

Applying to Health Equity Scholars for Action, 2021 The Letter of Intent Stage

The letter of intent (LOI) submission materials will introduce you, your career goals, and your research idea to the Health Equity Scholars for Action (HES4A) reviewers and will be used to decide which applicants advance to the full proposal stage. The LOI submission materials consist of a series of eligibility questions, a statement of impact, a 2-page LOI describing your proposed research, and your uploaded CV/resume/biosketch.

Statement of Impact

Your statement of impact will be entered directly into a text field in the Project Summary page in the [RWJF Application & Review System](#) as part of the HES4A application.

In your statement of impact, you will describe how participating in HES4A would advance your professional development and help you achieve your career goals. For example, you may describe:

- Ways in which the research funding provided by HES4A would help launch or propel your research agenda or program;
- Ways in which the mentorship component of HES4A would help you develop or strengthen skills or advance your career; and/or
- Ways in which participation in the activities or events offered through the Health Equity Research Learning Collaborative (HER-LC) will augment your networks of support or your professional development.

In your statement, be as specific as possible about the ways in which you and your career would benefit from HES4A, using examples as appropriate.

While you have up to 2,500 characters, including spaces (i.e., about ¾ page, single-spaced), you do NOT need to use the entire allotment. Brief, clear responses that address the question are preferable to long, ambiguous statements.

The screenshot displays the 'Project Summary' page in the RWJF Application & Review System. On the left, a navigation menu lists various sections: Home, Resources, LETTER, Eligibility Criteria, Scholar Expectations, Home Institution, Key Contacts, Project Summary (selected), Project Information Questions, Letter of Intent Narrative, and Applicant CV/Resume/Biosketch. The main content area features an 'Instruction' box, a 'Proposed Project Title' field with a 'test' placeholder, 'Total Amount of RWJF Funding' set to 250,000, and 'Duration' set to 24 months. The 'Statement of Impact' section is highlighted with a red circle and contains a text editor with a 'test' placeholder and a character count of 4/2500.

The Letter of Intent Narrative

The LOI narrative template is downloaded as a Microsoft Word document via the [RWJF Application & Review System](#). After completing your 2-page narrative, save it as a PDF and upload the file back into the system as part of your HES4A application.

Your LOI narrative should address three major questions:

- **Rationale (1/2 page) – What will be gained from this work?**
 - Describe the research topic and how it relates to one or more of RWJF’s research funding program areas as described in the “Research” section of the call for proposals.
 - Explain why this research is important, what key gaps in knowledge will be addressed, and the potential of findings to improve population health, well-being, and equity.
- **Research approach and activities (~1 ¼ - 1 ½ pages) – What specific research question(s) or hypotheses will be examined and how will this be accomplished?** *This should include a summary of the methods and data that will be used, the study setting and population, and anticipated use of results.*
 - Clearly state the research question(s) and/or hypotheses.
 - Specify the health and other outcome(s) being measured.
 - Provide as much detail about the study design as possible, including a summary of the methods that will be used, the study setting and population, and plans for data collection and analysis.
 - Describe your plans for gaining access to the data, and the populations, or the settings in which the research takes place.
 - Describe your capacity to conduct the research, and what steps you will take to build your capacity or gain expertise required to carry out the research.
- **Dissemination (< ¼ page) – What are your plans to disseminate the proposed research?**
 - Describe any conferences and presentations, peer-reviewed journals or other publications, websites, and other methods through which you plan to disseminate your findings.

On the following page is more detailed guidance on what to include in your LOI narrative. RWJF program officers and staff are not able to review LOI narratives or other application materials prior to submission, but we hope this guide will help you develop a competitive proposal.

Health Equity Scholars for Action Letter of Intent Narrative

Project Title: [The Title of Your Project]

Letter of Intent I.D.: [Number found in the upper right corner of any A&R system screen]

Principal Investigator Name: [Your Name]

Legal Name of Home Institution: [Your Institution]

The Rationale section is where you will introduce the research topic and its relevance to population health and health equity. Describe how this topic relates to a specific system, policy, program, or practice that has the potential to address root causes of health disparities. Avoid a long summary of existing evidence about how social determinants affect health; instead be concise about the specific problem, the population(s) affected, the potential solution(s), and any contextual factors which justify the potential solution(s).

Clearly state how your proposed research reflects the spirit of RWJF's signature research programs, Evidence for Action, Policies for Action, and Systems for Action. Discuss how your research has the potential to inform action to build a Culture of Health.

Explain why the research is important. A brief description about the current state of evidence about the intervention can help make a case for why the proposed research is needed. Then describe the decisions, actions, further research, etc., that will be informed or enabled by your proposed project. Be specific about ways in which your research can advance the field. These do not have to be major advances; even incremental progress is valued.

The Research Approach and Activities section focuses on specific aspects of the research design and plan. It is an opportunity for applicants to demonstrate that the research is reasonable and feasible. It should flow from (but not duplicate) the Rationale section, in which you have already described the research topic, how it relates to RWJF's research interests, and why the research is important. Now you will describe what the research will entail.

State the research questions, aims and/or hypotheses clearly. There is no required number of questions or aims. (If listing more than one, bullet form is helpful.) Specify the health and other outcomes being measured.

State the research design, providing as much detail as possible.

For example:

- If evaluating an intervention, describe how you identify the exposed and comparison group(s). Be clear about how exposure was assigned or determined (e.g. at random, or using a set of criteria)
- For randomized control trials (RCTs), describe the treatment and control arms – who are the participants; how will they be recruited; approximately what size are the groups; etc.

For all studies, discuss the measures proposed, the data collection and analysis strategy, approximate sample sizes, and as much other detail as you have available.

Other details of the study design to describe, if available, include the:

- Measures you propose using
- Data collection and analysis strategy
- Approximate sample sizes
- Other details, if appropriate

Describe your plan for gaining access to the data or populations needed for your study.

For example, state whether:

- You have existing data sharing or access agreements, or if you are in the process of obtaining permission.
- You already have relationships with members of communities with whom you intend to work.

If your access to data is contingent on another event (e.g., the passage of a policy; the release of a dataset), be clear about the likelihood of the event happening within the necessary time-frame.

Describe your capacity to conduct the research. For example:

- Your experience or skill level with the necessary data collection or analysis methods;
- Your ability to interface with key stakeholders.

It is not required that you currently have the capacity to carry out the research yourself. If you plan to develop new skills or add members to your research team with complementary skills, this is where you would describe this.

The Dissemination section is where you will describe the tactics through which you plan to share your findings with the appropriate audiences. This may include academic approaches (e.g., journal publications, conference presentation) or non-academic approaches (e.g., op-ed writing, interviews, outreach to decision-makers). Discuss whether different audiences will require different strategies for dissemination, and your approach for each.

Note: Citations are NOT required. If you decide to include citations, any space devoted to them will count against the two page limit.