



Policies for Action: Research Vision and Roadmap

Our Vision

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's (RWJF) Policies for Action: Policy and Law Research to Build a Culture of Health (P4A) is intended to help build an evidence base for policies that can inform the *Culture of Health Action Framework* by identifying and building the evidence on what policies can serve as levers to help move us toward our vision. In unveiling this program and soliciting research proposals, we want to work with experts from many different fields, including health care, public health, early childhood development, education, transportation, housing, architectural design, built environments, economics, and beyond.

We want to better understand how policies affecting these sectors also impact health. By policies, we mean not just laws and regulations at the local, state, and federal level, but also private sector practices, such as the adoption of family-friendly workplace policies.

The goal is to develop innovative research that generates actionable evidence—the data and information that can guide legislators and other policymakers, public agencies, educators, advocates, community groups, and individuals. The research may examine established laws, regulations, and policies as well as potential new policies and approaches.

What We're Doing

RWJF's P4A program is administered by a National Coordinating Center (NCC) at Temple University's Beasley School of Law. Led by Scott Burris, JD, the program offers a strong foundation in policies, laws, and regulations in the public and private sectors that can improve public health. The NCC will work in collaboration with Research Hubs at the New York University Wagner Graduate School of Public Service, the University of Michigan Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy, and the Urban Institute. Together, the collaboration among the four institutions brings expertise and experience in conducting research that matters at the local, state, and national policy levels, and exemplifies our aim of integrating health research and expertise from beyond the health tradition.

- The NCC will build upon the work and insights of the Temple team's six years of experience with its Public Health Law Research (PHLR) program, also an RWJF program.
 - The Research Hub at New York University, led by Sherry Glied, PhD, draws heavily on centers of expertise in housing and transportation.
 - The Research Hub at the University of Michigan, led by Paula Lantz, PhD, MS, and Peter Jacobson, JD, MPH, brings together expertise in law, economics, health services research, political science, social demography and operations research, and decision science.
 - The Research Hub at the Urban Institute, led by Lisa Dubay, PhD, and Laudan Aron, MA, focuses on housing and food sector policies, state fiscal and income-related policies, and health care policies.
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What We're Looking For

We are interested in building from this foundation to develop the P4A program. We seek to fund research through calls for proposals (CFP) to inform the significant gaps in our knowledge regarding what policies can serve as levers in the Action Framework as we work to achieve improvements in population health, well-being, and achieve greater levels of health equity.

Every social policy factor that influences health in this country—public safety, transportation, the built environment, health care access, disability and income support, education, employment and training—is characterized by racial and economic disparities. For instance, researchers could study community policing policy, tax policy changes and their implications for community benefit, or disability policy within this context. Policies can influence health across sectors, from the long-term relationship of residential and educational segregation, to the overlap of education and law enforcement at the root of the ‘school-to-prison pipeline.’ To that end, we are specifically interested in understanding the role of policies in building equity.

In particular, we are seeking innovative research that evaluates and addresses actionable policies that:

- Focus on early childhood, or have lifelong, even multigenerational, benefits.
- Are preventive rather than remedial.
- Advance a community's own priorities. For instance, researchers looking at government and community policy initiatives might explore both health outcomes and the business case for these efforts.
- Highlight collaboration between the public and private sectors, or innovations within the private sector. For instance, architecture and urban planning researchers might explore themes of active design; those in the technology field may explore disruptive innovation within the context of health; and planning researchers might explore research around physical planning.
- Address people or places or systems that have been traditionally underserved or unattended. Researchers might explore neighborhoods that are without good schools or isolated from public transportation.
- Transform or bridge major service systems, such as between health care and public health systems, or other systems that influence health in communities, such as social services or education.
- Influence values and beliefs integral to a Culture of Health. Public policies often reflect the priorities and beliefs of the voting public—but may also in turn influence social norms, beliefs and behaviors (e.g. changes in attitudes about secondhand smoke due to smoke free air laws).

For more information and program updates, visit www.policiesforaction.org.