

Questions & Answers from the May 10th Webinar

Dear prospective applicants, thank you to those who participated in the webinar and for asking so many insightful questions. We did our best to group similar questions together and provide helpful answers. Please make sure to carefully read the [call for proposals \(CFP\)](#) and previous [program-specific FAQ sheet](#) to learn about this funding opportunity.

We understand that the selection criteria might seem too rigid or limiting to some of you who are interested in Health Equity Scholars for Action (HES4A). While this research program is targeting a very specific pool of researchers, we recognize that there are many other researchers who may have incredible career accomplishments and potential, who will not be eligible. We welcome anyone interested in this opportunity to keep up to date about other RWJF funding opportunities by subscribing to [RWJF funding alerts](#).

Because of the intensive and thoughtful process that informed the design of this program and our commitment to fairness, the eligibility criteria outlined in the CFP will be applied consistently in reviewing all applications.

If you believe that the answers that follow, the CFP and previous program-specific FAQ sheet do not address your questions, please email us at HES4A@rwjf.org. Additionally, we welcome your feedback and perspective.

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Eligibility

General Demographics

- Is there an age requirement?

No, there are no age requirements.

- Do you use a specific database to classify low-income communities for eligibility?

As outlined in the CFP, eligible individuals are from a systematically marginalized group that has historically been underrepresented in research disciplines. The term “systematically marginalized” refers to the challenges facing individuals because of their race, ethnicity, gender expression or sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, or similar factors. These examples are intended to be illustrative, not exclusive. Applicants will have an opportunity to describe their individual circumstances, as part of the online application.

- Are there any implicit preferences around disciplinary background? I'm in computer science, which would fall under "other" and I was wondering if this affects how the application could be seen.

No. Applicants will not be penalized or given an advantage, based on their academic discipline, specific field of study, or area of focus.

- How does RWJF define “disability” for the purposes of this funding opportunity?

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation often looks to the definition of disability found in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) defines a disability, with respect to an individual, as (1) a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities (such as walking, talking, seeing, hearing, or learning), (2) a record of such an impairment, or (3) being regarded as having such an impairment. Disabilities may include, but are not limited to, mobility disabilities, mental health disabilities, chronic illnesses, intellectual disabilities, and hearing and vision disabilities.

While we often reference the ADA definition, we recognize that there are other definitions of disability. Applicants may self-identify based on their own understanding of disability. At no point will you be asked to provide evidence of your identity/ies, but we ask you to be truthful as you describe your individual circumstances and respond to the application screening questions.

Immigration requirements

- can I apply for the grant? I am from Nigeria, and I live here
- May I ask regarding the citizenship/PR, can an application be submitted without citizenship/PR but expect to obtain before the issuance of the award? because we are a territory of the US, we can apply?
- Another eligibility question, if a researcher has an H1-B visa status and is not seeking residency, are they eligible for applying to this opportunity?
- Are H1-b visa holders who work at university allowable to apply?
- Hi, I have questions about eligibility. I'm in my third of tenure track position in a public institution in rural Midwest university. I'm resident alien for residency status. I have received an internal university grant with three other faculty members which was 27k, but all the money was for hiring and training students. I have not received any other award or grant. So am I still eligible?
- I am very interested in applying for the Health Equity Scholars for Action (HES4A) program. I meet all the listed eligibility criteria; however, I wanted to clarify one point regarding citizenship status. My application for U.S. permanent residency (Form I-485) is currently pending with USCIS. Given that I have not yet received my green card but am in the adjustment-of-status process, would I be eligible to apply for the program at this stage?
- I'm from Puerto Rico because we are a territory of the US, we can apply?
- If operating outside of academia...and I completely understand that I'm ineligible for this grant but challenge that its scope of influence is too narrow, if the goal is equity in scholarship. especially considering the ableism and racism that exists in academia that pushes out scholars. the inequity in scholarship for health equity starts in academia itself.
- My green card is pending but unlikely to be granted by May 31. I do expect to become a permanent resident in the next 3-4 months. Can I apply? Thank you.
- Applied for Permanent Residency and hoping to get it in a few months. Would I be able to submit LOI?
- Thank you very much for this wonderful session. I just want to confirm — as a third-year international student, am I correct that I'm not eligible to apply individually for this award?
- Am from Uganda, I do not have citizenship in U.S. However, my research is aimed to solve the above problem.

At the time of application, you must be (a) a U.S. citizen or its territories, (b) a lawful permanent resident, or (c) granted Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) status by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). Prospective applicants in the

process of obtaining permanent residency, and/or with a valid work or scholar visa, are not eligible to apply even if all other eligibility criteria are met. The focus on the program is on the development of leaders in the U.S. workforce, who are likely to remain in the U.S. and can help to build a Culture of Health in the U.S. over the long term. While we recognize that some individuals who do not currently meet the criteria intend to remain in the United States, we also recognize that unforeseen situations might affect one's existing immigration status or status adjustment process during the grant period. For that reason, we currently limit this opportunity to U.S. citizens or its territories, lawful permanent residents, or DACA recipients.

Graduation Time Frame

- What about people who are early in their careers but more than 5 years after degree, If they had a life event that resulted in stepping away and returning to research. For example, if they joined tenure track two years ago upon returning to research after addressing life event. So more than 5 years from degree but only a couple years in the program of research
- Follow-up question there are degrees that are terminal that are not doctorates that focus on research does that work.
- I defend my doctoral dissertation project this upcoming week*
- Hello! Eligibility - I defend my doctoral dissertation project and do have an offer for a postdoctoral fellowship opportunity that would start prior to the grant start date. Could I qualify for application?
- Did I heard , this program is for those who already have PhD
- Can a graduating PhD student who is on the job market apply with the expectation of securing a university position next school year?
- Regarding the early career eligibility: Is the 5 years from the time of submission of the LOI or is it to the submission date? I graduated in December of 2020, would I be eligible for this fellowship? THANK YOU!"
- I have a full time appointment at an accredited US school/academic institution, but my position is a Associate Research Scientist (position is considered officer of research and not a faculty). In my position I'm able to apply for grants as a PI, would not being a faculty member make me ineligible even if I can apply to grants as a PI? I received my PhD last month and am currently on the job market for tenure track asst. prof jobs.

- Thank you! Second eligibility q — I got my PhD in 2015 but have been on partial or full medical leave. Does this situation warrant an exception to the 5-year requirement for when you got your terminal degree?
- PhD students, not eligible?
- Would an August 2025 graduation date qualify?
- Would it be acceptable for a fourth-year PhD student to serve as Co-PI, with a senior faculty member listed as the PI for institutional support?
- If my transcript says my degree is conferred August 2025, does that mean I'm not eligible to apply? For the eligibility criterion "Have completed a terminal degree within the last five years," does that mean in 2020 or more recently, since October 2020, or some other cut-off date?
- "Sorry just checking this wasn't overlooked Anonymous attendee: Can a graduating PhD student who is on the job market apply with the expectation of securing a university position next school year?"
- Would the grant be applicable to individuals who are on clinical tracks, but scholarships is a mandatory requirement of job responsibilities and can lead to promotion?
- What if the transition is to an accredited institution with a tenure process, but out of the US"
- Two questions: 1) I have had many of my career milestones delayed because of challenges related to my background/identity and so have reached a career level relevant to this award over 5 years after receiving doctoral degree (6 years). Would I still be disqualified from this opportunity? 2) It seems that there would be VERY few researchers that have a full-time early career appointment without participating in a training fellowship or grant development (especially in a field as controversial as transformative health equity). Can someone please expand on the justification for this eligibility criteria?"
- I graduated with my Ph.D. in 2010 but taught at a teaching institution until 2021. After experiencing a life-threatening illness, I pivoted and found a position at an R1 institution, essentially starting all over. I am an assistant professor. Am I still eligible to apply?

We understand the transition to tenure is not immediate, linear, or straightforward. For the purposes of this program, you must have completed your terminal degree between May 1, 2020 and August 31, 2025, regardless of the timing of your transition to a tenure track position. A terminal degree is defined as the highest-level college degree that can be achieved and awarded in an academic discipline or professional field. This degree should be sufficient for being appointed as junior faculty member in an accredited school in the U.S. or its territories ("home institution"), with a full-time academic position

that could lead to tenure, or a postdoctoral fellow poised to be in such a position by the start of the grant. This criterion cannot be waived under any circumstances. If this requirement is not met, even by just a handful of days, we are unable to consider you for this year's funding opportunity.

MDs

- The terminal degree requirement for MD is it the obtaining of MD or graduation from subspecialty fellowship?
- For MD's, does that mean 5 years after residency completion or medical school completion? You cannot start tenure track as an MD until after completing residency.
- piggybacking on another's question, what about MD degrees, and following specialization (Fellowship), does the 5 years start from that?
- Will surgeons in new faculty positions be eligible to apply? Given that training took more than 7 years since graduating with the MD.
- The 5-year post doctorate (for MDs) is really limiting for such a great award. The pathway to faculty positions after going to medical school—>then residency + fellowship 3-10 yrs.—> before you can really even obtain faculty position, so I don't think this award is really feasible for an MD doing research, unfortunately. It's a great opportunity, though. Could you please clarify whether physician-scientists whose MD degree was conferred more than five years ago, but whose independent research careers only began recently due to the length of clinical training, are eligible to apply?
- Earlier in the eligibility/barriers slide, you mentioned being an older professional (I forget the exact wording), but then an exclusion is having achieved doctorate degree more than 5 yrs ago. I achieved my MD many years ago, however, I just finished a research heavy subspecialty fellowship this July 2025, so my current position as an assistant professor in my subspecialty is new to me. Would I still be excluded?
- Hi- I am an MD on a tenure track. Can I apply?
- The potential applicant I am supporting is a working primary care clinician (MD) working in a large health system with an academic component. She is a junior faculty member who is not on a tenure track as this is not possible for working clinicians – right now. Am I understanding that she would not be considered?

- In regard to the dates for graduation from a doctoral program- For MD applicants is this medical school, residency, or does it also include fellowship programs if applicable?
- If I got my doctoral degree (MD) in 2019 but just got out of residency and joined faculty in 2023, am I eligible?
- Support for tenure and promotion processes has been mentioned several times already. So, if an applicant has a full-time faculty appointment but it is not a tenure-eligible/tenure-track appointment (e.g., a Research track appointment at a School of Medicine or School of Nursing where tenure-track appointments are less common), does that meaningfully affect eligibility or selection?

We recognize that given the lengthy medical training, many MDs might not enter academia until after completing their residency and/or several fellowships. Therefore, the eligibility criterion around timeline might disqualify many prospective applicants with an MD degree. To be eligible for this opportunity, you must have received your MD degree between May 1, 2020, and August 31, 2025. If you have received your MD degree before May 1, 2020, you are not eligible for this program, regardless of the timing of your residency and/or fellowship. Unfortunately, we are unable to make any exceptions to this eligibility criterion based on your individual circumstances.

Previous grants experience

Experience as principal investigator (PI) or co-principal investigator (Co-PI)

- Would I still be qualified if I'm a tenure-track faculty member who served as a Co-principal Investigator of an internal grant that amounted to be \$30,000?
- Are postdoctoral fellowships (e.g., Ford) considered "grants" for eligibility purposes? My understanding is that if applied for and awarded as a doctoral student, the applicant doesn't lose eligibility.
- Would someone be ineligible if they were listed as a PI post-doctorally on a fellowship with funding >10k?
- By "postdoc grant greater than \$10,000" does it mean a grant received after completing a postdoc not during?
- I want to be sure I am clear about what was said regarding eligibility. You cannot have been a PI for a grant over 10,000.00 dollars? If you have, you are not eligible, correct?
- If I was awarded a \$10,000 grant as a postdoc. Am I eligible?

- I received a pre-doctoral grant during my PhD, that I was allowed to convert to a standard grant after I graduated (exceeding 10k total). Does that impact my eligibility according to the \$10k grant line?
- What about funding from a postdoc that was used for research? It was not a grant, but funding from a donor that support my postdoc project.
- If we received a sub-award under someone else's grant that was more than \$10k, would that disqualify us? I am not the PI for the grant, but I lead the subaward portion of the study.
- If I received a grant (>\$10k) just before graduating my phd program which is extending into the first year of your assistant professor position, would that disqualify me?
- "Hello! Eligibility q — I got a \$20k grant years ago but none of it went to salary/me —does this disqualify me from applying?"
- Regarding the eligibility requirement of not having been awarded a grant greater than \$10,000, does that mean that those awarded grants of \$10,000 or less remain eligible?
- Can you share more about the ineligibility criterion related to 10k in funding?
Thanks!
- "I completed my PhD in 2020 and began my position as an assistant professor in 2024. This year, I received an internal proposal development award of \$20,000 from my institution, where I served as principal investigator. The purpose of this fund is to support preliminary work and the preparation of an external grant application. Could you please confirm whether this type of internal proposal development funding counts toward the \$10,000 PI/Co-PI cap for eligibility?"
- What about funding from a postdoc that was used for research? It was not a grant, but funding from a donor that support my postdoc project.
- Does the \$10,000 grant limit focus on external funding and internal funding at our institution, or just the former?
- "Thank you for the presentation. I have a question regarding the eligibility criteria. The guidelines mention that individuals who have been PI or co-PI on a grant greater than \$10,000 are not eligible, regardless of the source. Could you please clarify whether this includes internal institutional funding?"
- If I have been a subaward recipient on a trianing award does that exclude me from eligibility??

Coinvestigators

- Similar question, if you have participated in grant writing but not the main PI, are you eligible?

- If I am a Co-I on a non-research related program award with the primary task of program evaluation will i be eligible?
- What if you are a co-investigator no a grant over \$10,000, but not a co-principal investigator?
- I received a grant as an academic "co-lead" (not PI and not IRB PI) over \$10,000. Does this make me ineligible?

Post-docs

- "I checked the FAQs for clarification on the following eligibility clause, “ Not have received support from other post-graduate research fellowships/traineeships (e.g., research career development award or equivalent).” Does this exclude those who have a postdoctoral fellowship or diversity enhancement professional development award?"
- "Individuals who have received support from other post-graduate research fellowships/traineeships (e.g., research career development award or equivalent) are not eligible for HES4A. " - does support in this section refer to financial support or does mentorship, etc. support count as well?
- I am part of an NIDA R25 grant- as a trainee not a PI. Would I still be eligible if this R25 provides \$20,000 for a pilot project for my research. To clarify, I am not serving as a PI at all for the main R25 grant but could potentially receive \$20,000 as a trainee for my research.

For our purposes, the role of a Co-PI is equal to the role of a PI. Therefore, individuals who have been principal or co-principal investigators on a grant greater than \$10,000 since receiving their doctoral degree, regardless of the source (e.g., institutional grant, external funder), and regardless of funds allocation, are not eligible for HES4A.

The role of co-investigator or trainee does not disqualify applicants. The NIH Research Education Program (R25) supports research education activities in the mission areas of the NIH and does not disqualify applicants. Fellowships and other grants received during doctoral training (i.e., before conferral of the degree) do not disqualify applicants.

- Would you be considered ineligible if you were a first-time PI of a grant over \$10,000 but it was terminated early (in Year 1) due to federal administration action?
- I did receive a diversity supplement during my postdoc, which was the DEI grant that was cancelled. Does that disqualify me to apply?
- Hello, Eligibility question: I was informed I got a \$100K grant in January 2025, however, the grant cycle has not started and there have been many delays due o the administrative executive order. Does this disqualify me from applying?

RWJF is committed to advancing research that focuses on innovative structural solutions that push beyond the status quo, and target root causes. We are aware of the current sociopolitical environment and the impact it has had on scientific research. If an applicant's health equity research funding was prematurely terminated, they may still be able eligible for HES4A. Please reach out to program staff to discuss your unique circumstance and eligibility.

T32/F32/Training

- Regarding eligibility, it was mentioned that the applicant must not have received major support post-graduate...would you please elaborate? Does that include postdoctoral fellowships (e.g., NIH T32)?
- Eligibility- are individuals that are funded as postdocs through an NIH T32 program eligible?
- What about NIH T32 Fellowships, where the applicant is not considered the PI, does not receive funding for a research project, but only a stipend?
- And finally, if still eligible, should these postdoctoral fellowships be listed as grants received in the application? How should these be listed so reviewers know of this eligibility situation?
- Thanks!"
- Does the \$10,000 cap of grants received also apply to internal grants? Does serving as T32 post-doc scholar deem a potential applicant ineligible?
- I received a T32 Predoctoral fellowship + T32 Postdoctoral fellowship — Never as the PI but as the recipient of these programs. Does that make me ineligible?
- Hello! Could you please provide more details on what qualifies a postdoctoral fellow for this program.
- Would a F31 award that supported pre-doctoral fellowship PhD studies count toward that grant history requirement?
- What about F32?
- Do you consider NIH T32 Postdoctoral Fellows as part of these non-eligible major trainee groups?
- It is unclear if someone can be in (or formerly in) a NIMH Funded T32 Postdoctoral Fellowship. Does that disqualify you?
- Can you have been on an NIH T32 for a postdoctoral fellow?
- Would fellowships fall into the training program category? (i.e., NIH-supported Leadership Fellowships)
- Is NIH T32 postdoctoral fellowship is considered a major grant?

Applicants currently or previously participating in an NIH T32 training grant are eligible to apply for HES4A, as long as their doctoral degree conferral date was between May 1, 2020 and August 31, 2025.

The F32 aims to enhance an individual fellow's potential to become a productive, independent researcher, by providing mentorship and training opportunities. Recipients of F32 are not eligible for this award.

- Also, what would happen if I were to be invited to submit a full proposal but receive an external grant before that final submission? I have a couple applications out but have not received any yet.
- Is one eligible for the grant if they are awarded co-pi on a different grant funded through a different grantor after they are invited for a full proposal for this grant?
- What if we are currently Co-PI for a \$10K+ grant that is under review (not granted yet), does that disqualify from applying?
- And does a pending proposal — one that hasn't been awarded yet — affect eligibility?"
- There is an eligibility question that asks if applicants are applying to other grants. Will this put applicants at a disadvantage during the selection process if they are? Additionally, what if the other grant's goals do not overlap with what's proposed in this grant (but complements them)? Thank you!
- Thank you for this webinar. If you have grants under review(but not awarded) that are over \$10,000 limit- if you apply to this call and then get awarded the prior grant, how do you proceed? Will you need to withdraw your application?
- I wanted to confirm eligibility. If I do not currently hold a grant over \$10,000 as PI but have pending applications, and I receive one during the review process, would that
- If we have received more than 10,000 funding as PI, we are not eligible to apply? Also, what if we have not received funding of more than 10k when we apply for LOI, but receive funding once the LOI has been accepted, will we be eligible to submit full application?
- I wanted to confirm eligibility. If I do not currently hold a grant over \$10,000 as PI but have pending applications, and I receive one during the review process, would that affect my eligibility?
- Good afternoon and thank you for this informative session. I am ending my postdoctoral fellowship and starting a tenure track position in July. I was working on a LOI for another program when this came out. Would you recommend I submit the LOI here first or can I submit to both?

You are not prevented from applying to or joining other fellowships/traineeships while participating in the program. We do, however, encourage you to review our expectations for scholars participating in HES4A. Additionally, we ask that you are transparent about current activities that might affect your eligibility for this program. If you are awaiting approval of funding or conditions (e.g., letter of agreement or IRB approval), to start research where you are PI or Co-PI, please let us know.

- Does an NIH LRP (loan repayment program) count towards that 10k grant limit stipulation?

No, loan repayment programs do not count as a grant or disqualify you from this award.

Tenure vs. Non-Tenure

- Can you be at a community college in an adjunct faculty position
- I am in a postdoc that leads to a tenure track position in two years. Would I be eligible for this program?
- Would this grant be applicable to individuals who are on clinical tracks but scholarship is a mandatory requirement of job responsibilities and can lead to promotion?
- Are junior faculty at academic medical centers eligible to apply?
- If we have received more than 10,000 funding as PI, we are not eligible to apply? Also, what if we have not received funding of more than 10k when we apply for LOI, but receive funding once the LOI has been accepted, will we be eligible to submit full application?
- Would the grant be applicable to individuals who are on clinical tracks but scholarships is a mandatory requirement of job responsibilities and can lead to promotion?
- If I am currently on the job market and plan to apply for a new job to start next year, would this impact my eligibility for this program in any way? for instance, should I have an academic position secured by the time grants are distributed? Are these grants available for current Ph.D. students?
- Do you have to be employed through an academic facility or can you be a student?
- Would the program also support non tenure line research scientist in academia?
- Do you have to have a tenure track position to apply? Are postdocs allowed to apply even if they don't have a tenure track position secured yet? Do the scholars ideally already work in an academic setting?
- Is this research opportunity strictly for scholars/intuitions?

- What if you lost your funding and employment due to DEI, and do not have a home institution?
- Given the current instability in the academic job market—including rescinded job lines and federal hiring freezes, how are you interpreting the eligibility requirement that applicants be ‘poised to be in a faculty position by the start of the grant’? In this context, where many postdocs are facing delayed or rescinded offers, would you still encourage them to apply?
- What if you are at an institution that typically does not grant tenure? I am at UCSF in the Psychiatry department where even research focused faculty typically are not given tenure (and I think this is the case at other UC institutions in medical centers as well).
- UCSF has a unique structure with Academic Professional Researchers who are not Faculty, but are still in a ranked academic research position. Would this be eligible?
- If you are currently at a post-doctoral fellowship program that will transition to a TT job next year, does that meet criteria of “junior faculty”?
- I am a presidential postdoctoral fellow. My position will transition to a tenure-track position as early as Aug 2026 (as late as Aug 2027). Would I be eligible to apply?
- Just to clarify, current postdocs who are looking for tenure track faculty position are not eligible, right?
- For clarity, are postdoctoral fellows ineligible? And if selected, do we have to be in a tenure position by the start of the grant period?
- are postdoctoral fellows currently on the job market eligible to apply?
- Hi! What is the definition of a position that “could” lead to a tenure track position? Is a professional track faculty position in a department with a high internal promotion rate acceptable?
- If I currently have a full-time faculty appointment as a lecturer or teaching professor at my university, would I still be eligible to apply?
- To clarify the junior faculty criteria, does that allow for adjunct folks?
- For eligibility, does an applicant need to have already secured a faculty position? Could you clarify what “poised to be in that position” means? For example, would a current postdoctoral fellow be ineligible if they don’t yet have a confirmed faculty appointment?
- Can a postdoctoral fellow who will transition to a tenure-track role after the fellowship period be eligible to apply? affect my eligibility?
- I am a second-year postdoctoral research fellow planning to secure an assistant professor tenure-track position next year. Am I eligible to apply?

- Is it best to wait until you start a tenure track position or is applying while on the job market also a possibility?
- Hi! I graduated from my PhD in 2011, but I never practice as a researcher after graduating. I was working primarily in non profits organizations m. I moved to Texas in 2016, and accepted a Senior Research Coordinator position at University of Texas at Austin, Dell Medical School. I convinced them to give me an Assistant Professor appointment to do participatory research, but has been very difficult to get funds. Can I apply?
- Do you have to be tenure track or can you be a postdoc as well?
- If you graduated before 2020, but transitioned from a teaching institution to a research institution and is still considered a junior faculty, can an exception be made?
- I earned my Ph.D. in 2015 and have had a nontraditional path to scholarship and have a huge deficit in publishing and know I need support with engaging as a scholar, even as I show up as an organizer, disability justice advocate (and self-advocate) and nonprofit leader in this moment.
- If I currently have a full-time faculty appointment as a lecturer or teaching professor at my University, would I still be eligible to apply? If the intention to gain support to transition to tenure-track

By the start of the grant (July 15, 2026), the applicant must be a junior faculty member in an accredited school in the U.S. or its territories, with a full-time academic position that could lead to tenure. Researchers outside of academia, non-tenure track faculty, and visiting professors are not eligible for this award. For the purpose of this call for proposals, junior faculty is defined by an academic rank of assistant professor on a tenure track.

- Also, can a community-based organization (nonprofit) act as a home institution with or without audited financials?
- Can partnership with academic institutions and think tanks count as academic institution affiliation?
- Is eligibility limited to universities? Can a young scholar work for a non-profit instead?
- Hi! What is the definition of a position that “could” lead to a tenure track position? Is a professional track faculty position in a department with a high internal promotion rate acceptable?

Eligibility is limited to universities. The applicant must be a junior faculty member in an accredited school in the U.S. or its territories, with a full-time academic position that could lead to tenure at the start of the grant (July 15, 2026).

- Is there a preference for applicants' affiliation with an R1, R2, or R3 institution?
- Are faculty members at non-research intensive (R1) institutions eligible as long as they hope to be at a research-intensive institute in their future?

For the purposes of this award, we would like to encourage a diverse group of researchers from a variety of accredited academic settings to apply for this funding opportunity. However, applicants will not be given an advantage in the selection process based on their institutional home.

Other Eligibility Questions

- What if the transition is to an accredited institution with a tenure process but out of the US
- If we start this program at one institution and we move to a new one, (within the US, or Canada) does this program follow us or stay with the starting institution?
- My apologies if missed the answer to this question: If we move to a different institute after being funded by this opportunity, does the fund follow us?
- I'm starting at an institution as a TTAP in January 2026. I'm currently at a different institution NOT on tenure track. Could you advise how I should list my affiliation on the LOI? Relatedly, do I need institutional signoff for LOI submission?
- How would rwjf respond if we change institutions?
- If recipients move to another academic institution, after receiving this grant, do the recipients lose the funding, or does the funding move following the recipients'?

You may shift the responsibility for conducting grant activities from one grantee organization to another if the present grant has a balance of \$20,000 or more in uncommitted/ unexpended funds, and if both organizations involved agree to the transfer. Please refer to Transfer Grant Guidelines for more information. If a grantee transitions to another academic institution, the new home institution must be an accredited academic institution in the U.S. or its territories and agrees to administer and receive the grant. A new grant would be issued to the new institution, where the grantee must remain as a faculty member with a full- time, tenured-tracked academic position for the duration of the grant.

- Can we hire collaborator as a consultant if we can't have them as Co-I?
- Can we include collaborators, or should this be a solo project?
- Can we have a co-investigator or Co-PI as well from another university? Do they need to meet the eligibility criteria as well?

- Are we allowed to partner with other individuals who meet the application criteria?

Only one applicant is allowed per application. Each applicant can include one or more junior staff or support professionals on their application, such as a research assistant or a project coordinator. A second project investigator (e.g., Co-PI or Co-director), Co-investigator, or another senior contributor are not allowed. The applicant themselves must be the most senior researcher and only investigator on the application.

Salary

- Is it required to have part of the grant go towards salary or can we use everything for the research itself?
- Could a PI be a Scholar and still teach at the same time during the award period?
- Are you required to use grant funds toward your salary?
- I apologize if this was answered already. My internet is spotty. Do you have to do 70% of your salary? Could you do 20-50% of your time/salary to this project? I ask because I teach a lot but want to do more research.

It is expected that during the duration of this award you will maintain your employment status. HES4A funds will cover up to 70 percent full time professional effort for two years (capped at \$75,000 per year, including fringe). The salary cap applies only to the institutional base salary. Your institution will pay the remainder of your salary, that is not covered by this award. This will allow you to buy-out sufficient release-time to focus on HES4A research and related program activities. The remainder of the award is to be used for research and other related expenses. You should not propose a budget that reflects a different allocation of funds. Supplemental funding is welcomed and encouraged, if the scope of your research is beyond what the award will cover. Please refer to the [program-specific FAQ](#) for a detailed list of the costs that can be covered by this grant.

Acceptable Research

- The HES4A FAQ states that randomized trials are good fits for funding but that funds should not be used to carry out interventions. Could you clarify what parts of a trial are fundable?

- It was mentioned that descriptive studies are excluded. But what if the proposal has phases/steps? Phase 1 being identifying barriers and phase 2 developing interventions based on what was identified?
- Is it acceptable to include the development and validation of measurement tools as a part of an action-oriented research? When it states "health" can it include mental health?

When we say that funds from this award may not be used to carry out interventions, we mean specifically that this award cannot be used for activities associated with implementing the intervention itself, such as delivering the actual program or service that is being evaluated. However, costs associated with evaluating the intervention – such as time and resources needed for data collection, analysis, and dissemination – are fundable.

We have a very broad interpretation of health equity, which spans beyond specific health outcomes, access, and quality of care. Community engagement is an important approach to centering community voice and perspective, and we expect community engagement in the research proposal.

- Is there an expectation that an applicant proposes research that focuses on the same underrepresented population that they personally identify with, or not necessarily?

The experience of the candidate does not have to be aligned with the research topic. RWJF prioritizes research on systems that have the potential to address the root causes of health disparities and improve population health and well-being.

- Are projects in global health accepted? Some of my projects are overseas but may inform HIV care and treatment in the U.S. do you fund international (global health) work?"
- Also, do all components of our work have to be US based? Thank you!
- Most of my research is conducted in an international setting; is that geographical context of interest/a priority to RWJF?
- Can the research (experimental work) take place outside the United States to enable lower-cost data collection on more subjects while generating credible causal evidence that can also inform the US context?
- Can proposed research be conducted in a global health setting such as the U.S.-affiliated Pacific Islands (e.g. Marshall Islands, Palau, or Federated States of Micronesia)? Or must research be focused on populations living within U.S. states and territories?
- Would the program fund field works in global setting?

- Are projects examining issues relevant to racial equity in the United States (e.g., gun control) but in a developing country setting eligible? What about focusing on healthcare equity and not a health outcome, per se?
- Hello. For projects that identify multiple institutional systems contributing to health inequities, is it expected that the proposal offer systems-change strategies for each, institution, or is it acceptable to focus on one primary system (e.g., intersections of criminal legal systems & healthcare)?

Yes, as long as the research project is feasible and has the potential to improve population health and wellbeing in the United States. This funding is for research projects that will build evidence that can inform action to impact population health, wellbeing, and equity.

Use of Funds

- Can you apply for additional funds for a project that is already grant funded? My current funding limits the scope of my work and additional funds would allow for expansion of the pilot.

Yes. As stated in the CFP and program-specific FAQ sheet, studies may be conducted as standalone projects as part of larger existing studies or trials underway.

- Is it possible to allocate salary funds for funding a graduate students?
- How many research assistants can there be included into this budget?
- Could student support (e.g., hiring a graduate research assistant) be built into the grant?
- What research related expenses are allowed? Can funds be used to cover time of a research assistant or a statistical consultant?
- Can funding be earmarked/used specifically to support increased transportation needs that are unique to my disability?
- Would we be able to use part of the funding to pay for a research assistant?
thank you

Yes, you can include a research assistant and/or a project coordinator in your budget. Direct costs related to implementation of the research is acceptable. Please note that you are not allowed to budget for a Co-PI or other senior investigator (e.g., mentor, advisor)

- Are the remaining funds for research, after salary, unrestricted? "Can you please clarify:

- a) Is it \$260K over two years?
 - b) Grants made up to \$260K — how determined if the amount awarded is \$260K or a number less than that?"
- Even if the requested funds are used solely for research and data collection, rather than for salaries?

Payment of the award generally will be based upon spending against approved budgets or milestones (not invoices), across two years.

- Does the funding amount include overhead funds to our university (fringe benefits)? Should our budget account for that in considering the award amount?
- Is there a cap for indirect cost?

Yes, RWJF's indirect rate for U.S. colleges/universities and hospital or health systems is 15%. Please refer to this [Indirect Cost Rate Policy](#) to learn about our allowed indirect rates.

Feedback

- Will applications receive feedback from reviewers or be advised whether their application is a better fit for one of the other programs?
- Can I discuss my research idea with the program officer to see whether my research idea fits the grant purpose?
- Can we reach out to request feedback on project topics before submitting the LOI?
- Can I email (and send my CV) to program administrator if I have questions about eligibility?

We understand receiving feedback about your application is important for your learning; however, per RWJF policy, we don't provide any feedback about successful or unsuccessful applications, and we do not review materials during the application stage under any circumstances. Nonetheless, applicants who are not invited to the full proposal stage will be informed of the most common reasons why applications were turned down.

Future Plans

- I am wondering if you have a plan to recruit the next cohort (next year RFA) within this topic as currently I am in the process of getting my permanent card and I can't think I will have one at the time of my application for this cycle.
- Are you guys looking at opportunities for non-tenure tract faculty for additional funding from the foundation?
- Are there other early career opportunities for those that have served as a co-PI but not a PI on a grant?
- I just want to say thank you so much for doing this training and for being so encouraging. It gives us hope to know there are places like this organization that care and are changing the world:)

Given our institutional focus on health equity and dismantling structural racism, as well as our focus on creating and disseminating actionable evidence, there will be more funding opportunities as they become available. The exact focus of these opportunities, in terms of topics and target applicants, is undetermined. For updated information on RWJF funding opportunities, please visit [rwjf.org](https://www.rwjf.org) and sign up for our funding alerts.

Mentorship, Coaching, and Home Institution Advisor

Mentor selection and characteristics

- Mentors in other countries (outside of US) are allowed?
- Should we identify potential mentors in our applications or is this something the foundation will do independently based on our research interests and fields?

There will be a space within the application form, allowing you to suggest possible mentors.

We would also like you to tell us what you are looking for in a mentor. A team from Johns Hopkins University will provide each selected scholar with a proposed technical mentor and career coach. Scholars will have the opportunity to assess fit with the mentors prior to official assignment.

- Are assigned mentors (technical and career coach) from systematically marginalized groups that have historically been underrepresented in research disciplines?
- Can we nominate specific researchers to be on the mentor team?

It is the intention of the mentorship matching program to identify mentors that meet as many of the desired characteristics expressed by the scholar, including both technical and career needs. We cannot guarantee that every aspect of a scholar's multi-faceted lived experience will be matched exactly in each of the mentors. However, scholars will be asked for input regarding possible mentor matches and will have an opportunity to assess fit with any proposed mentors prior to official assignment. Thus, if a scholar seeks a mentor, e.g., with a similar cultural background(s), that holds commercialization experience, or who is a parent, the matching team will do its best to identify appropriate matches that meet those criteria.

- [Where do the career coaches come from?](#)

Applicants may make specific suggestions for career coaches. Other methods to identify possible career coaches will be internet searches for relevant publications (academic and non-academic), speaker profiles from national meetings, faculty lists at all types of academic institutions (including Historically Black Colleges and Universities), review of leadership at major scholarly and professional societies, and use of networks including those of health equity researcher-colleagues. The matching team itself is a diverse group of individuals with a range of lived experience (by age, race, gender, regional origin, profession, and rank).

- [I have a question about mentorship— one issue I've been dealing with are some structural/institutional race/gender issues. Can RWJ match me with a mentor/coach who has faced these similar issues?](#)

Yes. It is our intention that matched mentors be able to advise Scholars on successfully navigating academia, notably with respect to race/gender and other structural/institutional discrimination issues.

Home Institution Advisor

- [What role is the typical for the institution advisor? school dean?](#)
- [Does having a home institution advisor impact the applicant's chance of funding?](#)
[I do not have anyone in my research area at my institution.](#)
- [Is there a requirement in terms of credential for the home institution advisor?](#)

Applicants are not required to have a home institution advisor. There are no requirements regarding credentials of home institution advisors.

- [Can the Institutional Adviser be a part of the proposed research with the eligible Scholar?](#)

We anticipate that the home institution advisor will be available to assist the applicant in planning their applications and are welcome to participate in the research if the scholar desires. Home Institution Advisors will be welcome to participate in other aspects of the HES4A program (e.g., networking sessions) that are sponsored by the Foundation.

However, home institution advisors do not receive salary support from the HES4A Scholar's research budget.

- [Do you suggest obtaining a home institution advisor and how would the experience differ from not having such an advisor.](#)

Most junior researchers will benefit from having a home institution advisor to help them navigate demands and expectations within their own institution. However, whether an applicant has a home institution advisor will have no effect on their application for

HES4A. If a home institution advisor is present, that person will be invited to participate in HES4A social and developmental activities that are planned to create community within the cohort of Scholars, outside of the specific research projects.

- [Do technical mentors and career coaches receive salary?](#)

A flat amount of remuneration for mentoring scholars will be provided to both technical mentors and career coaches separately from your grant award.

Letter of Intent

- [Does the LOI or full application require a letter of support from their home institution's leadership? If so, at what level \(dept, school, Provost, etc.\)?](#)
- [No, the LOI stage does not require a letter of support from anybody. If an applicant has a home institution advisor, a letter of support will be requested at the full proposal stage.](#)
- [Do you have to submit your LOI through a University grants office ?](#)
- [Do we need our institutions to submit \(our research grants office at our respective institutions\)? or would they only get involved if we are invited to submit the full proposal?](#)

RWJF does not require that letters of intent be submitted by a grants officer at the applicant's home institution. Anyone, including the applicant themselves, can create an account and submit. Applicants need only ensure that their home institutions agree to receive and administer the grant. Many institutions have internal processes and policies

regarding grant submissions, in which case you should refer to and follow your institution's guidance.

- Where do letters of support from community participants/orgs fit into this application process? They are valuable towards demonstrating the feasibility of the research.

At the letter of intent stage, letters of support from community organizations are not requested. At the full proposal stage, they will be optional, and it is at the applicant's discretion to determine if such a letter strengthens their application.

Intellectual Property Rights

- Who will own the developed intellectual property?

The grantee owns the intellectual property; however, the grantee grants RWJF a license for materials produced with grant funds. The specific intellectual property terms applicable to these grants may be found in Article 5 of the "Grants to Individuals" in the Grant Agreement. In addition, [RWJF's Open Access Policy](#) will apply to any peer-reviewed publications resulting from our grants. We believe that providing free, online access to these publications is the most effective way to ensure that research we fund can be accessed, read, and built upon. Specifically, peer-reviewed publications must be made publicly available immediately upon their publication under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY) or an equivalent license agreed to by RWJF.

General Process Questions

- Is this being recorded? Also, how can we receive recording link after its over?
- Is this webinar recorded and will it be available?
- Can you please share the slide deck with us?

The webinar recording and slide deck are available within the "Resources" section of the Application and Review system.

- Will reviewers be matched on field?

External reviewers have been selected based on their participation in the RWJF *New Connections* program, which had very similar goals to HES4A, and their experience with advancing their career in academia. A smaller subset of reviewers at our current

research programs' National Program Offices and internal from Research-Evaluation-Learning unit.

- In the LOI guidelines, it suggests that part of the two-page plan should be a preliminary budget. However, in the LOI template, there is no mention of budget. Could you provide more guidance on what the preliminary budget should look like in the context of the LOI? Is it stating the approximate request and the activities that the funding would be used to support? ("I would request \$XXX,XXX to support activities X, Y, and Z.")
- For the LOI, can you describe more than one research project if it fits under health equity?
- "Thank you for sharing what reviewers are looking for in LOI. Do we have a template for an LOI?"
- Can we have a sample budget? It is really difficult to know how to do these as new faculty and first-generation graduate
- Hello, thank you for the information. Should we submit budget along with LOI?

We apologize for this oversight. At the letter of intent stage, a preliminary budget is not required. At the full proposal stage, a project budget and budget justification will be requested.

- Thank you very much for your presentation. It's really helpful. Could you provide more info on the second-round interview process and timeframe?
- I work for the foundation of a medical center and our researchers are also clinicians - is there a required time commitment / minimum protected research time required? 2) can we submit more than one application or are we limited to one researcher/ project per organization?
- Will it be possible to speak directly with one of the program officers to make sure the idea is in scope?
- Can you talk a bit about the project being completed within 2 years- does the project need to be in the form of a manuscript/poster/presentation by the 2 year mark?
- Are there examples of the impact that will be shared? It's so hard to put it into words
- Are HES4A awardees required to travel each month, or once a year?

Please refer to the RWJF website, the call for proposals and program-specific FAQ document for answers to these questions. Please contact HES4A@rwjf.org to discuss ideas for research that may fall outside of the funding parameters of this program or for additional questions.