

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
Addressing the Harms of Financialization in Healthcare
Research to Inform Advocacy and Action and Expand the Evidence Base
Call for Proposals

Frequently Asked Questions
(Last updated February 1, 2024)

*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 submit a concept paper proposal. 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](#)
- [Additional Guidance for Applicants](#)

APPLICATION DETAILS AND TIMELINE

1. What is the due date for completed applications? *(updated 2/1/2024)*

The deadline for concept paper applications is February 12, 2024 at 3:00 pm ET/12:00 pm PT. *Please note: your concept paper proposal MUST be submitted through the MyRWJF application system; concept papers will not be accepted via email.*

2. Do you accept late submissions for any reason?

Late submissions will not be accepted for any reason. While late submissions will not be accepted, RWJF may choose, at its sole discretion, to extend the proposal deadline for all applicants. Such extensions generally will be granted only 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. 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. 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. Please add myrwjf@rwjf.org to your safe sender list to ensure all communications regarding this CFP are received.

4. What is the timing of this grant process and the grant period?

Concept papers are due February 12, 2024 at 3 pm ET. Applicants advancing to the full proposal phase will be invited to the full proposal phase on March 8, 2024, with full proposals being due on April 8, 2024. Finalists will be notified mid-May 2024. The grants will begin on July 15, 2024. All grants will end no later than 18 months from the start date.

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

To have a fair process we are unable to answer project specific questions or meet 1:1 with applicants. You may ask general questions during the webinar or submit your question via our CFP e-mail address, fin@rwjf.org. 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. Is there a structure for the concept paper? Can we see a template? (added 2/1/2024)

No, there is not a required structure for concept papers, which can be up to three pages in length (and must also complete required attachments and questions in the MyRWJF portal). Applicants should be sure to address the factors that will be considered in evaluating the project idea, as described in the CFP:

- Statement of purpose
- Rationale for the project
- Potential to generate timely and useful information
- Relevant experience of applicant and partners
- Intersection between structural racism and financialization

NOTE: The MyRWJF application system has a template concept paper document applicants should download and use when preparing the concept paper. The template is already formatted to the required 11-point Arial font with 1.5 line spacing. The system will not let you upload a document more than three pages. Concept papers MUST be submitted through the MyRWJF system.

7. Is a budget narrative expected in the concept paper? (added 2/1/2024)

No, a budget narrative is not part of the concept paper phase; however, a total budget estimate is requested as part of your concept. If invited to complete a full proposal, a full budget and budget narrative will be required at that stage.

8. Are references included in the 3 page limit for the concept paper? (added 2/1/2024)

There is not a separate section for references. Key references should be included in your concept paper within the three-page limit.

9. Does RWJF provide assistance in preparing a grant proposal?

RWJF does not provide direct assistance or funding/reimbursement for assistance in preparing a grant proposal. If you need technical assistance with the MyRWJF application system, please reach out to fin@rwjf.org.

10. Does the project need to be fully funded by RWJF?

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 \$100K-\$300K) and duration.

GRANTEE SELECTION AND ELIGIBILITY

11. Are public universities eligible to apply as lead applicant or are they considered a government agency?

Yes, public universities are eligible to apply as lead applicant. Although government agencies generally are not eligible to apply as the lead applicant under this CFP, exceptions do occur, as in the case with public universities. If you have a question regarding eligibility, reach out to fin@rwjf.org for guidance.

12. Can a state health department or other city, county, state department apply?

Government agencies are not eligible to apply as lead applicant but are encouraged to participate as key partners, where appropriate.

13. We are not a 501(c)(3); can we still apply?

Yes. While the Foundation generally prefers to fund 501(c)(3) organizations, applicants for this CFP can include but are not limited to community-based, state, and national advocacy organizations or coalitions; policy think tanks; and professional or workforce organizations representing the medical workforce. Academic institutions and universities (public and private) are eligible to apply. Government agencies are not eligible to apply as lead applicant but are encouraged to participate as key partners, where appropriate. The Foundation may require additional documentation to confirm that eligibility requirements have been met.

14. Is a U.S. based organization doing research in another country eligible to receive funds through this grant? (added 2/1/2024)

No. The research **MUST** focus on financialization in the U.S. healthcare system and be performed by a U.S.-based organization.

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

Yes.

16. We have a fiscal sponsor; can we still apply?

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.

During the full proposal phase, 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. The fiscal sponsor will 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. Will early-stage organizations be considered for this opportunity? *(added 2/1/2024)*

Yes, new organizations are eligible to apply. The track record or subject matter experience of those leading the work will be considered.

18. We are fiscally sponsored; should we complete the Demographics section with our organization's information or that of our fiscal sponsor?

Please provide information on the sponsored project, NOT the fiscal sponsor.

19. We are applying from a university *or large academic institution*; should we complete the Demographics section in relation to the entire university? *(updated 2/1/2024)*

For projects within a university setting *or academic institution*, please provide information about the department/school/*unit* where the project is based, not the university/*institution* as a whole.

20. Will the information provided in the Demographics section be used to make funding decisions? *(updated 2/1/2024)*

The data collected will help RWJF better understand the demographic profiles of applicant organizations. The data collected from questions 1 through 7 will be aggregated, not shared with reviewers and not used to make funding decisions. This data will allow RWJF to:

- Track the flow of our resources to communities that have been historically marginalized and under invested in.
- Understand changes in applicant and grantee profiles and resource flows over time to inform RWJF's ongoing efforts to build a Culture of Health.
- Share the data collected from applicant and grantee organizations in aggregated form internally and externally. Such public reporting on RWJF's website or other places will not include the identification of individual organizations.

Responses to questions 8-10 of the proposal will be visible to reviewers and will be considered in the funding decision if the questions are relevant to the eligibility and selection criteria listed in the CFP.

21. Will RWJF fund lobbying or advocacy projects? How do I know if my project is categorized as lobbying or advocacy? *(updated 2/1/2024)*

As a private foundation, the Foundation is prohibited from engaging in lobbying or providing grant funds that are earmarked for lobbying. Direct lobbying and grassroots lobbying are strictly prohibited. However, grants funds may be used for nonpartisan analysis, study, or research and examination of broad social issues. The Foundation is able to fund advocacy projects. See the RWJF lobbying and advocacy guidelines, via [this link](#) and the RWJF guide for researchers, available [here](#).

We recognize that research taken on by advocacy and power building groups is integrated in the overall work of the organization. We would want the majority of the funding to support the research work. We are prioritizing research that can back up and bolster existing advocacy campaigns to rein in financialization. Policymaker education may be considered.

22. 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.

23. Can an organization or individual be a lead applicant or project director, respectively, for one proposal and be a partner to another proposal?

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

24. Is it possible to apply jointly with other organizations or does the proposal have to come from one organization only? Are proposals with partnerships viewed more favorably? *(added 2/1/2024)*

Applications that represent collaborations or partnerships are welcome and encouraged. Applicants from a community power building group, a community-based organization, an advocacy group, etc., may want to partner with a research entity or with more traditional researchers as needed to increase capacity and create a more competitive proposal.

However, only one organization can apply as the lead within the MyRWJF application system, and the partners/collaborators may be included as subcontractors or consultants, as appropriate. Refer to the [Budget Preparation guidelines](#) for more information about how to structure a budget.

25. Can a university submit more than one application?

A university may submit multiple proposals, but we are limiting the proposal to one per university department (e.g., Engineering Department, Psychology Department).

26. Can we have more than two co-directors? *(updated 2/1/2024)*

Proposals may have as many key personnel as makes sense for the proposed work. However, the MyRWJF application system only requires one Project Director and offers an option to name a Co-Project Director/Co-Principal Investigator. Applicants may highlight additional key collaborators in the concept paper, as appropriate. If invited to submit a full proposal, applicants will have the opportunity to provide additional information about collaborators and partners.

The system only allows for two project directors mainly for communication with RWJF; however, you may structure the directors and key personnel in the way that works best for your team.

27. How do you define key personnel?? *(added 2/1/2024)*

Key personnel are considered the project directors/principal investigators who will be responsible for the activities identified in the concept/proposal.

28. How will decisions be made?

Both concept papers and full proposals will be assessed based on the eligibility and selection criteria listed on pages 5-7 of the CFP. All proposals will be screened and reviewed by external reviewers (with relevant expertise in research, content area, and/or policy) and an internal team of RWJF staff.

ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS

29. Will there be an applicant webinar? *(updated 2/1/2024)*

Yes, the webinar took place January 23rd, 2024. You may review the recording [here](#) and the slides [here](#).

30. What is the total amount available for this CFP?

The total combined funding available is \$1.2 million under this call for proposal. Individual grant awards will range from \$100,000 to \$300,000. We recommend you request the amount you will need to complete your proposed project. We expect to fund a diverse range of projects with varying budgets.

31. Should the total requested funds include the indirect cost rate?

The total requested funds should include indirect costs and the indirect rate set by RWJF (new as of January 1, 2024) for for-profits is 0%, for U.S. colleges/universities and hospital or health systems (including those that are nonprofits) is 15%, and for non-profits is 30%. Projects or programs that are fiscally sponsored should cover the fiscal sponsor fee from the indirect cost portion of the grant. If the indirect cost rate of the sponsored project or program exceeds the sponsorship fee, the grant may include additional indirect costs up to the maximum indirect cost rate. Indirect rates only go to the lead organization who is applying for the grant. If there is a contract between organizations, then there may be indirect costs 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 required to match 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.

32. Can the requested amount be less than \$100,000 or more than \$300,000?

All proposals must fall between the \$100,000 and \$300,000 range.

33. 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.

34. How do you define “financialization”? (updated 2/1/2024)

For this CFP, we use the definition as described by the [Democracy Collaborative](#): “Financialization in healthcare means that an increasing share of the extraordinary resources we put into the healthcare sector are extracted from the productive provision of high-quality care by healthcare.”

An additional relevant definition is:

"[The] growing influence of financial markets, motives, institutions, and elites in our economy and society. This dynamic encompasses the expanding influence of financial actors — including commercial and investment banks, private equity (PE) firms, venture capital firms, and other types of investors — and a shift in the business of non-finance-related entities away from trade and commodity production toward new financial channels and maneuvers." (*Bruch, Roy, and Grogan in The New England Journal of Medicine* 2024)

35. Can you distinguish "financialization" from other economic concepts in healthcare? (added 2/1/2024)

We're particularly looking at the role of the financial industry firms and actors. We recognize privatization and commodification are not new phenomena in healthcare; however, financial sector ownership and influence on the U.S. healthcare system, with its emphasis on short-term profit growth, is newer and growing. For more information, see the recent paper on "The Financialization of Health in the United States" (*Bruch, et al., NEJM, January 2024; DOI:10.1056/NEJMms2308188*).

36. How do you define "research," especially in the context of community-led organizations? (added 2/1/2024)

Although academic institutions are invited to apply, projects don't have to be traditional research singularly done by an academic institution. We're interested in research led by community power-building organizations, racial justice organizations, and academic researchers -- and the partnerships that may emerge among them. As such, we encourage a very flexible definition of research for the purpose of these grants and we welcome new ideas, partners, and approaches. We welcome research that lifts up new voices or new information about the problem or making the case for a solution. Proposals that focus on a small geographic scope or community will be more competitive if they provide lessons and insights for communities and policymakers beyond that community.

37. What might research conducted by community power building institutions look like? (added 2/1/2024)

Illustrative examples might be projects to engage voices and/or narrative storytelling about the impacts of financialization, or research in support of an advocacy campaign. Community power building organizations are encouraged to partner with a researcher if you do not have research capacities in-house.

38. Can this research be a continuation of previous research (non-funded)? Or does it have to be a completely new concept? (added 2/1/2024)

Yes, this grant may support existing work. We recognize that this work is nascent and that there have not been many funders in this space. If there's an ongoing project that aligns with CFP, then it is eligible.

39. You said that the grant does not support direct services; what do you consider direct service?
(added 2/1/2024)

Direct services are programs, initiatives, or other work that directly supports people in need. This does not include advocacy, community organizing, fundraising, administrative work, etc. Direct service organizations - or organizations that do not have a research or advocacy program - are likely at a disadvantage or ineligible for this CFP. If you provide direct service and engage in research, your work may be relevant to this funding opportunity.

40. Can you describe more about how narratives and storytelling would be used in this research grant? (added 2/1/2024)

Narrative and storytelling work that is actionable and directed to an audience or decision makers will be most competitive, as well as work that lifts up structural racism and untapped experiences of people and communities that have been impacted by structural racism. We're open to ideas from applicants. Examples might include projects that engage voices that have not been heard yet by decision makers or policymakers; that lift up counter narratives; that engage new partners and voices in this issue; and that build a powerful and accessible narrative about the importance of adequately steering public dollars to healthcare providers to provide an alternative to predatory private sources of capital. Also relevant is research that can support existing campaigns and organizing, help build on political momentum, and can generate a public "aha!" moment. More examples include work that can expand connections and engagement across groups addressing financialization from varying entry points -- including racial justice, economic justice, health systems, research, health policy advocacy.

41. What types of research projects are you looking to fund? (added 2/1/2024)

The most competitive applications will be narrowly focused within one (or more) of the following three priority topic areas: 1) Policy and Systems; 2) Narratives and Storytelling; and 3) Financialization and Structural Racism. See pages 2-5 of the Call for Proposals for more information about these three priority areas as well as illustrative examples.

42. Are there any expectations around products (reports, convenings. etc.) at the end of the grant?
(added 2/1/2024)

We welcome your ideas on how best to disseminate the findings that will make the research actionable by advocates and decision makers. That may include a convening, a report, or some other deliverable that will lend itself to action.

43. What if the proposed topic intersects with more than one of the three priority topic areas? (added 2/1/2024)

The application system will ask you to choose from one of the three priority topic areas listed in the CFP:

- Policy and Systems
- Narratives and Storytelling
- Financialization and Structural Racism

We recognize that some concepts may overlap with more than one of these priority topic areas but ask that you choose one as your primary areas of focus. The application questions will also allow you to select a secondary focus if applicable.

44. If my proposal is not selected, will you provide me 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 may be provided in the letter informing the applicant of RWJF's decision.

45. Can you tell me if my specific idea is a good fit for this CFP? *(updated 2/1/2024)*

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

Please keep in mind, with this CFP, the Foundation is looking to support actionable research that helps counter the harms of financialization in the healthcare system, *and particularly how it intersects with structural racism. Sector-specific work may be relevant but preferably with lessons for the broader system.* Proposed projects should fall into one of the **three priority topic areas** (Policy and Systems, Narrative and Storytelling, and Financialization and Structural Racism). *Consider how your project and your background may demonstrate an explicit connection to financialization in healthcare under one of the three priority topic areas.* 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.

46. Is there an interest in policies that affect market power in pharmaceutical markets and thus prices? *(added 2/1/2024)*

We recognize that financialization is a major phenomenon in the pharmaceutical industry. We'd be particularly interested in how the financialized pharmaceutical industry entrenches/exacerbates structural racism -- and that explore the rationale and the system. If a particular class of drugs illuminates the particular harms of financialization, that also would be considered.

47. Would the development of software tools/platforms that align with these goals be within scope for this RFP? *(added 2/1/2024)*

Development of software would be considered direct service and not fundable under this grant, unless there is a research topic affiliated with the software. Projects have to be focused on research.

48. 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 fin@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.