Equity-Focused Policy Research: Building Cross-Cutting Evidence on Supports for Families with Young Children

Responding to the Call for Proposals

Webinar for prospective applicants
January 12, 2021
Today’s speakers

- Gina Hijjawi, Senior Program Officer, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
- Andrew Burwick, Senior Researcher, Mathematica
“Health equity means that everyone has a fair and just opportunity to be as healthy as possible. This requires removing obstacles to health such as poverty, discrimination, and their consequences....”


- **Barriers to health equity begin early in life**
- **Policies may promote health equity by:**
  - Reducing poverty
  - Improving access to supports families need
  - Improving family well-being
  - Addressing structural racism

RWJF vision: A Culture of Health with health equity at the center
Overview of today’s webinar

• Background on the Equity-Focused Policy Research program
• Purpose of the funding opportunity
• Application and review process
• Expectations for grantees
• Q&A
Background and Purpose
Developing an equity-focused research agenda

• Equity-focused research recognizes that disparities in access to supports and outcomes exist—and that policies should be designed to address these disparities

• RWJF worked with Mathematica to identify focal policy areas and key research gaps
  - Income supports
  - Access to early care and education
  - Nutrition supports

• Four briefs summarize the research agenda
Purpose of this opportunity

• Highlight strategies and policies that enhance families’ equitable access to key resources

• Illuminate the nature and effects of structural barriers to accessing the social safety net

• Promote understanding of innovations (including those in response to the COVID-19 pandemic) and their long-term potential

• Promote action-oriented research that directly informs policymaking

• Promote equity and cultural responsiveness when conducting research
Supporting research on topics that cut across policy domains

- Looking across the policy areas may help us understand and inform policymaking for the social safety net as a whole
- Access to early childhood education, income supports, and nutrition supports may be interconnected and mutually reinforcing
- Characteristics of families or communities may affect likelihood of accessing multiple supports
- Policy determinants affecting access may be similar or different across various types of supports
Understanding the long-term lessons or potential of responses to the pandemic

- Newly emerging barriers to accessing essential supports
- Federal, state, and local responses may have helped families maintain or increase access to different supports
- Research can assess the effects of these responses and draw attention to promising strategies
- Focus on informing policy beyond the current crisis
Equitable evaluation

• Research and evaluation has the potential to advance equity

• Three core principles
  – The production and consumption of evaluative work should be in service of equity
  – Research and evaluation should answer questions about structural conditions and context, drivers of inequity, and the effects of a policy on different populations
  – Research and evaluation should be culturally appropriate and oriented toward participant ownership


• Applicants should consider how to design projects that integrate these principles [www.equitableeval.org](http://www.equitableeval.org)
Application and Review Process
Awards

• Up to 20 awards
• Individual awards ranging from $50,000 to $200,000
• Awards will reflect project scope and methods
  – Primary data collection: up to $200,000 over 24 months
  – Applicants should request amounts that are consistent with the scope and complexity of the research questions and methods they propose
Two application phases

• **Phase 1: Brief proposals**
  - 3 pages
  - Describe research questions, design, timeline, key personnel, project management and quality assurance, and amount requested
  - Due February 16, 2021

• **Phase 2: Full proposals**
  - 10 pages
  - Elaborate elements listed above and provide detailed budget
  - Due May 11, 2021
Eligibility criteria

- Organizations: academic institutions, public entities, private nonprofits, state and local government agencies, and for-profits

- Principal investigators
  - No advanced degree required, but must demonstrate ability to conduct the research
  - Partnerships between researchers and service providers, community-based organizations, or other practitioners encouraged
  - Researchers from groups underrepresented in policy research and/or affiliated with institutions that serve underrepresented groups encouraged to apply
Review criteria

• Relevance to the research agenda and policy
• Focus on action-oriented research
• Quality of design
• Feasibility
• Alignment with equitable evaluation principles
• Qualifications of proposed personnel
• Evidence of fiscal and project management capacity
Grantee expectations

- Produce reports accessible to a wide audience
- Develop a dissemination plan
- Participate in dissemination activities
- Submission of narrative and financial reports and other information needed for project monitoring
Questions?
For more information

- Gina Hijjawi
  - ghijjawi@rwjf.org (suggested subject heading: EFPR 2021 CFP)

- Mathematica team
  - equityresearch@mathematica-mpr.com