



# Local Data for Equitable Communities

## Call for Proposals (CFP) 2026

### Program-specific Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

*Revised 1/15/2026*

For more information about the Local Data for Equitable Communities program, to view the CFP, or apply, visit <https://www.rwjf.org/cfp/DHC4>.

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### **\*\*\*IMPORTANT NOTE\*\*\***

We strongly advise reviewing all the FAQs, particularly the Project Eligibility sections. Projects will be screened for eligibility prior to full review. Ineligible projects will not be considered by RWJF Local Data for Equitable Communities program staff for funding or shared with other RWJF programs. Only projects that are eligible in terms of organization, topics and activities, and geography will move to full review.

## **Contacting Us and Finding Information**

### **1. Who can I contact if I have a question about the CFP or the RWJF online application system?**

For all questions related to the CFP, please email [localdata@urban.org](mailto:localdata@urban.org). We will accept questions through Thursday, February 26<sup>th</sup> before 5:00 p.m. ET. We will do our best to respond to all the questions before the deadline but may not be able to respond meaningfully before the March 3<sup>rd</sup> 3:00 p.m. ET deadline depending on the volume of questions arriving in the days prior.

If you are facing difficulties with the RWJF online registration and application system, review the “Troubleshooting Tips” found in the “Resources” area on the left side of most screens within the online proposal site. If the answer to your question is not found there, please email [localdata@urban.org](mailto:localdata@urban.org) right away.

### **2. Will you provide applicants with feedback on specific project ideas?**

While the CFP is open, grant program staff will provide applicants with limited feedback on whether organizations and project topics and activities are eligible for this program as reviewed against our stated criteria. We will not provide comments on the competitiveness of the project or the likelihood of being selected.

### **3. Can applicants speak to program staff about the project ideas?**

No, we are not available for individual conversations with potential applicants.

### **4. Where can I access the applicant webinar?**

An informational webinar will be held for applicants on February 5. After the webinar, links to a recording of the webinar and the slides will be posted in the Key Dates & Deadlines section on [www.rwjf.org/cfp/DHC4](http://www.rwjf.org/cfp/DHC4) and in the “Resources” area on the left side of most screens within the RWJF online application system. In the “Resources” area, review the “Applicant Webinar” section to find the recording link and the webinar slides.

We encourage you to attend or view the webinar prior to submitting your application.

## **Applying in the RWJF System**

### **5. What else is required for a complete application other than responses to the questions in the CFP?**

Applicants must apply through the RWJF portal, which is where they will enter their responses to the questions listed in the CFP. The portal requires applicants to create an account before starting their application and asks for certain documentation related to an organization’s finances, demographics, and board. Applicants are encouraged to start this process comfortably

before the due date of March 3rd at 3:00 p.m. ET to ensure that all documents can be accessed and provided, and to account for any unforeseen circumstances.

If you are facing any difficulties with the RWJF online application system, notify the program administrator immediately by sending an email to [localdata@urban.org](mailto:localdata@urban.org).

#### **6. When can I submit my proposal?**

Organizations applying can submit their proposals anytime between January 27, 2026 and the application deadline at 3:00 p.m. ET on March 3, 2026. Late proposals will not be accepted.

#### **7. What are the key dates?**

Application opens	January 27, 2026
Informational webinar	February 5, 2026
<b>Application deadline</b>	<b>March 3, 2026 3:00 p.m. ET</b>
Award notifications	May 11, 2026
Grants begin	July 1, 2026
Grants end	March 31, 2027

#### **8. Can I use generative artificial intelligence (Gen AI) tools to support my application?**

Gen AI models can be useful in some cases. However, they may produce errors or result in text that is overly generic and inauthentic that could put your application at a disadvantage during review. If you choose to use Gen AI tools, we strongly encourage you to review the text to ensure that the application reflects your local context, is specific about your proposed project activities, and demonstrates that the project is feasible for the budget and period of performance.

#### **9. Are there character limits in the application system for responses?**

Yes, there are character limits for some responses, including all the responses for project information questions. The character limit does count spaces. The character limit is found in the application for each response, as is a character counter at the bottom of the response. We have also provided approximate word counts for your reference.

#### **10. Can I print my application or download it?**

Instructions on printing are available in the Applicant Guide in the Resources section of the application system, which is found on the top left of the application. You can print the application to PDF to have a copy of it.

#### **11. Can I save my work in the application and come back to it?**

Yes. The system allows you to save your work and come back to it. The system will auto-save data every 30 seconds. However, you should be mindful of the Save options at the bottom of each section.

**12. We have a collaborating partner. Should their contact information be listed in the key contacts in the application system?**

This is not required. People who are listed in key contacts will receive RWJF correspondence. Applicants should only list key contacts external to the organization if they want those individuals to receive foundation correspondence. It is more important for applicants to identify their collaborating partner(s) in the application questions.

**13. Do we have to publish our findings in a peer-reviewed journal? Why are there academic journal questions in the application system and language in the call for proposals?**

Publishing findings in peer-reviewed journals is not required. Applicants should only plan to produce a journal article if doing so helps them accomplish their local project goals. References to peer-reviewed journals are standard text and required to be asked of all RWJF applicants for grant proposals. Open science is an important value of the Foundation, which is why the question is included. If you are not planning on publishing the findings in a peer review journal, you can select no. You will not be penalized for this response and there is no expectation that you would need to publish in this way for this opportunity. We do encourage publishing and sharing findings in other formats.

**14. What documentation do you need of our nonprofit status? Who should be the signatory?**

You must add your tax ID (Employer ID Number) in the online application system. RWJF will verify the tax id number against the IRS database. The name of your organization must match the formal legal name that appears in the IRS Business Master File. The authorized official is the person who receives the grant agreement for a project and whom the applicant organization has designated as being authorized to sign contracts on behalf of the organization. This person will receive a copy of the award notice.

**15. Can addresses of officers be work addresses?**

Yes. Provide officer's/project director's work addresses. Do not provide personal addresses.

**16. What financial documents are required for proposal submission?**

The most recent two years of audited or unaudited financial statements (include fiscal year 2025) and 2026 operating budget (can be unapproved or preliminary). If you are unsure of which financial documents to submit, please reach out to the Program Finance Analyst, Christine Lee ([clee@rwjf.org](mailto:clee@rwjf.org)). In the subject line of your email, please note that this is for the Local Data for Equitable Communities CFP.

Note, this grant funding is for \$50,000 and only 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(4) organizations are eligible to apply.

**17. Are newly formed organizations eligible to apply?**

Yes, new organizations, whether with their own 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(4) status or that are fiscally sponsored, are eligible to apply. If formed in the last two years, you may be required to submit additional financial information. Please review the financial documents section of the application. After that, if you are unsure of which financial documents to submit, please reach out to the Program Finance Analyst, Christine Lee ([clee@rwjf.org](mailto:clee@rwjf.org)). In the subject line of your email, please note that this is for the Local Data for Equitable Communities CFP.

**18. Our organization does not collect demographic information on our staff or board. Are we still eligible to apply?**

Yes, if your organization meets all other eligibility criteria. You will still be able to complete the Demographics section and indicate 'none of the above' or 'don't know' if that is the case.

**19. When you ask about demographics, is that specifically for the applying organization only or for the entire team working on the project?**

Please review the questions carefully. Some of the demographics questions ask about both the organization and project team.

## **General Grant Program Information**

**20. How many grants will be awarded and for what duration?**

RWJF expects to award up to 30 grants of \$50,000 each. However, the total number of awarded grants will depend on the quality and quantity of the applications received. The period of performance for this funding opportunity is nine months from July 1, 2026, to March 31, 2027. The budget will need to be expended within the nine-month period of performance.

**21. About how many applications are you expecting to receive?**

We expect this grant opportunity to be very competitive. We received about 2,000 applications in 2025.

**22. Where can I learn more about the 2025 grantees from “Local Data for Equitable Communities Grantees?”**

Profiles from the 2025 grant recipients of “Local Data for Equitable Communities” are available on the Urban Institute’s [grant program website](#). Though these may be helpful to review, please note that eligible topics and the selection criteria for the program have changed, and this year’s selected applicants will be assessed solely on the selection criteria in the 2026 CFP.

### **23. How will grant funds be distributed?**

RWJF will execute, administer, and manage all grant agreements with the lead applicant organization indicated in the proposal. The full grant amount will be dispersed at the beginning of the grant period.

### **24. Will you be releasing CFPs for this grant program in the future?**

The funding for future rounds has not yet been determined. If funding is allocated, RWJF and the Urban Institute hope to issue the next CFP in February 2027. If you'd like to receive notices about future RWJF grant opportunities, you can sign up at: <https://www.rwjf.org/en/email-subscriptions.html>.

### **25. What kind of technical assistance will be provided to support grantees' projects?**

The Urban Institute provides technical assistance to grantees on a wide range of issues related to qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis, policy analysis, community engagement, and project management. For previous projects, Urban staff have reviewed protocols for surveys, focus groups, and interviews; provided advice on processing and analysis plans for administrative data; supported the planning of an event to gather feedback from community members; supported development of a dissemination plan for products; provided guidance on formatting products and dashboards; and helped grantees navigate changes to project timelines. The Urban team can also connect grantees to people who are policy experts in the project topic. These examples are not exhaustive and are intended to give applicants a sense of the capabilities of Urban staff. Urban staff will not collect or analyze data for your project.

## **Definitions and Terms**

### **26. How do you define "near-term?"**

We don't have a particular time frame for near-term but want it to be connected to a current real-world planning or decisionmaking process (not an abstract question). Question 6 in the application asks how the project is connected to a specific opportunity for local action. Applications will be assessed for whether they communicate how answering the project's primary question corresponds to new opportunities or momentum for local action related to the primary condition.

### **27. How do you define "data"?**

We define data as any collected statistics or information. Data may be quantitative, like counts or percentages based on information from surveys or the operations of governments, foundations, or nonprofits. They may also be qualitative, such as stories from lived experience or information collected through focus groups or interviews.

### **28. How do you define "data tools or dashboards"?**

A data tool or dashboard is an interactive web tool that displays the data you have collected and analyzed. Developing public or internal data dashboards is an allowable use of funds. All projects, including dashboard projects, need to identify specific users and uses of data and engage those users in the project design and analysis. Applicants must also demonstrate why these data are connected to a specific opportunity for local action. Projects that propose data dashboards that do not clearly inform action or decision-making of specific audiences will not rate highly on that selection criteria.

**29. How do you define “structural racism”?**

Structural or systemic racism is race-based unfair treatment built into policies, laws, and practices. It's also called "systemic" racism because it's fostered through mutually reinforcing systems, policies and practices in housing, education, employment, earnings, benefits, credit, media, healthcare, and criminal justice. These patterns and practices reinforce discriminatory beliefs, values, and the distribution of resources, which affect health.

**30. How do you define “health equity”?**

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, including lack of access to good jobs with fair pay, quality education and housing, safe environments, and health care.

## **Eligibility for Organizations**

**31. What types of organization are eligible?**

This call for proposals is open to nonprofit organizations that are not universities or government entities (see questions 35-37) that are tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) or Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code. Organizations that are fiscally sponsored by an eligible tax-exempt 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(4) organization are also eligible.

There are no requirements for how long an organization has been incorporated.

**32. If an organization is currently in the process of applying for 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(4) nonprofit status, is it eligible to apply?**

No. Only organizations that already have been granted 501(c)(3) status by the IRS are eligible to apply. An organization that has not yet received 501(c)(3) status is eligible to be a partner organization to a lead-applicant organization that has this status, but that lead applicant must play a substantial role in the proposed project. If the organization has not yet received 501(c)(3) status but does have a fiscal sponsor who is an eligible nonprofit with 501(c)(3) status, they could apply for the project through the fiscal sponsor.

**33. Are organizations that received funding in the 2020 Using Data to Inform Local Decisions on COVID-19 Response & Recovery program and/or the 2022 Data to Improve Community Conditions Shaped by Structural Racism program eligible to apply?**

Yes. Organizations funded by those opportunities are eligible to apply for this program. There is no preference or priority related to prior receipt of funding.

**34. Are organizations that received funding in 2025 through the Local Data for Equitable Communities grant eligible to apply?**

No. Organizations funded by the Local Data for Equitable Communities grant for the 2025-2026 cycle are not eligible to respond to the 2026 CFP.

**35. Can universities apply?**

Universities, whether public or private and whether or not they have 501(c)(3) status, are not eligible to apply. However, universities may contract or partner with an eligible nonprofit that would be the lead applicant.

**36. Are 501(c)3 organizations associated with universities eligible to apply?**

No. Organizations that are 501(c)3 organizations associated with universities are not eligible to apply as the lead applicant, even if they are independently and separately governed and operated from the university. However, nonprofits associated with or based in a university may contract or partner with an eligible nonprofit that would be the lead applicant.

**37. Can state or local government agencies apply?**

All state and local government agencies are not eligible to apply, whether or not they have 501(c)(3) status. This includes, but is not limited to, agencies representing states, cities, towns, and villages, including public health departments, school districts, and public schools. Organizations that are 501(c)(3) organizations associated with government agencies are also not eligible to apply as the lead applicant. Government agencies can contract or partner with an eligible nonprofit that would be the lead applicant.

Only nonprofit organizations that are tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) or Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code can apply.

**38. Can national or state organizations apply for this opportunity?**

Yes. While projects with a national or state level focus will not be considered for funding, national or state level organizations can propose a local-level project that uses data to answer a community question. See the CFP for detailed eligibility and selection criteria.

**39. Can multiple applicants be on the same proposal?**



Partnerships between multiple organizations are encouraged to apply. However, only one eligible organization can serve as the applicant and the grant recipient.

**40. Can my organization submit multiple applications to this funding opportunity?**

No. Organizations may submit only one application.

**41. Can we submit a proposal for this opportunity if we are applying for another RWJF opportunity or receive funding from another RWJF program?**

Yes. Current applicants or grantees from RWJF programs other than Local Data for Equitable Communities are welcome to apply. However, current RWJF grantees cannot request funding from the Local Data for Equitable Communities grant program for the same project as their current RWJF grant.

**42. If we apply for but do not get chosen for this CFP, are we able to apply for other RWJF opportunities this year?**

Yes, as long as the proposed project is not already funded by RWJF.

## **Partners**

**43. Who can a lead applicant partner or subcontract with?**

- Other nonprofits based in the U.S. or internationally
- Universities or colleges
- Local government agencies
- Faith-based organizations
- Private firms
- Individual consultants

Applicants should identify their collaborating partner(s) in the project information questions. Grantees can partner or subcontract with one or more organizations.

**44. Will preference be given to applications with partner organizations?**

We do not have a preference on whether applications include partner organizations. Applicants should determine whether partners are needed based on what capacities are required to successfully complete the project activities and achieve the impact they seek.

**45. Do we need to upload letters of support from partners and subcontractors?**

Letters of support are not required for this application.

**46. Do we need to provide information for the Demographics section of the application for our partners and subcontractors?**

No, do not report on the demographics of collaborating partners.

**47. Is there a limit to the number of partners and subcontractors that applicants can name?**

No. There is no limit to the number of partners and subcontractors an applicant can have for their project.

**48. Can organizations be listed as partners or subcontractors on multiple grant applications?**

Yes. Organizations may be listed as a partner or subcontractor on multiple proposals submitted by lead applicants.

**49. Do we apply with a researcher identified, or is there an opportunity to match us with a researcher if we have our research project outlined?**

All proposals need to propose a team that meets the selection criterion of having capacity to perform the project activities, including expertise with data and with community engagement. The Urban Institute and RWJF are not able match applicants with research partners or consultants.

## **Fiscal sponsors and fiscally-sponsored organizations**

**50. Are fiscally-sponsored organizations eligible to apply?**

Yes. Organizations that are fiscally-sponsored can apply for this opportunity. The fiscal sponsor must be an eligible tax-exempt 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(4) organization. The fiscal sponsor cannot be a university, whether public or private, or a non-profit associated with or based in a university. The fiscal sponsor is required to provide the total amount of the award to the organization who will perform the program activities as described in the application less the fiscal sponsorship fee. The fiscal sponsorship fee is an allowable expense under the award.

**51. For fiscally-sponsored organizations, who is the applicant?**

The applicant organization is the fiscal sponsor, not the *fiscally-sponsored* organization. The *fiscally-sponsored* organization should be named in the proposal summary and narrative questions. The project director should be at the applicant – the fiscal sponsor - organization. Staff for the *fiscally-sponsored* organization can be listed as project co-director.

**52. For fiscally-sponsored entities applying, should questions such as the demographics one be answered in reference to the fiscally-sponsored entity or the fiscal sponsor?**

Fiscally-sponsored organizations should provide information for the demographics section for the sponsored organization or project team as specified in the question, NOT the organization serving as the fiscal sponsor.

## **Project Eligibility - Geography**

### **53. What geographies will be considered eligible for a project's focus?**

This grant is intended to support data projects in local geographies in the U.S., including urban, suburban, or rural areas. Applicants must focus their projects on local geographies in the U.S. or U.S. territories:

- Neighborhood(s) within a city or county (do not need to be contiguous);
- City, county, or other municipality (must be contiguous if multiple are the focus of the project);
- A single metropolitan area; or
- A tribal area

Applicants may propose a geographical area comprised of multiple contiguous counties or tribal jurisdictions. A school district is also an eligible geography, but as with all projects, the project topic should relate to the physical, economic, or social conditions of the district.

### **54. Are U.S. territories, including Puerto Rico, U.S. Affiliated Pacific Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, considered eligible geographies?**

Project locations in any U.S. state or territory are eligible.

### **55. Is a project proposing to work in several cities or several counties eligible?**

Non-contiguous cities or counties are not eligible geographies. Proposed projects may cover multiple contiguous counties, but still would need to demonstrate that it successfully meets all the selection criteria, especially for feasibility and credibility and relationships with the communities of focus. We recommend carefully reviewing the selection criteria.

### **56. Will proposals that are national in scope be considered?**

No. This funding opportunity is designed to fund organizations to provide data and data services in the community in which they are located. If you are an applicant that performs work at a national scale, you must propose activities in the locality or region where you are physically based or partner with a local affiliate or collaborator in another location with which you have previous relationships.

### **57. Are there any preferences in terms of geographic focus (e.g. neighborhood, city, etc.)?**

No, there are no preferences about the scale of the focus geography for the application. Please note projects at the state or national level or that focus on international communities are ineligible.

### **58. Could the project have a community of focus that is not geographic? For example, patients of a health system or a community of identity, like immigrants.**

No. The project must identify a geographic area of focus. Identifying a group of individuals would not be considered responsive to the CFP.

**59. Would a school building or campus be considered a geographic focus area?**

No, a school is not an eligible geography for this grant program.

**60. Would individuals incarcerated in facilities be considered a community?**

No, individuals incarcerated in facilities are not an eligible community of focus for this grant program. A focus on a specific facility would also not be an eligible community of focus for this grant program.

## **Project Eligibility – Topics and Activities**

**61. What types of projects do you support?**

Grants can be used to collect, analyze, and use data to improve the physical, economic, and social conditions of a place, such as a neighborhood, city, or town. Applicants must select one physical, economic, or social condition of their selected geography as the primary focus of their project. The following local conditions are eligible:

- built environment
- climate and environment
- community safety
- healthy food access
- housing
- transportation

**62. What types of projects do you not fund?**

This program will not fund the following activities:

- Research disconnected from near-term decisionmaking and action
- Building data capacity disconnected from near-term decisionmaking and action
- Developing data tools or dashboards without designing for specific audiences and defined uses
- Multitopic or comprehensive community needs assessments health impact assessments
- Community health needs assessments
- Programmatic evaluation
- Data collection to support grant writing
- National- or state-level projects, or projects focused on noncontiguous cities or counties, or multiple metropolitan areas
- Lobbying or political activities (for more information, see *RWJF's policies on lobbying*)

The program will not fund projects on the following topics:

- Childcare access or small business and economic development (this is a change from the 2025 Local Data for Equitable Communities CFP)
- Health outcomes, including projects that aim to identify the relationship between physical or economic conditions and health outcomes
- Individual medical or social needs (i.e., the social or economic circumstances of a person or family that may affect their health)
- Access to healthcare or human services (including mental, behavioral, or maternal health services)
- Public benefits received by individuals or households – such as Medicaid, SNAP, TANF, childcare subsidies, or rental assistance
- Homelessness
- Civic engagement and voting
- Job training, or workforce development
- Education, including any project focused on schools as a geography
- Immigration or migration

**63. Can we focus on a physical, economic, or social condition not listed in the CFP's definition?**

No. The list provided in the CFP (and question #61) contains the only eligible conditions.

**64. What kinds of transportation projects are eligible?**

Projects that analyze data related to the built environment (sidewalks, trails, pedestrian safety) or public transit and transportation infrastructure are eligible. Projects about providing transportation services to individuals (like ride-share projects or transportation subsidy programs) are not eligible.

**65. What types of environmental topics are eligible?**

Examples of topics related to climate and environment are measuring air and water quality, gathering data on the tree canopy of an area, identifying heat islands and mitigating built environment factors, or collecting data on environmental impacts of poor housing conditions.

**66. Is education an eligible condition of place?**

No, data and community engagement related to what happens in the classroom, including academic programs and teacher quality, are not aligned with the goals of this program. Enrichment programs and out-of-school programs are also out of scope as a topic.

**67. What topics related to the criminal legal system are in scope?**

We seek to fund community safety projects that relate to community-level characteristics, interventions, and outcomes, such as analyzing the spatial patterns of police vehicle stops, pedestrian stops, or use of force; informing improvements to the built environment to improve

safety; or surveying residents about community investments that could prevent violence and/or redefine community safety. As with other topics, all projects should be connected to a specific opportunity for local action.

Interventions focused on individual outcomes, such as diversion or violence interruption programs are not topics in scope for this program, though we understand one of the goals for those programs is broader community safety. Organizations that conduct those programs as part of their mission are eligible to apply, but the proposed projects must be focused on community-level interventions.

**68. Is access to healthcare services an eligible topic?**

No, a project focused on coverage, referral systems, or analyzing subsidies for healthcare would not be eligible. A project that focuses on the physical, economic or social conditions of a place that relate to access to health care, such as transportation infrastructure (see question #61) would be an eligible project topic.

**69. Is immigration or migration an eligible topic?**

No, projects related to immigration or migration are not eligible topics for this grant program. However, projects that focus on the physical, economic, and social conditions of a geographic place of focus that impact immigrants or migrants are eligible.

**70. Can a project that already exists be funded?**

This grant may not be used to support work that is already funded through another source. However, projects that already exist are eligible for funding through this opportunity if the work proposed is an expansion of the current work. Proposed project activities should be outside the scope of the currently funded work.

**71. Are proposals that expand the scope of an ongoing project eligible?**

We welcome applicants to submit projects that are new in nature as well as projects that expand the scope of an ongoing project. You could also tailor previous analysis for a new audience, replicate analysis for an additional neighborhood or county, or implement new activities related to communications and engagement. There are lots of possibilities.

**72. Can the proposed activities be part of a larger project?**

The applicant needs to propose a discrete set of activities that will be funded by this grant AND that will catalyze improvements in the conditions of a place within the 9-month grant period. It can be connected to a longer-term program of work. If applicants have funding in hand other than from this program to support these activities, they should note the sources and amount in their application responses. Additional funding sources are not required and are not a selection criterion.

**73. Are the four grant program goals listed in the CFP all required, or can one or more goals be selected for an application?**

The four goals listed on page 2 of the Call for Proposals refer to the goals of the entire program, not for any individual grantee's project. Please refer to the *Eligible Project Topics and Activities* section of the CFP for guidance on the project focus.

**74. Can the project fund capacity building and training for residents to collect, analyze, and/or use data?**

Yes, these are allowable uses of funds, but the project will be assessed based on how responsive it is to all selection criteria.

**75. Can the process of launching a data dashboard meant for community leaders get funding?**

Developing public or internal data dashboards is an allowable use of funds. All projects, including dashboard projects, need to identify specific audiences and defined uses, and engage those audiences in the project design and analysis. Projects that propose data dashboards and do not demonstrate how they clearly inform action or decisionmaking of specific audiences and are not clearly connected to opportunities for local action will not rate highly on that selection criteria.

**76. Can the focus of the proposed project be to document a process for data collection from previous work?**

Documenting a process for previous data collection as the primary purpose of the project is not a good fit for this CFP. Projects need to demonstrate they are answering timely questions about conditions in the place of focus and use data to catalyze action on those conditions.

**77. Is a project geared towards a narrative change strategy eligible?**

If the project incorporates the use of data to change narrative, the strategy is centered on the identified geography in the application, and meets all other selection criteria, it would be eligible.

**78. Are any types of community needs assessments eligible for funding?**

Projects that assess the needs of individuals or a group of individuals in a community (e.g., unhoused community members, survivors of intimate partner violence) are not responsive to this grant. However, needs assessments related to the physical or economic conditions of a local place—such as an assessment of a community's housing stock to identify opportunities for affordable housing—are eligible.

**79. Can a project focus on demonstrating the impact of local physical, economic, or social conditions on health outcomes?**

This program is designed with the assumption that physical, economic, and social conditions of a place have important implications for health outcomes and health equity. However, eligible

projects will use data to better understand these conditions and inform policy solutions that address them rather than focus on the health outcomes “downstream.”

**80. Are health impact assessments eligible?**

Health impact assessments (HIAs) that try to predict the likely impact on health of a proposed project or intervention, such as a mixed-use community space, will not be considered. A health impact assessment is a particular methodology that is excluded from this opportunity. For more information on HIAs, please [see here](#).

**81. What does it mean that “individual medical or social needs” are ineligible topics”?**

Projects focused on these individual social or medical needs are not eligible for this grant, though important to the people being served. Individual social needs refer to the social or economic circumstances of a person or family that may affect their health. For example, a project that links data to facilitate referrals for housing or food assistance for individuals is not a fit for this CFP. Projects that use data to support the delivery of healthcare or otherwise address medical needs of individuals are also not a fit for this CFP.

**82. Would a data project to inform local health and human service delivery be considered responsive?**

No, projects that are focused on the delivery of health, health-related social needs, or other human services are not responsive to this CFP. Projects need to focus on physical, economic, or social conditions of a place identified in question #61.

**83. Can the project be used to inform my organization’s program?**

We will not consider projects that relate to service programs, program evaluations, or those with the exclusive purpose of internal program improvement. A project that uses data to support decisionmaking related to a nonprofit program will be considered, as long as: 1) the program services or activities relate to a physical, economic, or social condition of the geography of focus AND 2) the project also engages with and disseminates data and/or findings to specific external audiences. Research to inform outreach to eligible individuals or families for program services is not eligible.

**84. The CFP says community health needs assessments will not be considered for funding. What is considered a community health needs assessment?**

These assessments refer to the required analysis done by nonprofit hospitals and health care systems to identify key health needs and issues.

**85. Is it possible to apply and then design the questions with community members impacted once awarded the grant?**



To be responsive to this CFP, applicants must propose a project with an identified set of activities related to a particular physical, economic, or social condition of a place. We support engaging the community before and during the project and understand some proposed activities may be adjusted in response to community feedback. However, projects that propose a general process to engage community members with the intention of determining the scope of work will not meet the selection criteria.

**86. Can you explain how the project should be focused on informing public policy, but the money cannot be used for lobbying, advocacy, or political activity?**

To understand the activities that the foundation considers lobbying, applicants should review [RWJF's guidance on Lobbying and Advocacy](#). For example, communications expressing a view on specific pending or proposed legislation are prohibited under this grant program. In addition, if an organization is contacting policymakers to influence their decision on specific legislation or to endorse particular candidates for office, it is likely engaging in lobbying activities. In general, using data and analyses to educate policymakers on an issue or publishing a report on how an existing or proposed policy would affect a population or place is not lobbying. With this grant, data and evidence can be used for such educational purposes.

## **Data and Methods**

**87. Is there any preference for the type of data (qualitative vs. quantitative) used in the project?**

No, there is no preference for the type of data that are collected, analyzed or used. The data can be qualitative or quantitative or a mix. Proposed projects should focus on the data that are best suited to answer the questions that are relevant to their specific issue and community.

**88. Can you speak more to how the data will be used and who it will be shared with? We work with many individuals who are, understandably, very skeptical of giving their information to organizations without strong data privacy protections in place.**

We ask that applicants identify the information or questions related to priority issues in the community and who needs those data. We agree that confidential data should be protected carefully and not shared publicly. In addition, we expect applicants to inform any respondents in data collection how their data will be shared, used, and stored.

**89. Does the data used in the project have to be published?**

Applicants are strongly encouraged to make any underlying data that are not confidential or proprietary available for download and reuse, and to use open-source technology where possible.

You may use data that are sensitive or confidential in your project and we do not expect those to be publicly shared. Using confidential data will not count against your application. We do

encourage you to share the aggregate results of your analyses and publish those findings. To the extent possible, we encourage you to share methodologies, code, and best practices.

**90. Does new data collection have to be part of the project we propose?**

No. Applicants can propose projects that analyze existing data and are not required to collect new data. However, the analysis of the data must be new and contribute new findings to local conversations. For example, projects can analyze historical data over multiple years to identify longer-term trends in a certain local condition.

**91. Does the final data need to be used during the 9-month period of performance or is the idea that it will be used following the grant period?**

If you are doing new data collection, we expect that at least some data will be collected, analyzed and shared with the audiences you specified during the grant period. Part of the program's motivation for funding locally embedded groups is that they will continue to use the data and analysis for planning or engagement beyond the grant period in alignment with their missions. We also understand that it may take time beyond the grant period for changes in policies, programs or investments based on those findings.

**92. Does an applicant need to know with certainty which tools and software will be used in its project? Can identifying those tools early in the grant period be part of its plan?**

An applicant does not need to know exactly which tools or software will be used, as long as the roles of the tools or software in the proposed project are clear and the types and functionalities of tools and software needed are included in the proposal. Also, time should be built into the project schedule for identifying the specific tools and software.

**93. Can an organization apply if it doesn't have data expertise?**

All proposals will be reviewed using the selection criteria in the CFP, which includes the project team's capacity to carry out the proposed activities, including the necessary data and community engagement expertise. If an applicant does not have data expertise, they would need to have a collaborating partner with data expertise to be rated highly on the criteria. Similarly, an organization that does not have community engagement expertise should apply with a collaborating partner that has this expertise.

**94. Is an Institutional Review Board review of data collection activities required?**

All institutions receiving federal support for research and evaluation—including universities, public schools, hospitals, and nonprofit organizations—are required by federal law to establish IRBs. Urban Institute and RWJF cannot issue any legal decisions related to IRB requirements, but data collection by community groups that are not receiving federal funds for research support may not be legally required to undergo IRB review. If your organization has an IRB, questions about IRB review should be directed to your organization's IRB.

Whether or not IRB review is required, we encourage and support grantees to learn and follow the principles of ethical, equitable, and responsible data collection, use, and storage, especially for any activities involving people. This includes ensuring informed consent from any participants in data collection and protecting any personally identifiable information.

If an IRB review is appropriate for your project, any anticipated IRB costs and time for review should be factored into your proposed project's budget and timeline. We will recommend that grantees pursue the submission as soon as they are notified of the award.

**95. Will the Urban Institute serve as the Institutional Review Board for grantees?**

No. If a project requires review by an institutional review board (IRB), applicants should account for IRB selection, preparation, and review in their timeline and budget. The Urban Institute may be able to provide technical assistance in reviewing a grantee's IRB package but cannot serve as a grantee's IRB.

## **Selection Criteria and Application Narrative Questions**

**96. How will applications be judged?**

Proposals will be reviewed using the criteria listed in the selection criteria section of the CFP; your responses to the application questions should correspond to these criteria. Reviewers will score proposals based on the strength of each application's responses. Applicants are advised to closely review these criteria before, during, and after completing their application to ensure that their responses meet the criteria.

**97. Will preference be given to certain applicants based on community size or region?**

All proposals from communities of any size or region will be assessed on their responsiveness to the selection criteria. When making final decisions to select the grantee cohort from proposals that reviewers deem highly responsive, the program team will make every effort to include applicants representing places large and small, urban, suburban, and rural, and in different regions of the U.S. and its territories. Projects that are state or national in scope are ineligible.

**98. Will preference be given to certain applicants based on organization size or budget?**

No. All applicants from eligible organizations will be considered for funding and all eligible applications will be assessed based on the selection criteria listed in the CFP.

**99. Is there a preference for the type of outputs (products, events, etc.) that will result from project activities (see application question 7)?**

No, there are no specific parameters for the outputs or reports that are produced by the project. Outputs can range from an event like a data walk or community dialogue to a final report or presentation. Grantees can decide what product is best to inform decisionmakers and reach

people who are affected by the issues they are seeking to address. Please review the “Activities, Methods, and Data Sources” selection criterion in the CFP. For information on the expectations of grantees related to deliverables, please review the Monitoring section of the CFP.

**100. How do you define “people who are affected by the primary condition” the project addresses in application question 8?**

People who are affected by the condition the project addresses are community members who live in the geography of focus, and whose opportunities for full health and wellbeing have been affected by the conditions that your project seeks to address. For example, if your project seeks to address unaffordable housing costs, people who are affected by the conditions may be renters in the community who are housing cost burdened. Or if your project seeks to address environmental risks, people who are affected could be individuals living in flood-prone areas. See the following question for more description of meaningful participation.

**101. How can “people who are affected by the primary condition” the project addresses meaningfully participate in and/or contribute to project activities, as referenced in application question 8?**

People who are affected by the condition(s) can meaningfully participate in and/or contribute to project activities in a variety of ways. This could include advising on the data collection process through defining research questions or reviewing data collection strategies. Grantees could also invite community members to participate actively in the research process by hiring them to conduct interviews, facilitate focus groups, or distribute surveys. Community members may also participate by reviewing early findings and sharing reflections through a data walk, or similar activity. In all cases, applicants should return the findings in an accessible way to the people who are affected by the condition and live in the focus geography. In some cases, the organization or a partner organization may hire a community member as a community consultant to inform the project throughout. Some applicant organizations may also have staff who are directly affected by the condition(s). Please review the selection criterion “Community Participation” in the CFP.

**102. What should be included in the “key milestones and timing for your project” in application question 9?**

The applicant should describe when key project activities (as described elsewhere in the application) will be carried out and in what order. Examples that might be included in milestones and timeline include survey design; stakeholder interviews; administrative data access and cleaning; data analysis and visualization; community discussions; coordination with interested and relevant parties; report writing; and outreach and dissemination. This list is illustrative; the milestones and timing should reflect the details of the specific proposed project and applicants should review the “Feasible Timeline and Scope” selection criterion in the CFP.

Applicants should focus their response to this question on the expected RWJF grant period: July 1, 2026 to March 31, 2027. Applicants should also include in the timeline any necessary activities that occur before that period (such as accessing data from other organizations or hiring staff or vendors) or after that period (such as presenting results at convenings, doing follow-up outreach, and disseminating project results) to provide context for the applicant's ability to execute the project and the project's potential impact.

**103. How should a proposal describe “key audiences,” as referenced in application question 10?**

Applicants should be as specific as possible in naming the groups of people or organizations who will be the audience of the data analysis and project outputs. For example, rather than saying that “local governments” will use the data, applicants should identify the specific offices or departments within a local government, such as the Department of Transportation or Department of Housing and Community Development. Furthermore, applicants should make it clear how that specific office or department would use the data, such as to inform the implementation of a policy or program. Responses to question 10 should also describe the existing relationships between the applicant and the specific intended audiences. Please review selection criterion “Relationships with Key Audiences” in the CFP. As a reminder, RWJF funds may not be used by the applicant to engage in any lobbying or political activities that occur during or after the term of the project. Please be sure to review the [lobbying guidelines](#).

Applicants do not need to describe all other potential groups that may use the data in the future.

**104. Can you share examples of what kinds of impact you envision from a 9-month grant?**

Systems and policies that created the inequitable physical, economic, and social conditions are entrenched, but activities under this grant can contribute to a longer path to transformation. Potential impacts may be increasing the awareness of inequities across places and the impact on opportunities for the groups affected.

Past grantees have initiated conversations among residents, local policymakers and other interested groups to advance equity in the conditions they are focused on. Other grantees have provided evidence of inequities in conditions that have resulted in increased funding for relevant programs or shifted the decision criteria for such investments. Please review the selection criterion “Impact and Change” in the CFP.

**105. Is the scale of impact of the project activities a selection criterion?**

No, the number of people affected is not a criterion for selection, but applicants should clearly identify the impact and/or change that they expect would result from the project in their response to question #11 of the application. Please review the selection criterion “Impact and Change” in the CFP.

**106. Application question 13 asks that we describe the roles and experience of the project team for no more than 5 key individuals. What if more than 5 individuals are involved in the project?**

Please describe the responsibilities of up to five individuals who will be most involved with directing and carrying out key project tasks. If you are unable to describe how all key tasks will be covered by these five individuals, you can reference said tasks under individuals with project leadership responsibilities. Please review the selection criterion “Project Team Capacity” in the CFP.

**107. What constitutes a “substantial role” for the applicant organization in leading proposed project activities?**

If the applicant organization is not serving as the fiscal sponsor, they should not pass through the grant funding to partners or subcontractors who then lead, direct, and conduct all the work without the involvement of the applicant organization. The response to questions 12 and 13 should explain the role of the applicant organization. Please review the selection criterion “Project Team Capacity” in the CFP.

## **Budget and Use of Funds**

**108. Can grant funds be used for general operating support?**

No. RWJF understands that many nonprofits are navigating many challenges including increased demand for their services. However, funds from this award cannot be used for general operating support.

**109. Can I ask for more than \$50,000?**

The maximum award for grants is \$50,000 for both direct and indirect costs. Proposals for funding above this amount will not be considered.

The ‘Budget Worksheet’ section will allow the user to enter more than \$50,000 in the box next to ‘Project Budget’. However, no more than \$50,000 should be entered.

**110. Can I ask for less than \$50,000?**

The award amount is \$50,000; unused funds should be returned to RWJF at the end of the grant period.

**111. What are allowed uses of funds?**

Grant funds can be used to cover the costs for the project of personnel, including staff salaries, fringe benefits, stipends for interns, and direct costs associated with the project including but not limited to meeting /convening costs, and incentives for participants in data collection. Indirect

costs are also allowed. See the following FAQ for details. There are no caps related to salaries or other costs outside of those discussed for indirect costs in the [indirect rate policy](#). No budget detail is requested in the proposal submission.

**112. Are indirect/overhead costs allowed and should they be included in the \$50,000 total?**

Yes, indirect costs are allowed and should be included in the \$50,000 budget. Please review RWJF's [indirect cost rate policy](#).

**113. How much funding can be paid to partner organizations?**

Grantees can decide whether to subcontract with one or more partner organizations. It is up to the grantee's discretion how much funding is paid to partners.

**114. Could the project fund incentives for participants in data collection such as focus groups, surveys, or interviews or feedback sessions or advisory committees?**

Yes, incentives for participants in focus groups, interviews, or feedback sessions are allowable uses of funds. You can also use project funds to provide refreshments for such activities, if needed.

**115. Can the budget be used to support staff who have not yet been hired?**

Yes, an applicant may propose using funds to support staff that are not yet in place at the time the application is submitted. If applicants need to hire staff, they should include the time required (e.g., for generating a job description, recruitment, and selection) in the planning for the project.

**116. What are prohibited uses of funds?**

- General operating support
- Lobbying, advocacy, or political activities
- Subsidizing individuals for the costs of their health care
- Supporting clinical trials of unapproved drugs or devices
- Constructing or renovating facilities
- Substituting funds currently being used to support similar activities