

# 2014 Call for Proposals

*Proposal Deadline: January 21, 2015*



Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

## NEW CONNECTIONS: INCREASING DIVERSITY OF RWJF PROGRAMMING

### 2014 CALL FOR PROPOSALS - ROUND 9

#### BACKGROUND

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF)'s *New Connections: Increasing Diversity of RWJF Programming* aims to expand the diversity of perspectives that inform RWJF programming and introduce new researchers and scholars to the Foundation in order to help address research and evaluation needs. The program invites *Junior Investigators*—scholars from historically disadvantaged and underrepresented communities who have received their doctorate within the last 10 years—to address RWJF program priorities. New Connections is a career development program for early- and mid-career researchers and consultants from underrepresented groups. The program provides support to grantees of the program and other individuals who are part of a network of eligible scholars. Through grantmaking, mentorship, and career development, New Connections enhances the research capacity of its grantees and network members. Eligible scholars include individuals from ethnic, racial minority, or low-income communities; first-generation college graduates (i.e., the first person in one's family to receive a 2- or 4- year college degree in any country); or others who historically have been underrepresented in research disciplines.\*

#### THE PROGRAM

The New Connections program provides support and training to *Junior Investigators* to address RWJF's program priorities. A brief overview of RWJF focus areas is included on page 3.

*Junior Investigators* will address program research topics in their proposals by using the most relevant methodology as determined through the application process. Approaches might include qualitative methods (i.e., focus groups or interviews), environmental scans, mixed methods, or other innovative approaches to research and/or evaluation. Projects proposing secondary data analysis are preferred. Any projects proposing primary data collection must provide evidence both for how this approach is feasible and how it enhances the project. The proposed work should reflect RWJF's vision to build a Culture of Health for all Americans. To learn more about the Culture of Health visit [www.rwjf.org/en/about-rwjf.html](http://www.rwjf.org/en/about-rwjf.html).

Selected finalists in the grantmaking process will develop a work plan at the outset of the grant. This plan should detail the milestones, timeline and key deliverables of the funded project for the 24-month grant period. New Connections program staff, along with RWJF staff, will review all work plans. As part of the deliverables for their funded project, *Junior Investigators* must prepare at least two manuscripts based on their New Connections project for submission to a peer-reviewed journal by the end of the grant. We will

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not accept manuscripts developed or published prior to the grant start date as project deliverables for New Connections-funded work.

Applicants must select a mentor for the project who will provide his or her in-kind support. *Junior Investigators* must enroll in up to two methodological training programs during the grant. They may use some of their funding to hire a consultant, such as a biostatistician, mentor or research assistant.

We require *Junior Investigators* to include in their budgets attendance at one New Connections Annual Symposium (usually held in June), one Research and Coaching Clinic, and two meetings at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation in Princeton, New Jersey—one at the outset of the award and another during the second year of the award. Junior Investigator applicants may also include in their budgets travel expenses to present and/or disseminate their research at up to two key national meetings, but they may need to solicit additional funds from their host institution in order to cover these costs. We encourage applicants to participate in a web conference for more detailed information about the application process. Please see page 7 for more details about the applicant web conference.

The New Connections national program office will be the first point of contact for *Junior Investigators*. New Connections will facilitate grantee communication with staff at RWJF. Programming staff will help to explain program areas at RWJF and how the Foundation operates.

## TOTAL AWARDS

- We will award up to ten *Junior Investigators* grants of up to \$100,000 for a 24-month period.
- Of the ten *Junior Investigators* grants awarded in this funding round, up to two grants will be designated for Public Health Law Research (PHLR)-New Connections awards.
- In this proposal stage, we ask applicants to submit a brief proposal for selection as a New Connections grantee.
- RWJF will award grants to the *Junior Investigator's* home university or other host institution. We will require the Project Director and his or her host institution to submit financial reports and other grant-related information on behalf of the Junior Investigator. We also expect host institutions to support the Junior Investigator's attendance at annual training events, such as the New Connections Symposium and Research and Coaching Clinic, methodological training, presentations and other networking and mentoring events. New Connections' funds are intended to support a minimum of 25 percent of the Junior Investigator's time over the entire 24-month grant period (including summer months). In addition, the grants will cover travel and other support. The work proposed must be completed within the 24-month period of the grant. Grant extensions are not encouraged.

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- This call for proposal is to solicit projects from *Junior Investigators*. Associate and Full professors interested in New Connections funding are encouraged to apply for the Midcareer Consultant opportunity.

*\*The New Connections program is open to applicants from any group that has been historically disadvantaged or underrepresented in research disciplines. This includes, but is not limited to, individuals from ethnic and racial minorities that have historically been underrepresented in research disciplines. It also includes persons of all races and ethnicities who come from groups that have historically been disadvantaged or underrepresented in research disciplines, such as first-generation college graduates and people from low-income communities. These examples are intended to be illustrative, not exclusive. Applicants who do not fall within one of these categories but who believe they are from a historically disadvantaged or underrepresented background will have an opportunity to describe their individual circumstances as part of the online application process.*

## RESEARCH TOPICS

Please follow this link: <http://www.rwjf.org/en/our-work.html> for a brief description of RWJF focus areas. In their applications, *Junior Investigators* must select up to two research topics that align with the RWJF focus areas, the vision for building a Culture of Health and their research interests and experience. For additional details on the focus areas please check the *Reference Materials* in the online application system.

CHILD AND FAMILY WELL-BEING

CHILDHOOD OBESITY

HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

HEALTH LEADERSHIP AND WORKFORCE

HEALTH SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT

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## NEW CONNECTIONS JUNIOR INVESTIGATOR PROGRAM APPLICANT REQUIREMENTS:

- New Connections Junior Investigator program applicants must have completed a doctoral degree (including a JD for PHLR-NC applicants) within the last 10 years (obtained by December 31, 2005 or later);
- Applicants must have an agreement from a host institution to administer and be the recipient of the grant;
- Individual candidates for receipt of award funds must be U.S. Citizens or permanent residents\*\* at the time of application;
- If there is an applicant organization, it must be either a public entity or nonprofit organization that is tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and is not a private foundation or non-functionally integrated Type III supporting organization. Applicant organizations must be based in the United States or its territories. The Foundation may require additional documentation;
- Applicants must be from a group that has historically been underrepresented in research activities, such as people from ethnic and racial minorities, low-income communities, or first-generation college graduates;
- Applicants must never have previously received a grant or contract from RWJF as a principal investigator;
- Applicants must provide evidence of research skills addressing various aspects of health and health care (research fellowship or equivalent training or experience); and
- Applicants must be committed to the goals and mission of New Connections, RWJF and its specific interest areas; and
- Applicants must be early-career scholars, such as a post-doc or assistant professor;
- Applicants must demonstrate how a New Connections *Junior Investigator* award would impact their career development.
- Additionally, individual candidates for receipt of award funds cannot be related by blood or marriage to any Officer\*\*\* or Trustee of RWJF, or be a descendant of its founder, Robert Wood Johnson.

*\*\* Applicants who are permanent residents and not green card holders should contact the National Program Office before applying to determine whether they can satisfy the program's eligibility and documentation requirements.*

*\*\*\* The Officers are the Chairman of the Board of Trustees; President and CEO; Chief of Staff; General Counsel; Secretary; Assistant Secretary; Treasurer; and Assistant Treasurer of the Foundation.*

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## DIVERSITY STATEMENT

Consistent with RWJF values, this program embraces diversity and inclusion across multiple dimensions, such as race, ethnicity, gender, disability, age and socioeconomic status. We strongly encourage applications in support of individual candidates who will help us expand the perspectives and experiences we bring to our work. We believe that the more we include diverse perspectives and experiences in our work, the more successful we will be as we strive together to build a Culture of Health, enabling all in our diverse society to lead healthier lives, now, and for generations to come.

## SELECTION CRITERIA

A committee consisting of RWJF staff and New Connections program staff from OMG Center for Collaborative Learning will review all proposals. RWJF does not provide individual critiques of proposals submitted. The following factors will be used in the selection process:

- Significance and relevance of the applicant's previous research and/or evaluation experience
- Demonstrated skill set in relevant program research topic and evaluation interests, in alignment with RWJF's vision to build a Culture of Health
- Evidence of solid research and/or evaluation experience and interests
- Demonstrated fit with program goals of career development for diverse early career researchers and consultants
- Uniqueness of the applicant's personal and professional experiences. We seek *Junior Investigator* applicants who strive to develop new ways to contribute to the understanding of current health and health care challenges.
- Demonstrated knowledge of and experience with various research methodologies and evaluation practices. We do not expect applicants to be content experts, but they should be able to lead a project with sufficient methodological understanding to produce new knowledge for RWJF and its program teams.
- Demonstrated ability and skill to complete the work within the specified time period
- If the applicant is proposing a project that reflects a shift from their prior research agenda, the applicant should explain how that shift will advance her or his career.

## EVALUATION AND MONITORING

An independent research group selected and funded by RWJF may conduct an evaluation of the program. As a condition of accepting RWJF funds, we require grantees to participate in the evaluation.

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Grantees are expected to meet RWJF requirements for the submission of narrative and financial reports, as well as periodic information needed for overall project performance monitoring and management. We may ask Project Directors (PDs) to participate in periodic meetings and give progress reports on their grants. At the close of each grant, the grantee is expected to provide a written report on the project and its findings suitable for wide dissemination.

## APPLICANT SURVEY PROCESS

To help us measure the effectiveness of RWJF grantmaking and improve the grant application experience, we will survey the Project Director (PD) listed in the proposals submitted under this call for proposals. Shortly after the proposal deadline, the PD will be contacted by Princeton Survey Research Associates International (PSRAI), an independent research firm, and asked to complete a brief, online survey about the application process and applicant characteristics. This voluntary questionnaire will take no more than 15 minutes to complete. Responses provided to PSRAI will not impact the funding decision for the proposals in any way.

PSRAI will protect the confidentiality of the responses. RWJF will not receive any data that links a name with the survey responses.

Please email [applicantfeedback@rwjf.org](mailto:applicantfeedback@rwjf.org) with any questions about the survey or the use of the data.

## USE OF GRANT FUNDS

Grant funds may be used to cover the costs associated with completing the research project or evaluation, travel for site visits, and other related costs. In keeping with RWJF policy, grant funds may not be used to subsidize individuals for the costs of their health care, to support clinical trials of unapproved drugs or devices, to construct or renovate facilities, for lobbying or as a substitute for funds currently being used to support similar activities.

The New Connections program guidelines specify the use of funds allowable under this program. Applicants should strive for efficient and appropriate use of funds as reflected in the proposed budget. The majority of funding should be used for the *Junior Investigator's* salary, travel, communication needs, training, and costs associated with full participation in the New Connections program. It is expected that by the end of grant funding through New Connections each applicant would be prepared to submit at least two manuscripts for publication. Grantees are also encouraged to propose and develop mechanisms for sharing knowledge gained with RWJF and, where applicable, with relevant audiences in the field.

## HOW TO APPLY

Applications for this solicitation must be submitted via the RWJF online system.

Visit [www.rwjf.org/cfp/nci9jr](http://www.rwjf.org/cfp/nci9jr) and use the Apply Online link. If you have not already done so, you will be required to register at <http://my.rwjf.org> before you begin the application process.

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There are two phases in the competitive proposal process:

## Phase 1: Brief Proposals

The first phase is the submission of a brief proposal that consists of the *Junior Investigators'* professional background, personal statement, professional statement (detailing the applicant's research and/or evaluation goals and future research and/or evaluation agenda) and identification of professional references. We will review brief proposals and invite selected applicants to move to the second stage of the application process.

## Phase 2: Full Proposals

Selected Phase 1 applicants will be invited to submit a full proposal of no more than eight pages accompanied by a detailed budget, budget narrative, and additional information.

All applicants should log into the system and familiarize themselves with online submission requirements well before the submission deadline. Staff may not be able to assist all applicants in the final 24 hours before the submission deadline. In fairness to all applicants, the program will not accept late submissions.

Please direct inquiries to:

Howard M. Walters, Project Manager

Phone: 215-732-2200 ext. 276

Email: [info@rwjf-newconnections.org](mailto:info@rwjf-newconnections.org)

RWJF does not provide individual critiques of applications submitted.

The deadline for receipt of brief proposals is **January 21, 2015 at 3:00 p.m. ET**. By **March 12, 2015** we will notify selected applicants that they have been invited to submit a full proposal. Information on full application submission requirements will be provided to selected applicants at that time. The deadline for receipt of full proposals is **3:00 p.m. ET on April 23, 2015**. We will notify Finalists of their status by **July 1, 2015**.

## OPTIONAL APPLICANT WEB CONFERENCE CALL

We will hold a web conference call for applicants to provide additional information on the program's goals, to assist applicants with the initial application process, and to offer an opportunity for applicants to ask questions. The webinar is scheduled for **January 6, 2015 from 2:30–3:30 p.m. ET**.

We highly encourage prospective applicants to participate in the web conference call. Applicants can learn more about this web conference call and register by going to the program's website at [www.rwjf-newconnections.org](http://www.rwjf-newconnections.org) Registration is required to participate.

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## PROGRAM DIRECTION

Direction and technical assistance for this program are provided by the OMG Center for Collaborative Learning, which serves as the national program office located at:

OMG Center for Collaborative Learning  
1528 Walnut Street Suite 905  
Philadelphia, PA 19102  
Phone: (215) 732 - 2200 x276  
Fax: (215) 732 - 8123  
E-mail: [info@rwjf-newconnections.org](mailto:info@rwjf-newconnections.org)  
Website: [www.rwjf-newconnections.org](http://www.rwjf-newconnections.org)

*Responsible staff members at OMG Center are:*

- Gerri Spilka, MArch, MA, *national program director, New Connections: Increasing Diversity of RWJF Programming*
- Lisa Aponte-Soto, PhD, MHA, *deputy director, New Connections: Increasing Diversity of RWJF Programming*
- Howard M. Walters, MSS, MLSP, *project manager, New Connections: Increasing Diversity of RWJF Programming*

*Responsible staff members at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation are:*

- Catherine Malone, DBA, MBA, *program officer*
- Herminia Palacio, MD, MPH, *director, Leadership and Human Capital*
- James Mendez, *program financial analyst*
- Shaheen Mamawala, MPA, *communications officer*

## KEY DATES AND DEADLINES

*January 21, 2015 (3 p.m. ET)*

Deadline for receipt of brief proposals.\*

*March 12, 2015*

Selected applicants invited to submit full proposals.

*April 23, 2015 (3 p.m. ET)*

Deadline for receipt of full proposals.

*July 1, 2015*

Finalists notified of funding recommendations.



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*September 1, 2015*

Grants initiated.

*\*All proposals must be submitted via [my.rwjf.org](http://my.rwjf.org) only. Program staff may not be able to assist all applicants in the final 24 hours before the submission deadline. In fairness to all applicants, the program will not accept late or incomplete proposals.*

## ABOUT THE ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON FOUNDATION

For more than 40 years the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation has worked to improve health and health care. We are striving to build a national Culture of Health that will enable all to live longer, healthier lives now and for generations to come. For more information, visit [www.rwjf.org](http://www.rwjf.org). Follow the Foundation on Twitter at [www.rwjf.org/twitter](http://www.rwjf.org/twitter) or on Facebook at [www.rwjf.org/facebook](http://www.rwjf.org/facebook).

Sign up to receive email alerts on upcoming calls for proposals at [www.rwjf.org/funding](http://www.rwjf.org/funding).

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