



WHAT IS OPEN ACCESS (OA)

1. What is an OA policy?

Open access policies promote the unfettered distribution and sharing of research outputs. Open access policies enable the free availability of research articles combined with the rights to use these articles fully.

2. Why do we need OA at RWJF?

Not everyone has access to the peer reviewed literature resulting from our funding¹. Well-resourced universities or academic medical centers may have access to peer reviewed literature that's behind a paywall, while others working in community-based organizations or local health departments² and government may not.

This situation is in direct contrast to our mission statement of improving the health and well-being of all in American and to our views on equity. It also conflicts with our guiding principles, because we will not be able to see bold and lasting change rooted in the best available evidence and openly debated, if evidence is not accessible to everyone.

As stewards of resources intended to improve the health and well-being of all in America, we have an obligation to see that research, evaluation, and learning highlighting innovations, calling attention to disparities, and surfacing solutions is accessible to all who need it, including researchers, practitioners, policymakers, and other individuals working to build a Culture of Health.

3. Where do our peers stand on OA?

Since 2008, the [National Institutes of Health](#) have required funded work to be shared openly in PubMed Central within twelve months of a peer-reviewed manuscript's acceptance for publication. Following suit, there has been a [movement among private funders](#) to pursue more open and transparent sharing of research that results from grant making. Among our global philanthropic peers, [the Wellcome Trust](#) has been championing more open and accessible research for more than twenty years.

¹ Prior to the implementation of the open access policy, RWJF did not direct where a grantee can publish, which is why articles sometimes landed behind paywalls.

² The National Association of County and City Health Officials asked its members about their engagement with academic institutions, including whether they had access to scientific or professional journals as a result. In 2016, 53 of the 484 surveyed (11%) had access through an academic institution. (<http://nacchoprofilestudy.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Figure3-5.jpg>)

RWJF'S OA POLICY

General

1. What does RWJF's OA policy look like?

The OA policy is available [here](#).

For applicants and grantees

1. Do all grantees have to publish in OA journals?

All grantees who plan to publish peer-reviewed research from the work made possible by a RWJF grant are required to publish said findings openly without any embargo period during which the publication is behind a paywall.

2. What if a grantee does not publish on an OA basis?

Failure to comply with RWJF's OA policy may impact future opportunities for funding from the Foundation.

3. Who pays for any article processing fees (fees which are sometimes charged to authors to make a work available openly)?

The Foundation allows grantees to include these costs in their research grant budgets. Grantees who were awarded their grants prior to the implementation of the revised funding guidelines and did not include these costs in the budget will be allowed to request additional funds from RWJF for this purpose. Further guidance on how to include funds for open access associated cost is available in the [budget preparation guidelines](#).

4. Does the policy apply *only* to new grants (ones that are initiated *after* the policy has been implemented on July 1, 2019)?

Yes. However, we encourage all current grantees with an already-active award, who did not include open access-related costs in their original budgets, to openly publish their findings. It is possible to request additional funds from RWJF to pay article processing fees (up to \$5,000) per publication (maximum of 4 publications) up to one year after the end date of their grant. If you wish to submit for reimbursement, start the process by sending an email to openaccessreimbursement@rwjf.org.

5. How does the new policy impact the online application process?

Our grants application process now features just a few additional questions to assess whether grantees plan to publish in peer-reviewed journals. Further guidance on how to include funds for open access associated cost is available in the [budget preparation guidelines](#).

6. How do grantees know what journals are open access?

Luckily, there is a directory of open access journals available [here](#). Please note that subscription-based journals can charge a fee to make single articles openly available are known as "hybrid journals". RWJF's policy allows grantees to publish in either of these journal types.

7. How do grantees handle unspent open access fees on a grant that has otherwise ended?

Grants may be closed when only the open access fees remain unspent and all activities, except for peer-reviewed journal publishing activities, are complete, as long as the grantee's institution:

1. Allows the funds to be retained to pay for open access fees in a grant that is closed, and
2. If the actual cost of the open access fees is less than what was budgeted, allows the unspent funds to be used for other purposes that are in accordance with the original signed grant agreement or for other charitable purposes, consistent with the restrictions in the grant agreement. It is expected that the majority of the open access fees approved in the grant budget will be spent for that purpose.

If statements 1 and 2 are not possible, the grantee should request a no-cost extension from the Foundation. The grant will remain open until the peer-reviewed publications are complete and the funds are spent down or, if they remain unused, returned to RWJF.

8. Does our OA policy limit grantees' freedom to publish in the journal of their choosing?

It doesn't. There are thousands of journals across scores of disciplines that publish fully open access journals. Additionally, a very large percentage of subscription journals offer "hybrid" open access that allows authors to make their individual articles freely available to readers. In virtually every academic subject area, authors can choose from a plethora of high-quality, reputable open access publishing options

9. Can grantees publish their work on their personal/organization's website?

Yes. The only requirement we impose is that peer-reviewed research be published pursuant to the form of Creative Commons license that we specify ([CC BY](#)).