

**Robert Wood Johnson Foundation**  
**Addressing Structural Barriers to Economic Inclusion for Children and Families**  
**Call for Proposals**

**Frequently Asked Questions**

(Last updated **June 8, 2023**)

*This document provides additional information on a new call for proposals (CFP). Please see the [CFP document for detailed information about the grant and how to apply](#). For budget questions, please also review the [Budget Preparation Guidelines](#).*

*This FAQ document will be updated regularly based on questions from applicants. New questions or updated answers will be listed in **purple font**.*

**FAQ SECTIONS**

- [Application Details and Timeline](#)
- [Grantee Selection and Eligibility](#)
- [Clarification of Terms](#)
- [Additional Guidance for Applicants](#)

**APPLICATION DETAILS AND TIMELINE**

**1. What is the due date for completed applications? (updated 6/8/2023)**

The deadline is June 21, 2023, at 3:00 pm **EDT**. RWJF has a new policy in place and there will be no exceptions to this deadline.

**2. Do you accept late submissions for any reason?**

Late submissions will not be accepted for any reason. In the event of (1) a verified issue with the RWJF proposal system that prevented completion and submission of proposals; or (2) a disaster, emergency, or significant internet outage that affects one or more regions, extensions will be considered. For purposes of this policy, a region is generally considered to be one or more states. If the deadline is extended for any reason, the extension will be posted on the funding opportunity page at [www.rwjf.org](http://www.rwjf.org). In addition, an email will be sent to all individuals that have started a proposal in the RWJF online system.

RWJF strives to give all applicants any support needed to successfully submit their proposal prior to the deadline. Submission is defined as all sections completed, marked finished, the proposal “submit” button used, and the proposal status shows “Submitted.” NOTE: Once you have completed all required sections of your proposal, you must return to the home page of the *MyRWJF* system to gain access to the “Submit” button, located in the upper right of the home screen. After clicking the “Submit” button, you will see a screen confirming your submission.

**3. How will I know that my proposal has been successfully submitted?**

You will receive an email from the [MyRWJF](#) application site confirming that you have submitted your proposal successfully.

**4. Can we submit appendices or links?**

Yes, you may provide links (and they are encouraged). Examples of links include evidence of prior work, descriptions of organizations with whom you will work, and other documents directly related to the proposed project. Further, please submit resumes, bios or curricula vitae via the supporting documents section of the application, otherwise all other supporting information should be included in the proposal narrative. As indicated in the CFP, your narrative can be up to ten pages, and only ten pages will be reviewed. If you would like a visual viewed, please link to it or include it in the ten pages. All proposals should follow the format listed in the application (e.g., one-inch margins, Arial font, 12-point font, 1.5 line-spaced). Anything that does not follow this format or is beyond the ten pages will not be reviewed.

**5. Are there opportunities to talk with a program officer to determine if our project is a match?**

To have a fair process we are unable to answer project specific questions or meet 1:1 with applicants. However, there are two ways for you to get your questions answered or the clarity you need. One is to review the webinar recording and the other, which is available around the clock, is to submit your question via our CFP e-mail address. Responses to questions submitted will be shared with the individual asking the question and will become a part of the FAQs on the CFP additional materials. As questions and responses are added they will be in [purple](#), to distinguish from those that were initially included.

**6. Are letters of recommendation needed or preferred? (added 6/8/23)**

Letters of recommendation are not an element of this application. If you feel letters of recommendation would significantly strengthen your proposal, you may include them as part of your 10-page proposal narrative. Only letters of partnership from applicants partnering with other organization(s) should be submitted in the Letters of Partnership section of the application.

**7. Do I need to include references as part of my proposal narrative? (added 6/8/23)**

A reference section is not required. Only 10 pages can be uploaded into the applicant portal. If you would like references included, they will count toward the proposal narrative page limit and should be included/uploaded with the proposal narrative.

**8. Does RWJF provide assistance in preparing a grant proposal? (added 6/8/23)**

RWJF does not provide direct assistance or funding/reimbursement for assistance in preparing a grant proposal.

**9. Is a logic model required? (added 6/8/23)**

No, but if you believe a logic model will be useful for describing how your proposal addresses the required elements of the CFP, then you may include one.

**10. Does the project need to be fully funded by RWJF? (added 6/8/23)**

RWJF will accept proposals where the overarching project is funded by multiple funders, but any proposed activities submitted through the CFP must be able to be completed within the funding request amount (awards will range from \$250K-750K) and duration.

**GRANTEE SELECTION AND ELIGIBILITY**

**11. What types of organizations are eligible to apply?**

Please see page 5 of the CFP for details on applicant eligibility.

**12. Will applicants from U.S. territories be eligible to apply?**

Yes.

**13. We are not a 501(c)(3), can we still apply? (added 6/8/23)**

Yes. Please be aware that preference is given to 501(c)(3) organizations. 501(c)(4) and for-profit organizations may partner with a 501(c)(3) organization but only one organization can be the lead applicant. All applicants should be mindful that RWJF grant funds cannot be used for lobbying or political activities, even if partnering with a 501(c)(3) organization.

**14. Can individuals apply for this grant? (added 6/8/23)**

Grant awards are made to organization, not individuals.

**15. Can a state health department or other government agency apply? (added 6/8/23)**

Yes, public entities are eligible to apply.

**16. We have a fiscal sponsor; can we still apply? (added 6/8/23)**

Yes. There's no prohibition against organizations using fiscal sponsors to apply. The fiscal sponsor would be formally identified as the grantee and the nature of the relationship should be described in the proposal and/or budget narrative.

The fiscally sponsored organization must have its fiscal sponsor complete the application, including financial questions, based on the fiscal sponsor's operational and financial status since the fiscal sponsor would need to certify that it will adopt this project as part of its own activities and will exercise oversight and control over the project if receiving the grant award.

**17. We are a new organization - based on the eligibility requirements in the CFP stating, "Must have organizational infrastructure that demonstrates sufficient capacity and a history to conduct proposed efforts in timely, well-managed capacity that led to desired outcomes.", does that mean we are excluded from applying? (added 6/8/23)**

Newer organizations are eligible to apply. However, in order to meet that eligibility criteria, the organization's leadership and other staff should have sufficient past work experience to demonstrate the capacity and history to conduct proposed efforts – and this should be noted in the proposal narrative and included resumes.

**18. We are a new organization and/or don't have two years of audited financials, do we need a fiscal sponsor? (added 6/8/23)**

No, but you may be required to provide internal financial statements (e.g., balance sheet, revenue/expense statement) for the **last two completed years** or otherwise demonstrate the ability to absorb the funds. Additionally, Program Finance will perform a financial review of the applicant organization's financial statements, tax forms, audits and other data to evaluate the recipient's financial capacity to manage the award effectively. If necessary, Program Finance may have a call with the applicant to understand the applicant's operations and resource needs prior to proceeding with funding the award.

**19. Can we apply if we are already a grantee of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation?**

Yes. Please be mindful if you have the same staff working on each grant. Their total staff time across grants must be no more than 1.0 FTE/100% effort.

**20. Can an organization be a lead applicant for one proposal, and be a partner to another proposal?**

Yes, an organization can be listed in multiple submissions as long as they are not the lead for multiple submissions for the same CFP. Be careful with time allotted per full-time-employee (FTEs), especially if the organization has other grants with RWJF. An individual's total time should only add up to 1.0 FTE or 100% effort.

**21. Can an organization submit more than one project they would like to request funding? (added 6/8/23)**

We encourage organizations to submit their best idea. However, an organization can be listed on multiple submissions as long as they are not the lead for multiple submissions. If your organization is listed on multiple submissions, be mindful of the time allotted per full-time-employee (FTEs), especially if the organization has other grants with RWJF. An individual's total time should only add up to 1.0 FTE or 100% effort.

**22. Can a university submit more than one application? (added 6/8/23)**

A university may submit multiple proposals, but we are limiting the proposal to one per university department (e.g., Engineering Department, Psychology Department). We encourage university departments to collaborate since we are only funding up to ten awards and not all of the grants will be awarded to a single organization.

**23. Are collaboratives or intermediaries working with other organizations on relevant activities eligible to apply? (added 6/8/23)**

Collaboratives or intermediaries are eligible to apply but should establish one lead organization as the applicant and clearly describe/define the project and its players in their proposal.

**24. Do you accept planning grant applications? (added 6/8/23)**

This solicitation is not designed to fund planning grants but recognizes that applications may have planning portions of their timelines and budget.

**25. Do you accept evaluation grant applications? (added 6/8/23)**

Yes. We encourage organizations to describe how their evaluation will meet the goals of the CFP.

**26. Can we have more than two co-directors?**

The system only allows for two project directors mainly for communication with RWJF; however, within the narrative and budget you can list additional directors/key personnel.

**27. How will grant decisions be made?**

Proposals will be assessed based on the eligibility and selection criteria listed on pages 5-6 of the CFP. All proposals will go through an initial screening to determine if the selection criteria are met. Those that meet the criteria will be reviewed by a team comprised of both internal RWJF and external subject matter experts.

**28. Will RWJF fund lobbying or advocacy projects? How do I know if my project is categorized as lobbying or advocacy? (added 6/8/23)**

The Foundation cannot fund lobbying projects. The Foundation is able to fund advocacy projects. For a detailed guide on the difference between advocacy and lobbying, please follow [this link](#).

**29. Will not having formal policies on topics such as whistle blowers cause our application to be penalized? (added 6/8/23)**

In the event that an applicant indicates it does not have a whistleblower policy, our review team will take a holistic approach in determining whether the lack of a whistleblower policy will be penalizing. The approach could include reviewing the applicant's approach in planning or creating steps to develop and/or implement such a policy; and reviewing the applicant's current policies, processes, and procedures for addressing workplace misconduct.

**30. We have previously applied for a grant and were not funded; can we still apply for this grant and will our history of applying make a difference? (added 6/8/23)**

Former and current grantees, as well as former and current applicants, are eligible to apply. An applicant's previous application history will have no bearing on the review of this proposal.

## **CLARIFICATION OF TERMS**

**31. What does the phrase "stated resource needs" mean in the CFP?**

It is anticipated that applicants will partner with families whose experiences give them deep knowledge of their own needs to gain an understanding of what will benefit their life circumstances and wellbeing. We are looking for a demonstration of collaborative, respectful and trust building approaches with families to determine what they need to thrive.

**32. How is your team thinking about systems change? (added 6/8/23)**

A system is defined as an interconnected set of elements that is coherently organized in a way that achieves something. A system must consist of three kinds of things: elements, interconnections, and a function or purpose. Transforming the systems that support the wellbeing of children and families

in the economy and disrupting the ways that production is valued over health is our approach to advancing economic inclusion for family wellbeing and improving health equity. Systems change is about shifting the conditions that are holding the problem in place. There exist leverage points to intervene in systems -- those places within a complex system where small shifts in one thing can produce big changes in everything. Leverage points are points of power and may influence transformational change. Our desire is to better understand the conditions holding the status quo for families in the economy in place and points of leverage to begin to shift those conditions. Please see the [link and graphic](#) for additional information about systems and systems change, as well as this article by Donna Meadows called "[Leverage Points: Places to Intervene in a System.](#)"

**33. What is an economic system? (added 6/8/23)**

Economic systems can be defined in a range of ways. We are interested in the systems encompassing institutions, policies, and practices that mediate families' economic status. Sometimes these systems are bounded with a well-defined set of actors and practices (e.g., the tax system), sometimes they encompass multiple complex overlapping and interacting systems (e.g., the care system).

**34. How is your team thinking about economic inclusion? (added 6/8/23)**

We lead with the premise that disrupting the current racialized and cultural paradigm of production, as built through the social contract, is an imperative to truly promote the health and wellbeing of children and families. The contributions of workers outside of formal labor markets, including raising families, often go unrecognized as a vital contribution to our nation's strength. Caregivers are undervalued -- and those who are not in the labor force, such as parents and family members who raise children, are regularly excluded from opportunities altogether, despite their critical role. This Call for Proposals aims to elevate new or innovative ideas and mechanisms to rectify, reckon with, and redress exclusionary economic structures and elevate new alternatives to support the wellbeing of children and families -- illustrating a vision for how families can and should be included in the economy and making tangible new pathways to economic policy and practice changes that focus on health and wellbeing.

**35. How is the team defining historically marginalized? (added 6/8/23)**

Historically marginalized refers to populations, groups of people, and communities who face systemic barriers due to social and institutional discrimination. We are working to ensure that families who have been historically and systematically marginalized by structural racism, colonialism, paternalism, and erasure will have opportunity, power, and the self-determination that comes from economic inclusion.

**36. What do you mean by structural transformation or transformational change? (added 6/8/23)**

This is grounded in addressing structural bias, or the cumulative and compounding effects across institutions and society (ex. the racial wealth divide) that systematically advantage some people and disadvantage others, at a level that seeks to get underneath the roots of inequity upon which many systems are built. Transformation comes from working at this systems level -- moving beyond a focus on small improvements to an existing system that do not change long-term outcomes or programs focused on individual behaviors. Our desire is to better understand the conditions holding the status quo for families in the economy in place -- including the frames, assumptions, values, and

principles that underpin policies and practices -- and points of leverage to begin to shift those conditions.

**37. What do you mean by innovation? (added 6/8/23)**

Innovation refers not to specific technological advancements necessarily, so much as strategies to disrupt the status quo. Through this Call for Proposals, we are looking for projects that are grounded in disrupting the systemic or structural barriers that stand in the way of families realizing opportunities for wellbeing and gaining access to health-promoting resources – and demonstrating alternatives and/or leverage points to push our country's economic decision-making to center the health and wellbeing of children and families. That said, this CFP is very much an exercise in learning and we are looking to the field to help us understand what innovation in this space might look like and where opportunities for disruption might exist.

**38. How is the team defining caregiver? (added 6/8/23)**

Caregivers are the parents and/or other adults who provide for children's needs.

## **ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS**

**39. Will there be an applicant webinar?**

Yes, the webinar for applicants took place June 1, 2023. You may view the [slides here](#) and the [recording here](#).

**40. What is the timing of this grant process and the grant period? (added 6/8/23)**

Proposals are due June 21, 2023, at 3 pm EDT. Finalists will be notified mid-August 2023. The grants will begin on October 15, 2023. All grants will end no later than 24 months from the start date. Funding will not be provided outside of the planned 24-month grant period.

**41. What is the total amount available for this CFP?**

The total combined funding available is \$3.5 million under this call for proposal. RWJF will fund up to 10 proposals. Individual grant awards will range from \$250,000 to \$750,000. We recommend you request the amount you will need to complete your proposed project and meet the deliverables. The size of the budget will be weighed in relation to the proposed activities and the likely contribution of the proposed project to the funding goals. We expect to fund a diverse range of projects with varying budgets.

**42. Should the total requested funds include the indirect cost rate? Is the indirect cost rate adjustable based on other negotiated rates? (added 6/8/23)**

The total requested funds should include indirect costs and the indirect rate set by RWJF for for-profits is 0 percent, for U.S. colleges/universities and hospital or health systems (including those that are nonprofits) is 12 percent and for non-profits is 20 percent. Projects or programs that engage a fiscal sponsor should cover the fiscal sponsor fee from the indirect cost portion of the grant. Indirect rates only go to the lead organization who the applicant for the grant. If there is a contract between organizations, then there may be indirect in their contract, and this must abide by RWJF policies (see percentages above).



We recognize that the calculated indirect cost rates for some grantees may exceed the maximum allowed by the Foundation. However, **the Foundation is a charitable entity and is not committed to matching the indirect cost rates the U.S. government or other entities accept.**

Please review the [RWJF Indirect Cost Rate Policy](#) and [Budget Preparation Guidelines](#) for more detailed information.

**43. Will renewal funding be available in subsequent rounds? Will this CFP be released again?**

This effort is a one-time grant opportunity with no renewal funding planned.

**44. Can the requested amount be less than \$250,000 or more than \$750,000? (added 6/8/23)**

All projects must fall between the \$250 and \$750K range.

**45. How will the funds from the grant be distributed? (added 6/8/23)**

The first payment is 100% of the budget for year one. After the first year, 90% of the next year's budget is paid. Upon completion of the award and receipt of the final financial and narrative reports and deliverables, the final 10% is paid. Final reporting required is outlined in the grant agreement.

**46. Do organizations need to have a certain budget size in order to be eligible for funding from RWJF? (added 6/8/23)**

There is no required organization budget size (minimum or maximum) to be eligible for funding from RWJF. Organizations should have the ability to absorb the funds and implement the proposed elements.

Program Finance will perform a financial review of the applicant organization's financial statements, tax forms, audits and other data to evaluate the recipient's financial capacity to manage the award effectively. If necessary, Program Finance may have a call with the applicant to understand the applicant's operations and resource needs prior to proceeding with funding the award.

Additionally, the Foundation relies on the applicant to confirm that they have discussed the ramifications of additional funding with their legal counsel and would continue to qualify as a publicly supported organization (if applicable) if additional funds were awarded.

**47. Can award grants be regranted in any capacity? (added 6/8/23)**

There is a budget category in RWJF's project budget for regranting if regranting is a component of the project. Regranting occurs when an organization awards and manages the administration of grants to support charitable activities carried out by public charities that are tax-exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code; and for which the applicant organization exercises discretion and control over the competitive selection process, payment of grant funds, and oversight of the sub-grantee. The applicant may be asked to complete a questionnaire outlining the regranting processes and procedures as part of the budget review process.

**48. Can grant funds be used for stipends or direct payments (both to partners and to individual families) ? (added 6/8/23)**

RWJF project budgets have a category for stipends. Types of stipends may include participation stipends, caregiving stipends, lost wages, and honoraria.



**49. Does RWJF have a preference to fund any proposals that focus on a particular geographic region, have a particular organization budget size, have plans to publish, are a new or former grantee, have individuals involved with a particular expertise, etc. ? (added 6/8/23)**

RWJF is committed to funding a diverse cadre of grantees and does not have any preferences outside those listed in the Call for Proposals.

**50. Please describe what type of proposals will be funded and what success will look like? (added 6/8/23)**

The CFP is targeting specific aims and essential components as detailed in the Program Section of the CFP (please see page 4 of the CFP for examples of the types of projects). Proposals need to speak to how the work is connected to addressing a structural or systemic barrier. The expectation is not that systemic shifts will be achieved through a lone project or over the time horizon of these grants -- rather, the proposal needs to express an understanding of how the proposed project contributes to shifting a lever within the system. To the extent that individual services are part of programmatic activities, the application would have to clearly specify how these services contribute to the ultimate goal of addressing a systemic barrier.

**51. What will the evaluation process look like for this grant? (added 6/8/23)**

The precise evaluation process for this program is still under development and is in part dependent on what proposals are funded. There are a range of activities that can be funded under this CFP, and we want to ensure that we're designing an evaluation process that takes that into account and is also appropriate for the time horizon of the grants. However, more broadly RWJF supports evaluation processes that are consistent with the equitable evaluation framework (<https://www.equitableeval.org/framework>). Additionally, as stated on page 9 of the CFP: "An independent group selected and funded by RWJF may conduct assessments across all funded efforts of this program. As a condition of accepting RWJF funds, we require grantees to participate in the evaluation. 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 to participate in periodic meetings and give progress reports on their grants. At the close of each grant, the lead agency is expected to provide a written report on the project and its findings suitable for wide dissemination."

**52. I have a specific program I would like funded; can you tell me if my program is a good fit for this CFP? (added 6/8/23)**

We cannot comment on or evaluate specific ideas or programs without seeing the full proposal submitted through the system. If you need further clarification on criteria or terms, please reach out.

Please keep in mind, this CFP is *not* intended to support programs, services, or interventions that address *individual behavior* for families to access resources within the existing economic system nor basic safety net issues (e.g., financial coaching, literacy programs, access to food relief). We explicitly seek efforts to transform the experience of families—their ability to sustain their families through full participation in our economy and related social systems. The CFP is targeting very specific aims and essential components as detailed in the [Program Section of the CFP](#), as the applicant you will need to determine the fit of your work and if it meets the defined areas to be funded by this solicitation.

**53. Can I see a list of webinar attendees or others interested in applying for potential partnership?**  
(added 6/8/23)

No, we will not be sharing this information.

**54. If my proposal is not selected, will you provide me with feedback for why it was not selected or how to improve it?**

RWJF does not provide individual critiques or comments on proposals that are not selected for funding. General feedback about why grants were funded and were not funded may be provided in the letter informing the applicant of RWJF's decision.

**55. Can you share a copy of a successful proposal?**

No, we consider proposals the intellectual property of the applicant and do not share them outside the Foundation.

If you have a general question about submitting a proposal for this CFP that hasn't been addressed in the CFP or in the FAQs above, please email us at [cfphcf@rwjf.org](mailto:cfphcf@rwjf.org). We will make every effort to respond to all emails as quickly as possible. Please note that in the 24-hour period leading up to the proposal deadline, staff may not be able to assist all applicants with any system-related issues.