

RWJF Sports Award



2021 RWJF Sports Award

Frequently Asked Questions

(Updated December 2020)

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Sports Award recognizes sports teams, athletes, coaches, and community-based organizations that use sports to catalyze and sustain changes to make communities healthier and more equitable places to live, learn, work, and play.

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Who is eligible?

The Foundation will consider applications from the following organizations:

- A professional sports team community relations department or foundation based in the United States or Canada.
- An individual athlete or professional coach based in the United States or Canada.
- An organization in the United States or Canada that is an influential leader and model for improving community health through sports.

What do you mean by “influential leader”?

We expect applicants to have significant reach and impact. These organizations should demonstrate a successful track record as a powerful voice for the importance of sports as a platform for community health and well-being.

Only one application may be submitted per national organization. If you are a local “chapter” that falls under the umbrella of or is directly associated with a larger, national organization (for example, Girls on the Run, YMCA, Special Olympics, Boys & Girls Clubs) we ask that you coordinate with the national office, as only the umbrella organization, and not individual chapters, is eligible to apply and multiple applications will not be accepted. If you submit on behalf of the national office, we encourage you to highlight the work of your local programs.

If you are an independent sports program, please be sure that you can highlight significant reach and impact and show a successful track record of serving as an influential leader nationally.

Learn more about recent past winners [on the website](#).

Applicants that are not charitable organizations or public entities must apply with an organization that is such an entity and will receive the prize funds. Additional documentation may be requested.

The Foundation pledges to work in ways that reflect our values and [Our Guiding Principles](#). We strive to treat everyone with respect; we cultivate diversity, inclusion, and collaboration; and we act as good stewards of private resources, using them to advance the public’s interest. We recognize that our reputation and success also depend upon the integrity, fairness, and sound judgment of those with whom we work.

With these principles in mind, RWJF will not consider an application if it is submitted by an entity whose name, brand, or practices—in the Foundation’s judgment—denigrates, harms, or discriminates against any racial or ethnic group. For example, a team with a name or mascot that, in RWJF’s view, denigrates Native Americans will not be eligible for the award.

Are RWJF grantees eligible to apply?

Yes. RWJF grantees are eligible to apply but are given no preference during the review process.

Are fundraising events eligible to apply?

No. We do not accept applications from fundraising events.

What if I am a grantmaking organization and don't operate a program?

You are eligible to apply and have the same opportunity to win as someone who operates their own program.

Is this a cash prize or a grant?

Organizations should understand that they are applying for a cash prize and not a grant.

How many awards are given?

Up to five awards of \$25,000 each may be given annually.

How does the work get nominated?

Eligible organizations submit their own applications. No third party applications are accepted.

If I am nominating my organization, who should complete the application?

We recommend having the person who oversees this type of work complete the application or someone very involved in the details of the program.

How many applications do you receive each year?

On average, we receive between 250-300 applications per year.

How long does the judging process take, how does it work, and who are the judges?

The selection process is strategic and thoughtful. It takes two months, two separate rounds of review, and a panel of experts to evaluate each application and determine the winners each year. Our reviewers represent RWJF, academia, industry experts and past winners. The decisions of the selection committee are final. The committee reserves the right not to present the award in any given year.

If I win, what do I need to do?

The winners will be expected to participate in an award presentation (virtual or in person) fall 2021.

Do I have to submit my application online?

Yes. Only submissions through our online application process are eligible. No hard copy materials will be accepted or reviewed.

What is the deadline for nominations?

All nominations must be submitted by the application deadline, May 5, 2021 at 5 p.m. ET.

Nominations submitted after the deadline will not be accepted or reviewed.

Are past winners eligible to apply?

Past RWJF Sports Award winners are not eligible to apply. Past Patterson Award winners are Eligible to apply.

Can I submit programming that is not currently up and running?

No, only organizations or programs that are operational are eligible to apply.