

FAQs: Pioneering Ideas

Updated April 30, 2020

These frequently asked questions (FAQs) pertain specifically to the Pioneering Ideas: Exploring the Future to Build a Culture of Health call for proposals (CFP).

Be sure to also review these [general questions and answers about applying for a grant](#) for additional relevant information about the RWJF funding process.

[Learn more about other RWJF funding opportunities.](#)

Q1: I've read the Pioneering Ideas: Exploring the Future to Build a Culture of Health call for proposals and I'm ready to submit. How do I submit?

A: Proposals for this solicitation must be submitted via the RWJF online system. Visit www.rwjf.org/cfp/pioneeringideas2020 and use the "Apply Online" link. If you have not already done so, you will be required to register at my.rwjf.org before you begin the application process.

Q2: I've submitted my application. What can I expect during the review process? Who reviews my application?

A: Here's an overview of the review process:

Pioneering Ideas: Exploring the Future to Build a Culture of Health proposals go through up to three rounds of reviews upon receipt of submission and before a decision is made to either turn it down or request a full proposal.

First review: An RWJF staff member reviews the brief proposal to ensure it falls within the [guidelines of what the Foundation funds](#) and the broad scope of the Pioneering Ideas: Exploring the Future to Build a Culture of Health call for proposals. Eligible submissions move to the second review.

Second review: Eligible brief proposals are reviewed by at least two RWJF *Pioneer* team members who each make a recommendation as to whether there should be further consideration of the proposal at a full *Pioneer* staff meeting.

Third review: The brief proposal is discussed by the larger Pioneer team. After this review, either a full proposal will be requested, or the applicant may be contacted by a *Pioneer* program officer for additional information in order to determine if the proposal will move to the full proposal stage. Additional information requested may include responses to questions that emerged during the third review.

Full Proposal Stage

If a full proposal is requested, we will send a link to our online proposal management system and ask the applicant to fill out a full proposal application. This will require detailed information on the funded project's goals, activities, and sustainability, as well as a more detailed budget and budget narrative.

Once a full proposal has been submitted, we will send it to up to two external and two internal experts for review. Reviewers may be experts in the field of study of the proposed work or may

be reviewing the proposal with an additional equity lens. The full proposal will also be reviewed by RWJF's legal and finance teams. After these reviews, there may be additional questions or conversations with the applicant before a final recommendation for funding will be made.

Q3: How will I know what stage of review my application is in? Will I be notified at each stage of review?

A: The *Pioneer* team prioritizes timely communication with prospective grantees and we strive to keep applicants updated on the status of their application as it moves through our review process. Applicants will be notified by email when the project reaches any of the following stages: turndown; third review stage as outlined in [FAQ #2](#); invitation to submit a full proposal. Please reach out to pioneeringideas@rwjf.org if you have a question about the status of your application.

Q4: Can I see a preview of a blank Pioneering Ideas: Exploring the Future to Build a Culture of Health call for proposal application?

A: Here is a [sample application](#).

Q5: Can you share examples of what a successful Pioneering Ideas: Exploring the Future to Build a Culture of Health call for proposals application looks like?

A: Because we want applicants to share their unique ideas as envisioned and not be influenced by past proposals, we intentionally do not share examples of previously submitted proposals.

Be creative, or keep it simple: It's up to you—and all okay by us. We want to assure you that you do not need to be a professional grant writer or a tenured professor in order for your idea to receive a fair review. The application contains guiding questions to help ensure we get the right kind of information to evaluate all proposals fairly. Please see the full CFP and application for detailed information about what we look for.

Q6: Can you share examples of what kinds of ideas have been funded? I want to be sure my idea is a good fit before I submit an application.

A: Please read our CFP and application thoroughly to get a good sense of what we look for. *You may find that one of RWJF's other [current funding opportunities](#) may be a better fit for your work.*

Visit RWJF's [Grants Explorer](#) to view all awards in the *Pioneer* portfolio. These include grants that come through the **Pioneering Ideas: Exploring the Future to Build a Culture of Health** call for proposals and grants sourced by program officers.

Visit our [Pioneering Ideas](#) page to learn more about the *Pioneer* team's approach to understanding emerging trends and our current and previous explorations into the future.

Please note: as we are constantly exploring new ideas and spaces, the examples we share are not indications of new funding priorities.

Q7: I have a pioneering idea, but I'm not from the health or health care fields. Should I bother to submit?

A: Yes! The changes we seek require diverse perspectives and cannot be accomplished by any one person, organization, or sector. We want to hear from scientists, anthropologists, artists, urban planners, community leaders—anyone, anywhere—who has a new or unconventional idea that could alter the trajectory of health, and improve health equity and well-being for generations to come.

If you think your idea is a good fit for our funding opportunity after reading the full CFP, submit!

Please note that the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation generally cannot make grants to individuals. That said, we can help applicants who are individuals and who reach the full proposal stage to find a fiscal sponsor through which the grant may be funded.

Q8: Do you discover all of your funded projects through the Pioneering Ideas: Exploring the Future to Build a Culture of Health call for proposals?

A: The **Pioneering Ideas: Exploring the Future to Build a Culture of Health** call for proposals is only one of the ways we discover pioneering ideas to fund. We have staff devoted to learning about emerging ideas and trends that may offer great potential to help build a Culture of Health. These staff members seek and develop ideas for funding in a variety of ways, including but not limited to review of proposals submitted to our CFP. In addition to funding projects through our CFP, we engage with people and places on social media, at conferences, and through our networks to look far and wide for potential grantees.

Q9: My team/organization has more than one pioneering idea. Can we submit more than one application to Pioneering Ideas: Exploring the Future to Build a Culture of Health CFP?

A: Yes. If your specific project team is working on more than one pioneering idea OR if there are multiple groups at your organization interested in submitting brief proposals, please feel free to submit more than one application.

Please note that each application should represent a unique project. Submitting multiple applications for the same project or for a set or series of projects is discouraged and will not improve likelihood of funding.

Q10: My organization is based outside of the United States. Can we apply to Pioneering Ideas: Exploring the Future to Build a Culture of Health CFP?

A: We only accept submissions from U.S. applicants at this time for **Pioneering Ideas: Exploring the Future to Build a Culture of Health** CFPs.

We recognize that good ideas have no borders, and we occasionally offer funding opportunities that are open to organizations outside of the United States that can help us learn from and adapt global ideas that can help build a Culture of Health in the United States. Non-U.S. organizations should check the eligibility requirements within the particular CFP of interest to determine if the funding is limited to organizations in the United States and its territories.

To learn more about RWJF's global learning efforts, visit [Global Ideas for U.S. Solutions](#) and [sign up](#) for email alerts to be notified when funding opportunities from the Global Ideas for U.S. Solutions team are available.

Q11: What are the most common reasons a proposal is turned down?

A:

- Proposed project falls outside the Foundation's general grantmaking guidelines as described in the application form
- Proposed project is not a fit with the funding opportunity described in the CFP
- Proposed project is similar to other projects already funded

RWJF does not offer individual guidance to applicants submitting proposals. Each proposal received is reviewed by foundation staff. Due to the volume of proposals we receive, RWJF does not provide feedback or written reviews of the proposals we receive under this solicitation. Please review information found in the *Pioneering Ideas: Exploring the Future to Build a Culture of Health CFP* and on our website for all information related to submitting a proposal.

Q12: Is there a time of year that offers better chances of success?

A: No. The *Pioneering Ideas: Exploring the Future to Build a Culture of Health CFP* funds proposals on a rolling basis and is open year round. Depending on when an application is submitted, the funding decision itself may not be made until the next calendar year due to the steps in our review process, but the likelihood of success is not affected by the time of year submitted.

Q13: What is the likelihood my proposal will be funded?

A: We receive a large number of brief proposals, over 1000 annually. While we do not cap the number of grants made through our open call for proposals, historically, we fund less than 1% of those. To put this number into context, the overwhelming majority of submitted applications do not fall within the guidelines of either what the Foundation funds or the broad scope of the Pioneer team as described in our CFP. Only about 49 of the 1201 submissions received in 2019 made it to the third review (see [FAQ #2](#)).

To optimize your chances of funding, please review the full CFP, selection criteria, and sample application and ensure this CFP is the right fit for your project before submitting your proposal.

Q14: How many grants does the *Pioneer* team make every year?

A: In 2019, we made 39 awards. Over the last three years, we made an average of 34 awards per year. These include both awards that have come through our previous call for proposals and proposals sourced by program officers (see [FAQ #8](#)). There is no cap on the number of grants made through the *Pioneering Ideas: Exploring the Future to Build a Culture of Health CFP*.

Q15: Will you be sharing my idea with anyone?

A: Applications go through up to three rounds of reviews with different RWJF staff members. If a full proposal is invited, that application will be seen by at least one external non-RWJF staff reviewer who is an expert in the field or topic, and additional RWJF staff members. We do not share applicant ideas or information with any others without permission. Please see [FAQ #2](#) for more details on our review process.

Q16: Do you have a question we didn't answer?

If you have a question that is not answered in these FAQs or in RWJF's [general FAQs](#), please feel free to email us at pioneeringideas@rwjf.org. If you have already applied to the **Pioneering Ideas: Exploring the Future to Build a Culture of Health** call for proposals, please be sure to include your applicant ID, the name of the applicant organization, the project director, and the applicant organization's contact information in your communication.