

Call for Research Proposals on Housing in Latin America and the Caribbean

Context

Housing is recognized as a fundamental human right and has direct impacts on multiple dimensions of well-being, including health, subjective well-being, labor mobility, and poverty reduction. Although the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean have made substantive progress in the last decades in terms of structural quality and access to basic services, significant challenges remain: high rental costs for lower-income households, constraints on the supply of formal housing, informal settlements, and limited access to financing. The housing deficit reflects both structural supply-side problems—such as rising land prices, insufficient service coverage, and limited territorial planning—and demand-side constraints stemming from inequality and low incomes.

CAF has positioned housing as a strategic priority through the development of its 2023–2026 Housing Strategy, which seeks to improve access to adequate housing, especially for vulnerable populations, while ensuring attributes such as durability, urban integration, security of tenure, and affordability. A central pillar of this strategy is the generation of data and knowledge, given the region’s historical deficit of information and studies on housing markets and the evaluation of housing policies.

This call aims to support research that generates rigorous and policy-relevant evidence, with special interest in studies of policies improving access to housing by low-income families.

Objective

Through this call, CAF seeks to fund research that provides original and rigorous empirical evidence on housing markets and housing policies in Latin America and the Caribbean.

In total, up to five research projects will be funded according to the following criteria:

- Up to 3 projects on topics of housing markets and housing policy in Latin America and the Caribbean (see non-exhaustive list below). The selection of these 3 projects will prioritize academic contribution. They may or may not include the study or evaluation of specific policies. They will receive US\$ 20.000 and be invited to present their progress at the 2026 workshop of LACEA’s Urban Economic Association LAURBAN to be held in Montevideo in December 2026. Travel and accommodation costs will be covered for one author per selected paper. These projects must produce a paper to be published after 16 months in CAF Working Papers series.
- Up to 2 projects evaluating specific housing programs in Latin America and the Caribbean. The selection of these two projects will prioritize policy relevance and a plausible causal study of the impacts of a housing policy or housing infrastructure intervention (i.e. water, sanitation, trash collection, etc) in a country of Latin America and the Caribbean. These projects will receive US\$ 15.000 and must produce a paper to be published in CAF Policy Papers series after 16 months.

Priority Topics

Proposals may focus on the following non-exhaustive list of topics:

Rental Markets

- Regulatory frameworks, formalization costs, institutional barriers.
- Evaluation of public policies subsidizing rental payments or providing rental guarantees.
- Market power, competition, and price dynamics in rental markets.
- Informality in rental markets and its interaction with tenant protection policies.
- Short-term rentals, digital platforms, and their effects on long-term rental supply and prices.
- Rental markets, tenure security, and housing stability over the life cycle

Housing supply

- Effects of land-use regulation, zoning, and urban planning on housing supply and affordability.
- Market power and competition in the real estate development and housing construction sectors.
- Constraints related to land availability, infrastructure provision, and access to urban services.
- The role of public land, social housing programs, and public–private partnerships in expanding supply.
- Construction costs, productivity in the construction sector, and barriers to innovation.
- Climate risk and insurance markets in formal and informal settings

Housing demand

- Effects of income shocks, labor market conditions, and macroeconomic volatility on housing demand.
- Internal and international migration: effects on housing demand and barriers to housing access for migrants.
- Functioning of mortgage markets and mortgage-related policies.
- Alternative housing finance mechanisms beyond traditional mortgages (e.g. guarantees, microfinance, rental finance) and their effects on access, affordability, and household welfare.
- Demographic transition and housing demand: household formation, household size, housing size, and specialized housing for the elderly.

- Effects of remote work and digitalization on housing demand within and between cities.

Housing informality

- Causes and consequences of informal settlements and informal housing arrangements.
- Evaluation of policies dealing with housing informality, such as slum upgrading, relocation, regularization, and titling.
- Interactions between informality, access to services, and labor market outcomes.
- Climate and environmental risks in informal settlements.

Economic effects of housing

- Effects of access to adequate housing on well-being (health, education, subjective well-being).
- Impacts of housing conditions and location on labor market outcomes, productivity, and spatial mismatch.
- Housing affordability, inequality, and intergenerational mobility.
- Macroeconomic and fiscal implications of housing policies.
- Housing, segregation, and urban inequality.
- Aspects of taxation related to housing: value capture, property tax.

Application

The amount will be disbursed through a single consultancy contract in the name of a team member or an institution. A detailed budget is not required at this stage.

How to apply

Applications must be submitted through [this online form](#) by March 8, 2026 at 11:59 p.m. (Buenos Aires time). The application must include the following documents in PDF format (in Spanish or English):

- Research proposal: A document of no more than 1,500 words that presents the research question and describes the methodology and data to be used. Particular consideration will be given to the clarity of the research question and the adequacy of the model, data, and empirical strategy to address it. Proposals exceeding the maximum length will not be evaluated. Projects must generate original knowledge. If the project has already started, the proposal should indicate its current stage of development (initial, mid-progress, or advanced). Advanced proposals may receive partial funding.

- Research team: A list including the name, institutional affiliation, and email address of each team member.
- CV of the principal investigator.

Selected proposals must adhere to the following tentative timeline:

- 17 March, 2025: Notification of selected proposals and contracting process.
- November, 2026: Submission of a first draft of the working paper.
- December 2026: (only 3 of the papers) presentation of research progress at workshop. Travel and accommodation costs will be covered for one author per selected paper.
- May 2027: Final submission of the research paper and a blog post summarizing the main findings. The final version will be published in CAF's Working Paper or Policy papers Series, without prejudice to the authors' right to publish the paper in academic journals.

Selection Committee

- The jury will be composed of: Guillermo Alves (CAF), Verónica Amarante (CAF), Verónica Frisancho (CAF), Jorge de la Roca (University of Southern California) and Pablo López (CAF).

Contact

If you have any questions not addressed in the documentation, please contact us at: investigacion@caf.com.