

2016 Call for Proposals

Letter of Intent Deadline: March 15, 2016

Full Proposal Deadline: June 17, 2016



Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

POLICIES FOR ACTION: POLICY AND LAW RESEARCH TO BUILD A CULTURE OF HEALTH

BACKGROUND

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) has announced a new research program: *Policies for Action: Policy and Law Research to Build a Culture of Health* (P4A).

For more than 40 years RWJF has worked with others to address the major health and health care issues of our time. From its inception, RWJF's work has been driven by a continuous cycle of rigorous research, evaluation, and learning. RWJF's commitment to advance a bold research agenda helps to bring evidence to bear on some of the most complex health and policy issues facing America.

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 reason we want to understand more about policies in these areas is that we want to better understand how to build a national *Culture of Health*—a culture that enables all in our diverse society to lead healthier lives, now and for generations to come. A Culture of Health recognizes that health and well-being are greatly influenced by where we live, how and where we work, the safety of our surroundings, having easy and affordable access to health care, the way the environment influences our behaviors, and the strengths of our families and communities—factors that lie both inside and outside the traditional health care system.

Building a Culture of Health is a national movement, driven by the belief that we will make true progress when we work together toward a shared goal. Our vision is to see health become a national priority, valued and advanced by collaborators from all sectors. For instance, health can be supported by various elements of community-based infrastructure, including green spaces that are safe and welcoming; schools that are also used as community centers; corner markets that sell nutritious food; and transportation systems that are less reliant on automobiles. This not only benefits people and communities, it makes good business sense, too. A Culture of Health can result in a healthier workforce, lower rates of chronic illness, and reduced health care costs.

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Achieving a Culture of Health requires unprecedented collaboration from communities, policymakers, businesses and others. With input from partners and colleagues across the country, RWJF developed a *Culture of Health Action Framework* to catalyze a national movement toward improved health, well-being, and equity. The Framework is intended to broaden the discussion of what influences health, and help catalyze and chart progress.

THE PROGRAM

Policies for Action: Policy and Law Research to Build a Culture of Health (P4A) was created to help build an evidence base for policies that can lead to a Culture of Health. P4A seeks to engage long-standing health and health care researchers, as well as experts in fields like housing, education, transportation, and the built environment, to name a few, who have not worked in health before. The goal is to develop 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. The research funded under this call for proposals (CFP) should inform the significant gaps in our knowledge regarding what policies can serve as levers to improve population health and well-being, and achieve greater levels of health equity.

Submissions are welcome in any area of research that aligns with P4A's objectives, but particular consideration will be given to 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 without good schools or isolated from public transportation.

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- Foster stability and continuity at neighborhood, community, state or federal levels. For example, an economics research project might explore how mortgage-lending policies lead to homeownership patterns that affect health.
- 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. change in attitudes about secondhand smoke due to smoke free air laws).

POSSIBLE APPROACHES

This program encourages collaborations, as well innovative research designs that will inform policy action, innovation, or change. Each proposal should offer a compelling, creative, and concrete plan for bringing applicants' unique perspectives and previous research or other experience to bear in meeting the goals specified here. We encourage applicants to seek transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary partnerships outside the conventional bounds of health or health services research.

The program seeks studies that can be implemented expeditiously using complex and multi-method research designs and analytic strategies. The research approach and methods employed may be drawn from outside the typical health or policy research, employing current research methodologies within specific fields like transportation, education, or housing. Methods and designs include, but are not limited to, natural experiments, micro-simulation studies, randomized controlled trials, and/or linkage and analysis of existing data sources, along with targeted qualitative research approaches. Of particular interest are studies that exploit existing data sources such as electronic health and social service records, other public records, restricted-access government data, social media data and marketing data. Investigators may also consider proposing research that would serve as a supplement to other existing programs or studies.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Each applicant funded under the *Policies for Action* program will undertake the following activities:

- Design and implement a rigorous scientific study that aligns with *Policies for Action* research goals.
- Work collaboratively with RWJF and the National Coordinating Center and other *Policies for Action* investigators to identify and leverage potential synergies across research projects and to disseminate results broadly.

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- Participate actively in research collaboration and translation mechanisms organized by RWJF and the National Coordinating Center, including research-in-progress webinars, blogs, podcasts, research meetings, and policy briefings.
- Identify and pursue opportunities for research expansion and follow-on studies.

TOTAL AWARDS

Approximately \$1.5 million will be awarded through this CFP. Each grant will award up to \$250,000 for a maximum funding period of 24 months.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Applicants must be either public entities or nonprofit organizations that are tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Applicant organizations must be based in the United States or its territories. Awards will be made to organizations, not to individuals. We welcome applications from all investigators, and the following are especially encouraged to apply:

- Interdisciplinary or cross-sector research teams;
- Investigators from a variety of areas and disciplines, including but not limited to architecture, business, community planning, data scientists, economics, epidemiology, health policy, medicine, public health, social work, sociology; urban planning and system engineers; and
- First-time applicants to RWJF.

DIVERSITY STATEMENT

Consistent with RWJF values, this program embraces diversity and inclusion across multiple dimensions, such as race, ethnicity, gender, disability, age and socioeconomic status. We strongly encourage applications in support of individual candidates who will help us expand the perspectives and experiences we bring to our work. We believe that the more we include diverse perspectives and experiences in our work, the more successful we will be as we strive together to build a Culture of Health, enabling all in our diverse society to lead healthier lives, now, and for generations to come.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Proposals will be reviewed by a committee composed of RWJF staff, leadership at the National Coordinating Center (NCC) at Temple University Beasley School of Law, the program's National

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Advisory Committee (NAC), and other expert reviewers, as needed. All funding decisions are made by RWJF staff and leadership.

Letters of intent will be evaluated on the basis of:

- Importance and policy relevance of the question to be addressed;
- Fit with the topics described in this solicitation and the Culture of Health Action Framework;
- Importance of the potential contribution to our understanding of a Culture of Health and how to achieve the intended outcome of improved population health, well-being, and equity; and
- Feasibility.

In addition to the above, *full proposals* will be evaluated on the basis of:

- Clarity and importance of the research aims and hypothesis, theoretical framework, conceptual model or rationale that guides the design of the study;
- Strength of the proposed methodology;
- Appropriateness and availability of the proposed data sources;
- Whether the expected results or outcomes are clearly stated, measurable, and achievable within the allotted time frame;
- Plan for an ongoing and systematic approach to dissemination, communication, and translation of research findings to the practice community and policymakers;
- Research qualifications and experience of the investigator(s) and appropriateness of disciplines and perspectives represented;
- Efficient use of available funds within individual proposals and across the set of funded proposals; and
- Appropriateness of proposed budget and project timeline.

EVALUATION AND MONITORING

Grantees will be expected to meet RWJF requirements for the submission of narrative and financial reports.

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As part of the proposal process, finalists will be asked to disclose any financial arrangements (e.g., fees, funding, employment, stock holdings) or relationships that might call into question the credibility or perceived credibility of the findings, mirroring the types of disclosure requested by the field's leading journals.

APPLICANT SURVEY PROCESS

To help us measure the effectiveness of RWJF grantmaking and improve the grant application experience, we will survey the Principal Investigator (PI) listed in proposals submitted under this call for proposals. Sometime within the next few months, the PI will be contacted by Princeton Survey Research Associates International (PSRAI), an independent research firm, and asked to complete a brief, online survey about the application process and applicant characteristics. This voluntary questionnaire will take no more than 15 minutes to complete. Responses provided to PSRAI will not impact the funding decision for the proposals in any way.

PSRAI will protect the confidentiality of the responses. RWJF will not receive any data that links a name with the survey responses. If you have any questions about the survey or the use of the data, feel free to email applicantfeedback@rwjf.org.

USE OF GRANT FUNDS

Grant funds may be used for project staff salaries, consultant fees, data collection and analysis, dataset procurement, meetings, supplies, project-related travel and other direct expenses, including a limited amount of equipment deemed essential to the project. In keeping with RWJF policy, grant funds may *not* be used to subsidize individuals for the costs of their health care, to support clinical trials of unapproved drugs or devices, to construct or renovate facilities, for lobbying, or as a substitute for funds currently being used to support similar activities. RWJF budget preparation guidelines are available [here](#).

HOW TO APPLY

Applications for this solicitation must be submitted via the RWJF online system. Visit www.rwjf.org/cfp/p4a and use the "Apply Online" link for this solicitation. If you have not already done so, you will be required to register at MyRWJF at <http://my.rwjf.org> before you begin the application process.

There are two stages in the application process:

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Stage 1: Letter of Intent

All applicants must submit: 1) a concept narrative of up to two pages describing the study; and 2) biosketches for key personnel. Applicants must follow the instructions and use the templates provided in the RWJF online system.

Stage 2: Full Proposals (if invited)

Selected Stage 1 applicants will be invited to submit a full proposal of up to 10 pages accompanied by a budget and budget narrative, and additional supporting documents. Applicants must follow the instructions and use the templates provided in the RWJF online system.

All proposals must be submitted through the RWJF online system. Applicants should log in to the system and familiarize themselves with online submission requirements well before the final submission deadline. Program staff may not be able to assist all applicants in the final 24 hours before the submission deadline. In fairness to all applicants, the program will not accept late proposals.

Deadlines, requirements for application materials, and information about funding for approved studies are listed in the *Key Dates and Deadlines* section.

Guidelines and information, including a list of frequently asked questions are available on the *Policies for Action* website at <http://www.policiesforaction.org/>.

An information webinar for applicants will be held on February 16, 2016 from 1–2 p.m. ET to provide an overview of the CFP and offer an opportunity for potential applicants to ask questions about the program and grantmaking process. These webinars will be archived and available for review on the *Policies for Action* website.

PROGRAM DIRECTION

Direction and technical assistance for *Policies for Action* are provided by the National Coordinating Center at Temple University Beasley School of Law:

Policies for Action National Coordinating Center

1819 N. Broad Street

Suite 300

Philadelphia, PA 19122

Phone: (215) 204-2134

Fax: (215) 204-2075

Email: policies4action@temple.edu

Website: www.policiesforaction.org

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Responsible staff members at the *Policies for Action* National Coordinating Center are:

- Scott Burris, JD, *director*
- Heidi Grunwald, PhD, *deputy director*
- Jennifer Ibrahim, PhD, *associate director*
- Bethany Saxon, MS, *director of communications*
- Kevin Lydon, *financial manager*

Responsible staff members at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation are:

- Kerry Anne McGeary, PhD, *senior program officer*
- Mona Shah, PhD, *program officer*
- Priya Gandhi, MSHCPM, *research associate*
- Brian Quinn, PhD, *assistant vice president, research, evaluation and learning*
- Alonzo Plough, PhD, *vice president, research, evaluation and learning*
- Mia Sedwick, MA, *communications associate*
- Sofia Kounelias, *senior program financial analyst*

KEY DATES AND DEADLINES

February 16, 2016 (1–2 p.m. ET)

Informational webinar for applicants. Registration *required*.

March 15, 2016 (3 p.m. ET)

Deadline for receipt of Letters of Intent.*

May 4, 2016

Applicants notified as to whether or not they are invited to submit a full proposal.

June 17, 2016 (3 p.m. ET)

Invited full proposals due in the RWJF online system.*

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July 12, 2016

Notification to finalists.

September 15, 2016

Grants initiated.

**All letters of intent and full proposals must be submitted via the RWJF online system. All applicants should log in to the system and familiarize themselves with online submission requirements well before the final submission deadline. Staff may not be able to assist all applicants in the final 24 hours before the submission deadline. In fairness to all applicants, late submissions will not be accepted.*

ABOUT THE ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON FOUNDATION

For more than 40 years the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation has worked to improve health and health care. We are striving to build a national Culture of Health that will enable all to live longer, healthier lives now and for generations to come. For more information, visit www.rwjf.org. Follow the Foundation on Twitter at www.rwjf.org/twitter or on Facebook at www.rwjf.org/facebook.

Sign up to receive email alerts on upcoming calls for proposals at www.rwjf.org/funding.

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