

2016 Call for Proposals

Proposal Deadline: May 4, 2016



Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

NEW CONNECTIONS: INCREASING DIVERSITY OF RWJF PROGRAMMING

New Connections has long focused on expanding the diversity of perspectives that inform Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) programming and introducing to the Foundation new researchers from across disciplines. The program supports a network of early career researchers from backgrounds that are underrepresented in research disciplines or historically disadvantaged to:

- Engage in career development activities that enhance their research capacity;
- Work to build the case for a Culture of Health with strong qualitative and quantitative research skills;
- Produce and translate timely research results; and
- Collaborate with other researchers from diverse fields to create a healthier, more equitable future for all people.

Participants will become the next generations of leaders, collaborating across sectors to upend the status quo, address health disparities, and take bold steps to achieve greater equity in communities across the country.

BACKGROUND

In 2013 and 2014, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) conducted a strategic review and thorough analysis of all of our areas of work. After careful assessment, RWJF Trustees and leadership agreed that the current and evolving landscape in health and health care demands different and new approaches to the challenges we face (e.g., widening health disparities, poor value for high health care expenditures; expanding populations of underserved communities; and more).

The Foundation has embraced a new vision: to build a national Culture of Health to enable all in our diverse society to lead healthier lives, now and for generations to come. RWJF believes health should be a fundamental and guiding social value—and that America should become a nation in which promoting health is as important as treating illness. Together with our grantees and collaborators, we strive to bring about meaningful, lasting change. For more information about how RWJF is framing the Culture of Health, please visit www.CultureOfHealth.org.

This new direction means changing the way we work, and the work we do. Recognizing the critical role that leaders play in advancing a Culture of Health and social change, RWJF is committed to continuing our investments in developing human capital and aligning them more closely to the Foundation's new strategic vision. Building on decades of success in our scholars and fellows programs, our programs will deploy creative and new approaches to develop diverse networks of leaders who become engaged champions and are well-positioned to move the nation toward a Culture of Health.

2016 Call for Proposals

Proposal Deadline: May 4, 2016

RWJF has a long-standing commitment to research aimed at filling gaps in knowledge and building evidence-based approaches to the most pressing issues affecting the nation's health. These issues demand sustained effort and insight from a broad array of people, who bring a variety of perspectives, backgrounds, knowledge and experiences to the challenge. We recognize that researchers from diverse backgrounds are essential to identifying lasting solutions to build a Culture of Health and achieve health equity in the nation. The Foundation is dedicated to providing opportunities for researchers to further develop their careers, leadership and networks.

We anticipate that participation in this program will lead to enriching and lifelong partnerships with other participants and the Foundation as we work together to build and strengthen healthy practices; we believe alumni of the program will serve as valuable role models and mentors to future participants as well.

THE PROGRAM

Program Goals

New Connections: Increasing Diversity of RWJF Programming is celebrating its 10th year of supporting research grants and career development opportunities for a network of more than 830 researchers from diverse, underrepresented and disadvantaged backgrounds. The program aims to expand the diversity of perspectives that inform RWJF programming and introduce new researchers to the Foundation to help address research and evaluation needs. *New Connections* is a career development program for early career researchers. Through grantmaking, mentorship, career development and networking, *New Connections* enhances the research capacity of its grantees and network members. The researchers in this program transcend disciplines (health; health care; social sciences; business; urban planning; architecture and engineering); work to build the case for a Culture of Health with strong qualitative and quantitative research skills; and produce and translate timely research results.

Program Activities and Proposal Requirements

New Connections invites junior investigators—researchers from backgrounds that are historically disadvantaged or underrepresented in research disciplines—who have received their doctorate within the last 10 years to submit proposals for research they believe will contribute to building a Culture of Health in the nation. The term “historically disadvantaged” refers to the challenges facing individuals because of their race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or similar factors. Eligible individuals include, but are not limited to, individuals from ethnic and racial groups historically underrepresented in research disciplines, first-generation college graduates and people from lower-income communities. Preference is given to applicants with full-time appointments at colleges and universities.

For this round of funding, *New Connections* will provide support and training for up to 17 junior investigators (up to 15 *New Connections* researchers and up to two *Policies for Action* researchers) in support of the Foundation's vision to build a Culture of Health. *New Connections* is particularly interested in funding research that moves the nation toward achieving health equity. Proposed research topics must align with the Culture of Health Action Framework which sets a national agenda to improve health, well-being, and equity. The Action Framework consists of four action areas for achieving improvements in health and well-being for all Americans. These action areas include: (1) making health a shared value; (2) fostering cross-sector collaboration; (3) creating healthier, more equitable communities; and (4) strengthening integration of health services and systems. Proposed research topics must address one of the four action areas and the associated drivers, with proposals describing the alignment between the research topic and the action area and corresponding drivers. For more information about a Culture of Health and the Action Framework, please visit www.CultureOfHealth.org. For more information on research topics

2016 Call for Proposals

Proposal Deadline: May 4, 2016

of interest for this program, please go to www.rwjf-newconnections.org and click on “Research Topics” for more detail.

Applicants may submit proposals specifically for the *New Connections–Policies for Action* collaborative opportunity. Proposals submitted for *Policies for Action: Policy and Law Research to Build a Culture of Health (P4A)* should inform the significant gaps in knowledge regarding what policies can serve as levers to improve population health and well-being, and achieve greater levels of health equity. To learn more about the *Policies for Action* research priorities, visit the program website: www.policiesforaction.org/about/research-priorities.

Junior investigators will address the research topics outlined in this call for proposals and on the program website (www.rwjf-newconnections.org) in their applications. The program’s expectation is that each submission propose the most appropriate, innovative, and rigorous methodology. Approaches must involve using secondary data analysis, systematic review and meta-analysis. Given time lines and the scale of the anticipated projects, original data collection is strongly discouraged. Applicants are responsible for identifying and acquiring the dataset(s) they propose using in the course of their study. Among other sources, existing datasets funded by RWJF can be found at the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research Health and Medical Care Archive (ICPSR).

Applicants must select a mentor for the project who will provide his/her in-kind support. We require junior investigators to include in their budgets attendance at one *New Connections* event during the course of their award. This can be attendance at an annual symposium (usually held in June) or the annual research and coaching clinic (usually held in October). Additionally, applicants should budget to attend a new grantee orientation meeting at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation in Princeton, N.J. The new grantee orientation occurs at the outset of the award and provides an opportunity to engage with national program office and foundation staff. Budgets may also include travel expenses for the applicant to present and disseminate their research at up to two key national meetings. Applicants may need to solicit additional funds from their home institution to completely cover these costs.

A workplan should be included in the proposal narrative and should detail the milestones, time line and key deliverables of the funded project, as well as career development activities (determined by the junior investigator) for the 12-month grant period. *New Connections* program staff, along with RWJF staff, will review all workplans. As part of the deliverables for their funded project, junior investigators must prepare at least two manuscripts based on their *New Connections* project for submission to a peer-reviewed journal by the end of the grant. We will not accept manuscripts developed or published prior to the grant start date as project deliverables for *New Connections* funded work.

RWJF will award grants to the junior investigator’s home university or other home institution, which will administer the grant on behalf of the junior investigator. We will require grantee institutions to submit financial reports and other grant-related information on behalf of the junior investigator. We expect grantee institutions to support the junior investigator’s attendance at annual training events, such as the *New Connections* symposium and research and coaching clinic, methodological training, presentations, and other networking and mentoring events. *New Connections’* funds are intended to support a minimum of 25 percent of the junior investigator’s time over the entire 12-month grant period (including summer months). In addition, the grants will cover travel and other support. The work proposed must be completed within the 12-month period of the grant. Grant extensions are discouraged.

TOTAL AWARDS

- Grants of up to \$50,000 each will be awarded through this program.
- A total of up to 17 grants will be awarded.

2016 Call for Proposals

Proposal Deadline: May 4, 2016

- Of the 17 grants awarded in this funding round, up to two grants will be designated for *New Connections–Policies for Action* awards.
- Grants will be 12 months in duration.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- Applicants must have completed a doctoral degree within the last 10 years (obtained by September 1, 2006 or later);
- Applicants must be early-career scholars, such as a post-doc or assistant professor;
- Applicants must be from backgrounds that are historically disadvantaged or underrepresented in research disciplines. The term “historically disadvantaged” refers to the challenges facing individuals because of their race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or similar factors. Eligible individuals include, but are not limited to, individuals from ethnic and racial groups historically underrepresented in research disciplines, first-generation college graduates and people from lower-income communities. These examples are intended to be illustrative, not exclusive. Applicants who do not fall within one of these categories but who believe they are from a historically disadvantaged or underrepresented background will have an opportunity to describe their individual circumstances as part of the online application process;
- Applicants must have agreement from the home institution to administer and be the recipient of the grant;
- Applicants must never have received a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation;
- Applicants must provide evidence of research skills (research fellowship or equivalent training or experience);
- Applicants must be committed to the goals and mission of *New Connections*, RWJF and building a Culture of Health.
- Applicant organizations must be either public entities or nonprofit organizations that are tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and are not private foundations or non-functionally integrated Type III supporting organizations. The Foundation may require additional documentation;
- Applicant organizations must be based in the United States or its territories;
- Individual candidates for receipt of award funds must be U.S. Citizens, permanent residents, or individuals granted Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) status by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services at the time of application* and must not be receiving support from other research fellowships/traineeships at the time they begin the program.
- Additionally, individual candidates for receipt of award funds cannot be related by blood or marriage to any Officer** or Trustee of RWJF, or be a descendant of its founder, Robert Wood Johnson.

2016 Call for Proposals

Proposal Deadline: May 4, 2016

**Applicants who are permanent residents and not green card holders should contact the national program office before applying to determine whether they can satisfy the program's eligibility and documentation requirements.*

***The Officers are the Chairman of the Board of Trustees; President and CEO; Chief of Staff; Executive Vice President; General Counsel; Secretary; Assistant Secretary; Treasurer; and Assistant Treasurer of the Foundation.*

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 proposals 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

A committee consisting of RWJF staff and *New Connections* program staff from Equal Measure will review all proposals. The following factors will be used in the selection process:

- Evidence of alignment between applicant's career goals and interests and *New Connections* program goals and career development opportunities. Applicants should demonstrate that participation in the *New Connections* program will impact his or her career.
- Uniqueness of the applicant's personal and professional experiences. We seek junior investigator applicants from across disciplines (e.g., health; social sciences; business; urban planning; engineering; architecture) who strive to develop new ways to contribute to building a Culture of Health and achieving health equity.
- Significance and relevance of the applicant's previous research experience and interests to the proposed project. If the applicant is proposing a project that reflects a shift from his or her prior research agenda, the applicant should explain how that shift will advance his or her career.
- Demonstrated knowledge and experience with the proposed research methodologies (e.g., secondary data analysis, systematic review). Applicants need not be content experts, but should have the expertise to lead a project with sufficient methodological understanding to produce new knowledge for RWJF.
- Demonstrated progress toward a track record of successful peer-reviewed publication.
- Relevance of the research project to RWJF's vision for building a Culture of Health and Action Framework to improve health, well-being and equity.
- Strength of the research design and methodology proposed, including the literature review, project aims, research questions, conceptual model, proposed dataset(s) for secondary analysis or protocols for systematic reviews, and data analysis plan.

2016 Call for Proposals

Proposal Deadline: May 4, 2016

- Feasibility and clarity of a workplan that demonstrates a time line for completing the research project and career development activities during the one-year grant period.
- Preference is given to applicants with full-time appointments at colleges and universities.

EVALUATION

The purpose of evaluation at RWJF is learning rather than accountability. An independent research group selected and funded by RWJF may conduct an evaluation of the program. RWJF intends for this initiative to contribute to national efforts to promote a Culture of Health. As a condition of accepting RWJF funds, grantees must participate in the evaluation, which may include assisting with necessary data collection to accomplish the evaluation objectives. The program will publicly release results from any evaluations completed.

MONITORING

RWJF monitors the grantees' efforts and careful stewardship of grant funds to assure accountability. Grantees will be required to submit periodic narrative and financial reports.

APPLICANT SURVEY PROCESS

To help us measure the effectiveness of RWJF grantmaking and improve the grant application experience, we will survey the Project Director listed in proposals submitted under this call for proposals. Shortly after the proposal deadline, the Project Director will be contacted by Princeton Survey Research Associates International (PSRAI), an independent research firm, and asked to complete a brief, online survey about the proposal 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 to cover the costs associated with completing the research project (e.g., junior investigator's salary, consultant fees, data collection and analysis and other direct project expenses) and travel for career development. 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, for political activities, or as a substitute for funds currently being used to support similar activities.

Applicants should strive for efficient and appropriate use of funds as reflected in the proposed budget. The majority of funding should be used for the junior investigator's salary, travel, trainings and costs associated with full participation in the *New Connections* program. Applicants must demonstrate a minimum 25 percent FTE commitment for 12 months of funding. Time cannot be apportioned differently in the summer. By the end of grant, each grantee must submit at least two manuscripts for publication.

2016 Call for Proposals

Proposal Deadline: May 4, 2016

Grantees are also encouraged to propose and develop mechanisms for sharing knowledge gained with RWJF, such as presentations or webinars, and, where applicable, relevant audiences in the field.

HOW TO APPLY

The application process consists of one phase—submission of a full proposal. Elements of the full proposal include: (1) applicant’s research and professional background; (2) personal statement; (3) professional statement (that details the applicant’s research goals and future research agenda); (4) identification of a project mentor; (5) proposal narrative (see detailed description below); (6) detailed budget and budget narrative; (7) letters of support; and (8) applicant’s curriculum vitae.

Applicants must submit proposal narratives of up to eight pages that provide an in-depth description of the research project. Narratives include: (1) project overview; (2) project relevance to the Foundation’s vision for building a Culture of Health and Action Framework; (3) research design and methodology; (4) the applicant’s related research experience; (5) description of the proposed dataset; (6) products and deliverables that will be developed; and (7) a workplan with time lines for both the research project and professional development activities.

Proposals for this solicitation must be submitted via the RWJF online system. Visit www.rwjf.org/cfp/nci10jr and use the “Apply Online” link. If you have not already done so, you will be required to register at <http://my.rwjf.org> before you begin the proposal process.

Please direct inquiries to:

Tia Burroughs, Project Coordinator

Phone: (215) 732-2200 ext. 235

Email: info@rwjf-newconnections.org

The *New Connections* national program office will be the first point of contact for applicants. *New Connections* will facilitate grantee communication with staff at RWJF.

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, the program will not accept late submissions.

RWJF does not provide individual critiques of proposals submitted.

The deadline for receipt of full proposals is May 4, 2016 at 3 p.m. ET. We will notify finalists of their status by July 15, 2016.

Optional Applicant Web Conference

We will hold an applicant Web conference to provide an overview of the program, assist applicants with the proposal process, and offer an opportunity for applicants to ask questions. The webinar is scheduled for March 23, 2016 from 3–4:30 p.m. ET. We highly encourage prospective applicants to participate in the Web conference. Applicants can register for the Web conference on the program’s website at www.rwjf-newconnections.org. Registration is required to participate.

2016 Call for Proposals

Proposal Deadline: May 4, 2016

PROGRAM DIRECTION

Direction and technical assistance for this program are provided by Equal Measure which serves as the national program office located at:

Equal Measure
1528 Walnut Street Suite 805
Philadelphia, PA 19102
Phone: (215) 732-2200 ext. 276
Fax: (215) 732-8123
Email: info@rwjf-newconnections.org
Website: www.rwjf-newconnections.org

Responsible staff members at the national program office are:

- Renee Byng Yancey, MS, *director*
- Lisa Aponte-Soto, PhD, *deputy director*
- Howard M. Walters, MSS, MLSP, *project manager*

Responsible staff members at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation are:

- Catherine Malone, DBA, MBA, *program officer*
- Nancy Fishman, MPH, *senior program officer*
- Pamela Dickson, MBA, *associate vice president*
- Maddalena Moreira, *program financial analyst*

KEY DATES AND DEADLINES

March 23, 2016 (3 p.m. ET)

Optional applicant Web conference. Registration is *required*.

May 4, 2016 (3 p.m. ET)

Deadline for receipt of full proposals.

July 15, 2016

Finalists notified of funding recommendations.

September 1, 2016

Grants initiated.

2016 Call for Proposals

Proposal Deadline: May 4, 2016

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 working with others to build a national Culture of Health, enabling everyone in America to live longer, healthier lives. 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.

Route 1 and College Road East
P.O. Box 2316
Princeton, NJ 08543-2316