



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**

RWJF vision: A Culture of Health with health equity at the center

- **“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....”**

Braveman P, Arkin E, Orleans T, Proctor D, and Plough A. *What Is Health Equity? And What Difference Does a Definition Make?* Princeton, NJ: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2017.

- **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

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**

Center for Evaluation Innovation, Institute for Foundation and Donor Learning, Dorothy A Johnson Center for Philanthropy, Luminare Group. "Equitable Evaluation Framing Paper." Equitable Evaluation Initiative, July 2017.

- **Applicants should consider how to design projects that integrate these principles 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**
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- **Mathematica team**
 - equityresearch@mathematica-mpr.com