to sudden damages from disasters, which may even lead to losing property.

The Lincoln Institute invites proposals for case studies focusing on strategies and solutions to this issue. As a volatile form of land tenure, heirs property owners are vulnerable in a way that good land policy can address. Good land policy on disaster relief, moreover, should ensure that it does not “leave behind” heirs property owners. These case studies will explore how communities address these issues, and possibly raise new questions on what good land policy about disaster preparedness and relief would look like. As case studies, these proposals should focus on stories about real-world situations facing people or groups and how they addressed it. These case studies will focus on specific challenges that are faced by heirs property communities and practitioners dealing with natural disaster damages. Specifically, we seek case studies that can help answer or shed light on the following type of questions: What strategies are being taken to disaster-proof communities and respond to post-disaster recovery?

The case studies from this request for proposals (RFP) will provide evidence and practical insights for further research and policy discussions. While we expect case studies that emerge from a rigorous research approach, one does not need to be based in a university for consideration. **We strongly encourage heirs property community leaders and practitioners who are involved with these themes to consider applying.**

Situations case studies can focus on include:

- **Cases of natural disaster risk that heirs property communities are experiencing**

- **Instances where heirs property communities stay informed and prepare for these disasters. Examples of resources, social or public support structures in a community.**
- **Financing measures (e.g. land-based finance) in local communities or among practitioners.**

Questions case studies may explore include, but are not limited to:

- **How do practices differ between types of natural disasters? Are these strategies and tactics replicable and practices scalable?**
- **What policy interventions do heirs property communities need from state and federal agencies for their strategies to be the most effective?**

Descriptive Case Study Outlines

A descriptive case study includes a concise but thorough account of the facts of the situation and expert commentary to help the audience understand the causes of the problem, the forces behind the solution, the outcomes of implementation, lessons learned, and connections to theories, concepts, policies, and tools relevant to the situation.

The format of a descriptive case study is:

- A definition of the problem
- Possible strategies and solutions
- Solution and implementation
- Results
- Analysis and Evaluation
- Lessons learned

Proposal Requirements:

Proposals must be submitted online via the web-based application form. Proposals sent by email or mail will be rejected.

The following sections must be included in proposals:

- **Project Abstract:** maximum length of 1,500 characters
- **Project Description:** (4–6 pages) that identifies the following:
 - Definition of the problem
 - A specific strategy taken by an individual, organization, or community
 - Explanation of results or insights from the case study
 - Calendar of activities: Attach to the proposal form an estimate of a work plan with a projected schedule of activities to be completed.
 - Detailed budget: Please outline the costs for research assistance, equipment, data, field-work, travel, etc. Please be advised that no overhead or indirect costs may be charged against funds awarded through this RFP.
- **CV or Resume:** maximum length 3 pages per investigator.

Evaluation Criteria

The Lincoln Institute will evaluate the research proposals based on the following criteria:

Merits of the research and relevance of research to RFP's theme	40%
Quality of the proposed methodology and design	35%
Feasibility of the project in timeline	20%
Qualifications of the researcher(s)	5%

Total score	100%
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Deliverables

Case study papers Deliverables are expected to result in case study papers appropriate for publication. Case studies must adhere to the Lincoln Institute's template, format, and style. The selected proposals will receive the template, format, and style guides for case studies during the contracting process. We expect the final case study papers to be no more than 15 pages in length, not including appendices and references.

Award Amount

We anticipate selecting two to three winning proposals for funding. The amount of the award will be up to \$18,000 for each winning proposal. The funds awarded under this RFP are contracted as work-for-hire and recipients are not permitted to subcontract to third parties.

Submitting a proposal in response to this RFP does not create an obligation on the part of the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy to fund the proposal.

Ownership and Third-Party Copyrights (if applicable)

The Lincoln Institute of Land Policy will own all work products that result from the research commissioned via this RFP. Individuals and/or institutions who accept a research commission shall transfer and assign to the Lincoln Institute all rights, title, and interests in and to such work products, including without limitation, all rights pertaining to copyright and trademark. Creators of commissioned works will be granted a license to use and reproduce the commissioned research for their own educational and research purposes. Commissioned works can be published in third-party journals or media outlets with advance permission from the Lincoln Institute.

RFP Schedule

Progress Report	1/15/2026
Rough Draft	2/28/2026
Final Draft	4/1/2026

Timeline:

Proposal submissions are due on October 31st, 2025, by 11:59 p.m. (ET). Proposals received after the deadline will not be accepted. Awards will be announced by the Lincoln Institute in mid November 2025. Contracts with selected proposals will be finalized in mid-November 2026, and the final case studies are due on April 1, 2026.

Confidentiality

The information submitted during the application process will be treated as confidential among the institute, any third-party reviewers, the applicant, and any co-applicants listed in the submission.

The Lincoln Institute reserves the right to publicize information about successful proposals as appropriate.

Expectations Regarding Research

Applicants selected for research funding must adhere to the Lincoln Institute's [research integrity](#) statement.

Questions about this RFP

Questions regarding proposal guidelines should be sent to Linus Glenhaber, program coordinator of Research and Cross-Cutting Initiatives, at lglenhaber@lincolninst.edu.

About the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy

The Lincoln Institute of Land Policy seeks to improve quality of life through the effective use, taxation, and stewardship of land. A nonprofit private operating foundation whose origins date to 1946, the Lincoln Institute researches and recommends creative approaches to land as a solution to economic, social, and environmental challenges. Through education, training, publications, and events, we integrate theory and practice to inform public policy decisions worldwide.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Proposal Format

How detailed should the project description be? Whatever best conveys the topic(s) and objective of your proposal in clear language. The project description should not exceed 10,000 characters.

Should the project description include a budget? No. The online application contains a separate section to upload the budget.

How flexible is the character count for each section? You must adhere to the specified character count or your proposal will not be accepted.

What is the format for a Lincoln Institute publication? The authors of selected proposals will be sent formatting guidelines and a template for Lincoln Institute working papers.

Are references included in the character count within the project description section? Yes.

Budget

Can the budget be changed during the research? No, except in the case of reallocation of funds in consultation with the Lincoln Institute.

Does the Lincoln Institute cover institutional overhead? No.

What does the award amount cover? The award covers all direct research expenditures including personnel, research assistance, data, interviews, books, research-related travel and software, or other items deemed indispensable for the project's development.

Does the Lincoln Institute finance acquisition of equipment? No.

Evaluation Criteria

Do I need to be a US citizen to apply? No.

Do you fund only researchers at universities? No. We encourage everyone involved in issues of heirs property to apply.

Can the proposal be coauthored? Yes. Contact details for all authors must be mentioned in the proposal and a lead author must be designated as the person responsible for the project.

Can I get feedback on the substance of my proposal? No. This is a competitive process, so all participants must have access to the same information. Thus, we will not respond to individual consultations during the evaluation period or prior to the proposal due date.

Can I make changes to a section of my proposal after I send it in? Only if you do so before the final date for submission of proposals and only if you submit a complete revised version that will replace the original one. You must notify the Lincoln Institute if you wish to submit a new proposal so that we can ensure the original one is discarded.

Can I submit more than one research proposal? Yes, you may submit multiple proposals, but they must be submitted as separate applications.

Other

Who should I email if I have additional questions? Linus Glenhaber, program coordinator of Research and Cross-Cutting Initiatives, lglenhaber@lincolninst.edu.