

2018 Call for Proposals

Global Ideas for U.S. Solutions Developing Solutions for Social Isolation in the United States: Learning From the World

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Please note: The Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) below pertain specifically to the CFP Developing Solutions for Social Isolation in the United States: Learning From the World funding opportunity. For more general information about applying for an RWJF grant, we encourage you to review these [questions and answers](#). To learn more about this RWJF funding opportunity, please view the CFP [brochure](#), the information and instructions provided in [RWJF's online application portal](#) (also found in the sample proposal provided under the 'Key Materials' section of the funding opportunity page), the informational webinar [recording](#) and [slides](#), [Budget Preparation Guidelines](#) documents found in the Resources section of [MyRWJF](#) and RWJF's [general grant making guidelines](#).

This document will be updated as new questions are asked. New questions will be listed in brown font at the top of each section.

These FAQs are grouped into the following sections:

- [General Questions about the Call for Proposals](#)
- [Eligibility Requirements & Selection Criteria](#)
- [Application Process](#)

GENERAL QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CALL FOR PROPOSALS (CFP)

- Q1. **How is RWJF thinking about equity with regard to this solicitation?** *(added 11/27/17)*
- A. As noted in the CFP, social isolation may not affect people evenly across society and often exacerbates health inequities. Populations of particular interest are noted in the CFP (see page 2). As such, we seek proposals/projects that address underserved or marginalized groups. Additionally, the project team itself will ideally involve a diverse group of people, including representation from the community(ies) it aims to serve.
- Q2. **How essential is it to have already established the international connection? What is the expected level of collaboration with international partners? Do we have to be actively collaborating internationally at the time of the application or can we draw from our past experiences?** *(added 11/27/17)*
- A. Since the global idea is the seed, it is helpful to have a global partner involved but not essential. If you're drawing on an idea from an international organization, then it makes sense you would want to contact and/or collaborate with someone from outside the U.S. who has the latest information, data, learnings, etc. on that approach and who could help you think

about how the approach can be adapted to the U.S. At the time of the application the relationship doesn't have to be long-standing, but there should be some outreach. The level of collaboration ultimately depends on the project or program being proposed and the roles of each partner.

- Q3. I'm not already affiliated with an international partner. Is there a place where I can search for international organizations seeking to submit a proposal for this CFP and also looking for partners? (added 11/27/17)**
- A. The Foundation does not have a list of organization seeking potential partners for this CFP. We encourage applicants to join the [RWJF Leadership Network](#) group on LinkedIn to try to create connections there.
- Q4. Is it sufficient to show how an innovation can be effectively demonstrated/implemented within a specific context in the U.S. (e.g., our city) or do we need to demonstrate how it might be replicated across the country? (added 11/27/17)**
- A. We are looking for adaption to the U.S. and assessment of the adaptation. This project does not need to focus on replicating or scaling up. It could be adapting it to one area, one city, one community, the nation – whatever makes sense.
- Q5. Is the preference for specific principles from other countries being integrated domestically, or for a full transplant of an existing program from another country? (added 11/27/17)**
- A. It is unlikely that an entire global program could be fully transported to the U.S.; adaptation would be needed. Really good principles that address social isolation may come out of a global approach, and those principles could be adapted, but it is unlikely the whole model or whole approach could be transplanted in the U.S.
- Q6. Are you looking for well-established interventions or new ideas that have not yet been tested? (added 11/27/17)**
- A. We hope that the global idea or intervention would have been piloted to assess its effectiveness. It doesn't have to be well established but it should have been evaluated.
- Q7. Some of the best sources/examples to adapt may be occurring naturally versus an intervention that has been evaluated. Are you open to that kind of option? (added 11/27/17)**
- A. The Foundation is open to approaches that have been occurring naturally. We would want to understand how well the approach worked and whether a better understanding of differences is required in order to adapt the approach to the U.S. Regardless of the source of the approach (naturally occurring or formal intervention), the project will need some kind of evaluation or assessment to see how well it might work in the U.S.

- Q8. Is the preference for the research project to focus on the social isolation of individuals or social groups? If groups, should the focus be city-wide, state-wide or national? (added 11/27/17)**
- A. There is no preference one way or another; the project could focus on individuals or groups. It depends on the project and the idea. The focus could be city-wide, state-wide or national.
- Q9. The CFP states that older adults are not a population of preference. If our proposal is to focus on adults, is there an age range defined as adult for this grant opportunity? What about projects that see older adults as the solution rather than the problem? (added 11/27/17)**
- A. The common definition of “older adults” as age 65 and over is applicable for this funding opportunity. There are many successful programs already focused on older populations. We will consider older populations if the proposal is new and innovative to the U.S., but the preference is for children, young adults, mothers, families at risk and the other populations listed in the CFP. The aspect that’s most important is how new and different is the proposed project from what has been done already in the U.S.
- Q10. Is this CFP looking to fund formal research projects? What about rapid field testing of adapting cultural practices by collaboratives of social agency learning networks? (added 11/27/17)**
- A. The CFP is not just for formal research projects. Our goal is to see what can be adapted to the U.S. We expect some evaluation on the adaption process and success of the adaption, but the grant isn’t just for research and evaluation projects only. Implementation and evaluation of the implementation itself are also included.
- Q11. Is the Foundation interested in projects related to policy solutions (policies that have been implemented in other countries) or programmatic solutions? (added 11/27/17)**
- A. The Foundation is interested in both policy and programmatic solutions.
- Q12. Do these need to be evidence-based interventions? If so, what level of evidence is required? How much evidence base is needed for strategies used in poorer or less-developed countries? (added 11/27/17)**
- A. The global idea or approach must have been tested, with some results and lessons learned. We would like to see evidence that the approach worked in another country and that learnings were generated – both of which will help adapt it to the U.S. There are no minimum requirements about size or level of evaluation, but qualitative and quantitative data will help the Foundation see more clearly the potential impact to U.S. targets.
- Q13. Does this funding support research model design, data collection and program implementation/evaluation phases? Is priority given to a specific phase? (added 11/27/17)**
- A. We are open to supporting all of these phases and it is a matter of what the proposed budget can achieve. It comes down to the specifics of the individual initiative being proposed.

- Q14. What are the learning exchanges and how do they work? (added 11/27/17)**
- A. The learning exchange is one of many possible avenues to receive funding for this grant. An example of a learning exchange would be a project that brings people from one country to the U.S., or vice versa, to facilitate greater learning about what made it possible for an intervention to thrive and how it might be adapted to the U.S., with the specific goal that people from the U.S. will apply and adapt the ideas to the U.S. context. This is an example of one of the many ways to facilitate cross-border learning.
- Q15. Does RWJF look favorably on proposals that bring additional funds from other foundations to support the project? (added 11/27/17)**
- A. We welcome collaborating with other foundations on this work. We would not give preference to proposals that do so, but it is always a good thing.
- Q16. Why does this CFP focus on social isolation? Is social isolation the same as loneliness? (added 11/27/17)**
- A. The Foundation is looking to support projects to address social isolation because social connections influence many health outcomes and behaviors, which affects the health and well-being of individuals as well as communities. To be socially isolated means that people do not have meaningful social connections. Someone can be lonely but still have social connections; or have social connections and not be lonely. Additional information and background information is provided on pages two and three of the CFP, as well as the recent Culture of Health blog post on the topic by Senior Program Officer Maryjoan Ladden.
- Q17. Is there a list of ideas from other countries that U.S. organizations can draw from, or is this completely wide open? Is there a list of evidence based strategies that U.S.-based organizations can select and implement? (added 11/27/17)**
- A. There is not a list; we are searching for ideas through this CFP.
- Q18. Is this a one-time call or will this CFP be issued yearly? (added 11/27/17)**
- A. This is a one-time call for proposals with no plans to re-issue at this time.
- Q19. How much funding is available? How many grants will be given? (updated 11/27/17)**
- A. A total of up to \$2.5 million U.S. dollars is available over the course of this funding opportunity (not \$2.5 million per year). The number of grants given will depend on the amounts requested by successful applicants.
- Q20. How is “social isolation” defined for this CFP? Can you provide examples? Where can I get more information about social isolation? (updated 11/27/17)**
- A. Social isolation is broadly defined as a state in which an individual lacks a sense of belonging socially, lacks engagement with others, has a minimal number of social contacts, and these contacts do not lead to fulfilling and quality relationships.

Proposals should reflect upon the broad contexts and conditions in which social isolation occurs. In addition to this definition and background information provided on pages two and three within the CFP, please read the recent [Culture of Health blog post](#) on the topic by Senior Program Officer, Maryjoan Ladden. In addition to your own research, the below articles can provide some relevant context on social isolation:

Pantell, M, Rehkopf, D, et al. Social Isolation: A Predictor of Mortality Comparable to Traditional Clinical Risk Factors. *Am J Public Health*; 103(11) November 2013. pp.2056-2062 .

Tanskanen, J and Anttila, T. A Prospective Study of Social Isolation, Loneliness and Mortality in Finland. *Am J Public Health*; 106(11) Nov. 2016 pp.2042-2048. .

Cacioppo, J and Cacioppo, S. Social Relationships and Health: The Toxic Effects of Perceived Social Isolation. *Soc Personal Psychol Compass*; 2014; 8(2):58-72.pp 58-72

Q21. Is my project/program eligible for funding through this CFP?

A. For this funding opportunity we're looking to support ideas that have demonstrated impact on addressing social isolation, were developed outside the U.S., have potential for adaptation in the U.S. and have not yet been widely tested or implemented in the U.S. We are only interested in projects that have clear relevance or applicability to the United States and align with the [Culture of Health Action Framework](#). We will not fund:

- individual applicants
- ongoing general operating expenses or existing deficits
- endowment or capital costs
- basic biomedical research
- research on drug therapies or devices
- lobbying of any kind

Q22. What is the time period (start/end dates and duration) for this funding opportunity?

A. Proposals are due Thursday, December 21, 2017 at 3 pm ET. In Mid-April 2018 semifinalists will be notified and asked to address questions in a scheduled telephone call with RWJF staff. The telephone calls with semi-finalists will take place between May 1 and May 15, 2018. Please hold these dates on your calendars. Finalists will be notified Mid-June 2018.

Grants in amounts up to \$250,000 U.S. dollars will begin 8/15/2018; grants in amounts over \$250,000 and up to \$750,000 U.S. dollars will begin 9/1/2018. All grants will end no later than 36 months from the start date.

Q23. What does a successful proposal for this CFP look like?

A. We're interested in projects that promote approaches developed outside the U.S. to address social isolation in U.S. individuals, groups and communities. While we are open to proposals that address social isolation in older populations, preference will be given to projects focused on children, adolescents, young adults, mothers, and families at risk. Ultimately, our goal is to

learn from innovative and impactful global ideas with the potential to contribute to a Culture of Health in the U.S. Please read the detailed CFP brochure for this funding opportunity for more information.

Q24. What are the most common reasons a proposal for this CFP would be declined?

A. Proposals are declined for not meeting the requirements of this funding opportunity. These include:

- does not demonstrate impact on addressing social isolation
- approach was not developed abroad
- does not demonstrate potential for adaptation in the U.S.
- proposes impact on social isolation outside the U.S only
- budget or timeline is outside of guidelines
- is not written in English
- proposed activities do not meet RWJF's general [grant making guidelines](#)
- any other eligibility criteria detailed in the funding announcement or in the application

We are also unlikely to fund:

- proposals that don't represent an opportunity for new learning (e.g., they are similar to projects we have already funded or are based on an idea that has already been implemented in the U.S.)
- ideas or activities that don't seem feasible for U.S. adaptation

Q25. Are you ONLY interested in approaches that are inspired by or imported from other countries? Will you ONLY consider programs or projects that have implications for U.S. health and well-being?

A. The answer to both questions is yes. The *Global Ideas for U.S. Solutions* funding opportunity is meant to bring in learning from abroad to help improve health in the U.S. If your idea does not fit these criteria, please consider RWJF's other [Funding Opportunities](#).

RWJF's focus is on building a Culture of Health in the U.S. While we fund grants that can help us learn from and adapt global ideas that can help build a Culture of Health in the U.S., we do not fund projects or programs that will exclusively impact health outside of the U.S.

Q26. Are you only interested in the adaptation of proven interventions? How much and what kind of evidence is needed? At what stage should the project be?

A. We are open to considering approaches that represent many points along the spectrum of evidence. While a "gold-standard" evidence base (i.e., a randomized controlled study) isn't required in order for your approach to be considered impactful, we do require you to provide some evidence of impact. This means proposed approaches must be inspired by programs and projects from abroad that have already been implemented and tested. If a project is in the process of implementation and has already started to demonstrate measurable impact, we will consider it.

We are not interested in ideas or programs that have not yet been implemented or tested. We are also not likely to fund proposals that include ideas that have been implemented only on a very small scale.

APPLICATION & ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS & SELECTION CRITERIA

Q27. What type of organizations can apply? Are for-profit/commercial businesses, public and private universities, or international organizations eligible to apply? (added 11/27/17)

A. Any type of organizational entity may apply for funding through this grant but all grant-funded activities must serve as charitable purpose.

Certain grants to organizations based outside of the U.S. will not be made directly by the Foundation but will be recommended through a fund the Foundation has with [Charities Aid Foundation of America](#).

Q28. Do you consider organizational size as a preference factor in selecting finalists? Can a small organization or a new organization be competitive? (added 11/27/17)

A. We look at organizational *capacity* including proper governance, sufficient staffing and strong policies, procedures and internal controls, but there are no requirements in terms of organizational size and length of existence.

Q29. Does the proposal have to have a principal investigator (PI)? Must there be a research/academic institution involved in the proposal? (added 11/27/17)

A. We use 'principal investigator' as our general language for the person who is the lead for the team, the main contact for the Foundation and the person responsible for the project. In this proposal, principal investigator and project director are interchangeable. No, a research or academic institution does not need to be involved in the proposal.

Q30. What type of experience or qualifications does the project director need to have? Are there any limitations as to who qualifies as the project director? (added 11/27/17)

A. The Foundation does not have any set educational or professional requirements. The project director should have the ability to lead and manage a team and assure that the project is successfully completed.

Q31. Will the Foundation award less than the amount requested in a proposal? Or will a proposal simply be rejected if the ask amount seems too high? (added 11/27/17)

A. The Foundation looks carefully at the budget of each proposal to ensure it matches the scope of the work being proposed. This review enters into the decision of how we would proceed with a particular proposal. Grantees may be requested to revise their budget further along in the process.

- Q32. If an organization's budget is small, say \$100,000 at this phase, is that organization still eligible to apply? (added 11/27/17)**
- A. Proposals can request less than \$250,000, depending on the scope and appropriateness of the proposal. We do look at organizational capacity, financially and programmatically, to make sure the organization can achieve the objectives that they have set out. We look at the overall budget of an organization and what percent of that budget RWJF would be supporting..
- Q33. Are U.S. territories and indigenous American tribes/communities considered international? (added 11/27/17)**
- A. We recognize the sovereignty of US-based tribes and the unique experiences of indigenous peoples in the US. For the purposes of this CFP, we consider the US to include those communities within the geographic borders of the US and its territories. These US communities and territories are not considered international.
- Q34. Is Canada considered international/global? (added 11/27/17)**
- A. Yes, Canada is a country outside of the United States and is considered international.
- Q35. Does the Foundation have a preference for either a geographic focus area within the U.S. for the project to take place, or countries from which the idea should have originated? (added 11/27/17)**
- A. No, the Foundation does not have a preference for either the geographic location where the program/project would take place in the U.S. or the country from which the idea originated.
- Q36. Would an idea that was originally developed in the U.S. but applied in a different way by another country qualify for this RFP? Or, methodology developed in the U.S. but applied in another country to make an impact? (added 11/27/17)**
- A. No, the idea or approach must be developed outside the U.S. to be eligible for this CFP.
- Q37. Would the Foundation consider approaches that have been developed internationally and have some very limited traction in the U.S. or must this be an approach that has never been utilized in the U.S.? Or a model whose origins included some U.S.-based ideas, has been successfully implemented overseas and that now could be applied in the U.S.? (added 11/27/17)**
- A. Our preference for this grant is for the idea to be new to U.S. If the idea has very limited exposure in the U.S. we wouldn't exclude it, but the preference is for approaches new to the U.S.
- Q38. Our nonprofit is part of an international network whose U.S. arm piloted a program involving many countries. The international program pilot was designed and administered from our U.S. office. Does this render us ineligible? (added 11/27/17)**
- A. Proposals for this grant must bring ideas that were developed and are working abroad to the United States. If your proposal is based on something developed in the U.S. that has spread to other countries, it would not be eligible. We want ideas developed outside the U.S.

- Q39. To what extent do connections with the Culture of Health (COH) Action Framework determine which proposals are selected? If we focus on one area in our proposal and make a strong case vs. identifying how the proposal connects to each of the 4 areas, how will that impact your review of the proposal? (added 11/27/17)**
- A. Connection to the COH framework is only one of the factors we look at in terms of eligibility and selection criteria. It is unlikely that your proposal will address ALL aspects of the COH framework. We won't give priority to proposals that address more areas of the framework. No preference will be given if a proposal addresses three areas vs. one area of the framework. Rather it's the degree to which the approach addresses the issue of social isolation and how it connects overall to the COH action framework.
- Q40. Is it OK for current or former RWJF grantees to apply?**
- A. Yes, all are welcome to apply. We are also looking to expand our network and encourage organizations new to RWJF to reach out. This funding opportunity serves as a learning platform to inform our work to build a Culture of Health. Competitive proposals are those that represent a new learning opportunity.
- Q41. Does the project director have to be from the applicant organization?**
- A. Ideally yes; however, if the project director is from another organization, the relationship between the project director and the applicant organization should be explained in the proposal.
- Q42. Can an individual apply to receive any of these grant awards?**
- A. No. Awards will be made to organizations, not individuals, and preference will be given to applicants that are public entities, public charities, or nongovernmental organizations.
- Q43. Should references/citations be included in the proposal narrative?**
- A. Citations and references should be included either in your proposal narrative or as an item in your the "Supporting Documents."
- Q44. Are letters of support required?**
- A. Letters of support are *required from confirmed U.S. and/or global collaborating organization(s)* that will serve as primary collaborators and/or subcontractor(s) on this project. Confirmed collaborating organizations identified in your proposal narrative and/or budget narrative should submit a letter of support describing the nature of the proposed collaboration and specifying their role on the project. Additionally, the letter should confirm their authority to commit resources to the project.

APPLICATION PROCESS

- Q45. How can organizations never previously funded by the Foundation increase their chances of being noticed and funded? (added 11/27/17)**
- A. The Foundation is actively seeking new partners so organizations that have not previously been funded have at least an equal chance of being noticed than those previously funded. Other ways to increase your chances of being noticed is to ensure a thorough review of the CFP and application materials to ensure your proposal contains all the required items and materials requested. A strong and compelling idea that could have traction here in the U.S. will also get your proposal noticed.
- Q46. Are there best practices for how the budget should be divided between U.S. organizations and collaborating organizations abroad? (added 11/27/17)**
- A. There are no specific guidelines. The best approach depends on the scope of work from the international and U.S. partners, how robust of a collaboration it might be and how involved each of the organizations are in the scope and over the time frame.
- Q47. Can you provide more detail on how the budget can be used (for construction, equipment, staff costs, etc., for example)? (added 11/27/17)**
- A. Please review the [Budget Preparation Guidelines](#) (available in the Resources section of A&R) and the CFP section entitled “Use of Grant Funds” (page 6) for specific information on what can and cannot be included in the budget.
- Q48. Do we need to include explanation of how the project might be sustained after the funding ends? (added 11/27/17)**
- A. We are always interested in how an approach or program can be sustained. It is important to talk in proposal narrative about the approach and how you know it is successful, how it might be spread and how it could be sustained.
- Q49. If the project director submits an application when affiliated with one university and the application is eventually awarded funding, will the funding/award travel with the investigator if the investigator changes employment/university affiliation before finalists are notified/project start date? (added 11/27/17)**
- A. The grant award would stay with the applicant organization/university. In some cases, the recipient organization might agree to transfer the award when the PI moves. The Foundation has a process that would include the first organization relinquishing the grant and the new organization submitting a new application. However, it would be difficult for this process to take place during the grant review process and before the finalists are notified and we therefore recommend that the organization that is the likely end recipient should be the one to apply for the funds.

Q50. Should the three examples for the landscape assessment be U.S.-based or international examples? (added 11/27/17)

A. The purpose of the landscape assessment is to understand how the approach you are proposing fits into a broader landscape of similar interventions. It is specifically meant to understand the U.S. context, so the examples should come from the U.S. to help us understand why what you're proposing is somewhat different or innovative compared with what is already happening in the U.S. You should select examples that are close to what you are proposing and then highlight the differences among them.

Q51. What is the review process for this CFP? (added 11/27/17)

A. There are several steps in the review process for this funding opportunity. All proposals will go through an initial eligibility review. Those passing that review will be reviewed and scored by internal (RWJF staff) and external (non-RWJF) reviewers who are experts in the areas of social isolation and adapting international ideas to the U.S. A group of internal and external reviewers will identify a group of semi-finalists. Semi-finalists will be notified in mid-April 2018, at which time we will schedule phone interviews with the project director and/or team and RWJF staff to take place the first half of May 2018. A standard set of questions will be sent to each semi-finalist in advance of their phone interview. Finalists will be notified in early to mid June 2018

Q52. Will there be an applicant webinar? (updated 11/27/17)

A. Yes. A webinar for applicants was held on November 9, 2017. A PDF of the slides is available in the Resources section of the [MyRWJF A&R system](#). The recording of the webinar can be viewed [here](#).

Q53. Are applicants allowed to submit more than one proposal? Can applicants submit more than one idea? Can an organization or individual be a part of multiple proposals? (updated 11/27/17)

A. There is no limit to the number of proposals you may submit or be listed on for this funding opportunity. Applicants may submit more than one idea or more than one proposal. Please only submit one idea per proposal. It is allowable for one person to be a co-investigator/co-project director or collaborator on several grants, but one person cannot be the principal investigator/project director on several grants. Please note, prior to awarding grants, we would review the proposal and budget to ensure that the amount of time the individual is spending across RWJF grants is appropriate.

Q54. I'm not 100% sure if my program qualifies or if my proposed approach is a good fit. Can I speak with a Program Officer before deciding whether or not to submit my proposal?

A. In the interest of fairness to all applicants, we cannot provide personal consultations with RWJF staff. We cannot review or provide guidance on ideas submitted via e-mail or communicated over the phone.

If after reviewing the informational materials for this funding opportunity (these frequently asked questions, our [funding opportunity brochure](#), RWJF's [general grantmaking guidelines](#),

and the information and instructions provided in [RWJF's online application portal](#)) you are still unsure of whether your proposal is a good fit, we encourage you to apply. You may also email globalideas2018@rwjf.org with questions and refer back to the FAQ document, which will be updated as questions are received.

Q55. Do I have to submit the proposal online?

A. Yes. Proposals will only be accepted through RWJF's online system at My.RWJF.org. To apply, visit www.rwjf.org/CFP/global2 and use the Apply Online link located on the right side of the screen.

Q56. What is the deadline for the CFP proposal and late submission policy?

A. The deadline for proposals is Thursday, December 21, 2017, at 3:00 p.m. ET. To be accepted for review, your proposal must be completed and submitted by the deadline. In fairness to all applicants, late submissions will not be accepted.

Q57. How will I know that my proposal has been successfully submitted?

A. You will receive an email from the MyRWJF application site confirming that you have submitted your proposal successfully.

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.

Q58. How can I check the status of my proposal once it is submitted?

A. We expect to receive many proposals, all of which must go through the same review process. Once you submit your proposal through the MyRWJF system, you will receive an email from myrwjf@rwjf.org confirming your submission, please check your spam folder if not received. Semi-finalists will be notified in mid-April 2018.

Q59. Will I receive feedback on the content of my proposal after a decision is made?

A. RWJF does not provide individual critiques or comments on proposals that are not selected for funding. General feedback is usually provided in the letter informing the applicant of RWJF's decision.

Q60. How can I find out more about RWJF and its initiatives?

A. Please visit the Foundation's [website](#) for more information about funding opportunities, interest areas, lessons learned from past grants and contracts, and other information related to the mission and work of RWJF. [Click here](#) to sign up to receive future RWJF program mailings, including future funding alerts.

If you have a general question about submitting a proposal for this CFP that hasn't been addressed in our [funding opportunity brochure](#) or in the FAQs above, please email us at globalideas2018@rwjf.org and we'll get back to you as soon as possible.