

# 2016 Call for Qualifications

*Application Deadline: November 30, 2016 (3 p.m. ET)*



Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

## ADVANCING SYSTEMIC CHANGES TO PROMOTE HEALTHY SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS

### BACKGROUND

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) has embraced a vision to build a Culture of Health in the United States to enable all in our diverse society to lead healthier lives, now and for generations to come. RWJF believes that health should be a fundamental and guiding social value—and that the United States should become a nation in which promoting health is as important as treating illness. Central to realizing this vision is ensuring that all children and families have the opportunity to achieve optimal physical, social, emotional, and cognitive health and well-being—a charge of the Foundation’s [Healthy Children, Healthy Weight](#) thematic area. President and CEO Risa Lavizzo-Mourey elaborated on this in her [2016 annual letter](#).

Health and educational outcomes are inextricably linked. Science shows us that physically and mentally healthier students achieve more in schools. The more educated you are, the more likely you are to live a healthier, longer life. When schools offer a healthy environment to learn and grow, we have a better chance of raising a generation of strong and vibrant children who are prepared to succeed as adults. In most cases, schools play a significant role in the community as hubs of academic, social, and recreational services and are often major regional employers. Most children and youths from pre-kindergarten through high school spend more time at school than any place other than home. Children and youths will experience multiple developmental benchmarks throughout their education, helping to set the trajectory for the rest of their lives. Adults also spend a significant amount of time in schools—whether as primary caregivers of children, employees, or both.

Based on a long history of supporting efforts that promote health in education, RWJF is launching a multipronged effort to help foster conditions that will make healthy school environments the norm and not the exception. The body of work that RWJF will fund should be informed by the existing framework developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and ASCD (formerly the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development), which is known as [Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child](#) (WSCC). WSCC represents a coming together of health and education perspectives to foster educational outcomes for children by supporting their health and well-being and by addressing social and environmental conditions. The WSCC framework is rooted in and promotes the understanding that:

- Student well-being must be integrated into the core of the school environment from classroom to kitchen to playground.
- All aspects of a child’s development and well-being must be fostered.
- Approaches in schools must consider the context of the communities and environmental conditions in which children and their families live.

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- Creating healthy school environments happens in partnerships with students, parents, families, caregivers, and leaders in the community.

Housed in the Healthy Children, Healthy Weight thematic area, this new body of work will help to ensure children's social and emotional well-being, their ability to achieve a healthy weight, and school climates that support the conditions necessary to achieve these and related health outcomes.

### PROGRAM AND PURPOSE OVERVIEW

RWJF seeks to advance systemic changes that embed health in school environments. To help advance these systemic changes, the Foundation will support a collaborative, multipronged strategy with three complementary areas of work related to **Research, Policy, and Strategic Action**. This call for qualifications (CFQ) represents Phase I of a two-phase selection process designed to identify eligible organizations to lead each area of work. (Phase II, which RWJF expects to undertake in early 2017, will be a targeted Request for Proposals that will involve only the top-rated applicants who successfully meet the eligibility and qualifications criteria outlined in Phase I. See "Total Awards" below, for more information.)

Across the entire body of work, RWJF seeks the following:

1. Increases in decision-maker awareness about the links between conditions and outcomes in health and education;
2. Opportunities for alignment across sectors to integrate approaches for physical, social, and emotional well-being in schools and opportunities to activate networks and coalitions to support these efforts;
3. Identification and elevation of federal, state, and local policy changes that support physical health and social and emotional development;
4. Elevation of best practices that integrate health in educational settings, including approaches that recognize the adversities that children and adults may face in and/or out of school;
5. Increased demand by direct stakeholders (e.g., students, parents, and educators) to advance schools with a commitment to healthy environments; and
6. Prioritization of health equity both in approaches and outcomes—striving for the highest possible standard of health for all students and giving special attention to the needs of those at greatest risk of poor health based on social and environmental conditions.

Below are the three distinct areas of work for which applicants may submit qualifications:

1. **Applied Research and Translation (one to two grants to be awarded):** Despite significant and growing evidence indicating how to achieve healthy school environments and how to carry out school health efforts so they are integrated effectively day to day, many schools and districts are still unable to apply this evidence in their practices. Among the barriers to implementation identified by stakeholders are: time and structural challenges; challenges in adapting current models with equity considerations; and competing priorities. The successful applicant(s) will be tasked with conducting

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timely and relevant research that addresses evidence gaps, particularly factors related to implementation and adaptation of evidence-based models. In addition, these grants will support meaningful translation and dissemination of evidence to research, policy, practice, and other stakeholder channels. The overall objective of this area of work is to use research to facilitate the implementation of practices and policies that generate healthy, safe, and nurturing school climates that help to reduce health disparities.

2. **Policy Analysis and Development (one to two grants to be awarded):** Although a number of model programs flourish across the country, few policy or systems changes have spread to integrate these changes into the majority of school environments. There is a need to aggregate and promote the existing policy leverage points at the federal, state, and local levels that will allow schools to promote and embed health in all settings and, potentially, to generate new policy options. Building on the existing efforts in which RWJF already has invested, the successful applicant(s) will provide sophisticated and compelling analysis on the possible policy pathways that will encourage school environments aligned with WSCC. The successful applicant(s) will have expertise in leveraging education policy at multiple levels as well as policies in other areas (such as health or justice) that are implemented in schools. Ideally, applicant organizations should have established protocol, procedures, and experience using a mix of lobbying and non-lobbying funds to advance policy goals. The overall objective of this area of work is to identify and elevate effective and equitable policies that generate healthy, safe, and nurturing school climates that help to reduce health disparities.
3. **Strategic Action and Alignment (one lead grantee to be awarded with core partners):** There are many groups, across multiple sectors, working together and separately to create healthy schools; however, it has been a challenge to realize the collective power of these endeavors. The purpose of this work is to foster alignment across stakeholder groups to advance approaches that improve children's health and well-being in schools. The selected grantee and core partners will be responsible for conducting a planning phase to map opportunities and develop strategies for change. These could include (but are not limited to) advocacy, campaigns/awareness-building, strategic communications and organizing. The work in this area is designed to strategically deploy, amplify, and connect the actions of many stakeholders by lifting up the common purposes and agendas for healthy schools. The lead grantee and partners will be charged with developing and fostering stronger alignment and activation of the base of existing stakeholders and the addition of new stakeholders to support healthy school environments. The overall objective of this area of work is to expand support from decision-makers, practitioners, and other key stakeholders who will ultimately be responsible for establishing and supporting policy, implementing best practices, and embracing school-change efforts that address the real conditions that support or impede children's health and learning.

### *Applying for More Than One Area of Work*

An organization may submit qualifications for more than one area of work (e.g., Applied Research and Translation; Policy Analysis and Development; or Strategic Action and Alignment). However, each submission *must* be separate (applications for each body of work will be reviewed separately). We anticipate that no single entity will have the organizational capacity to effectively manage all areas of work; thus, we anticipate awarding at least two and up to five grants across the three areas of work. Applicants interested in applying for more than one area of work should give full consideration to the overall eligibility criteria and the specific selection criteria for each area and should be able to address synergistic enhancements gained by having one organization/entity lead more than one area of work.

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## *Collaborative Applications*

In the areas of **Applied Research and Translation** and **Policy Analysis and Development**, applications from collaboratives are encouraged, provided that a single lead organization for the application is designated. For **Strategic Action and Alignment**, a collaborative application is *required* from a single lead organization that has identified core partners/collaborators with specific roles and responsibilities that will be critical to achieving the aims of the program. (See “Eligibility Criteria” and “Selection Criteria” below.)

## TOTAL AWARDS

The process for selecting grantees to lead each body of work for this new effort will be conducted in two separate phases over a 12-month period.

**Phase I** is a call for qualifications. Responses to the CFQ are due November 30, 2016, at 3:00 p.m. ET.

**Phase II** is a targeted request for proposals (RFP). RWJF expects to conduct the RFP process in early 2017. It will be by invitation only to top-rated applicants who successfully meet the eligibility and qualifications criteria outlined in Phase I. To be considered for Phase II, all applicants *must* be part of the Phase I call for qualifications. The applicant organizations selected during Phase I will be invited to enter into Phase II of the grant selection process with RWJF in early 2017 and will submit their full proposals by February 16, 2017.

RWJF expects to fund up to \$9.5 million for this body of work as follows:

- **Applied Research and Translation:** One to two awards of up to \$1.5 million total in grant funding over a two-year period (July 2017–July 2019).
- **Policy Analysis and Development:** One to two awards of up to \$2 million total in grant funding over a two-year period (July 2017–July 2019).
- **Strategic Action and Alignment:** One award of up to \$6 million total to a lead organization with core partners. The \$6 million total includes \$800,000 for a preliminary six- to nine-month planning period during which the lead organization and its core partners will develop a strategy and infrastructure plan. If the planning period proceeds in a satisfactory manner, we anticipate that the remaining funds will be awarded as follows: \$3.2 million for the lead organization for infrastructure and to implement the plan (including any subcontracts the lead organization establishes with its core partners) and \$2 million to be regranted by the lead organization for new, emergent opportunities that are in alignment with the overall objectives for this area. The two-year funding will begin after the successful completion of the preliminary planning period.

## FOUNDATION FUNDED

The grant opportunity outlined in the call for qualifications is contingent upon final funding confirmation from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation for such grants.

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## ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

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 Type III supporting organizations.

Applicant organizations must be based in the United States or its territories.

The Phase I selection process will consider the degree to which applicant organizations demonstrate their resources and capabilities in the following areas:

**Proven track record.** Applicants should have a demonstrated history of work to support healthy school environments, including specific efforts conducted within the past three years and a record of work on the multiple areas of work or factors that affect the school environment.

**Strong credibility and reputation.** Applicants should have a solid reputation and be held in high regard among peers, collaborators, and decision-makers, with particular importance given to reputation within the education sector.

**Commitment to addressing health equity in education.** Applicants should have a demonstrated and active record of and commitment to addressing issues of equity in all aspects of their work. Applicants should uplift inclusive, systemic approaches to their work. This may include (but is not limited to) work in areas of equity related to race, gender, sexual orientation, or differing physical and/or intellectual ability, as well as the intersection of these and other social and environmental issues and conditions.

**Strategic direction.** Applicants should have a demonstrated ability to assess the landscape in their area (e.g., research, policy, strategic action) to identify strategic directions and develop initiatives that are additive. Applicants should take an adaptive, responsive approach to work with a keen eye on emerging opportunities. Ideally, applicants will demonstrate their capacity to incorporate and adapt to trends and opportunities, including (but not limited to) new research, changes in the policy landscape, cross-sector opportunities, and/or stakeholder feedback.

**Emphasis on partnership and bridge-building.** Applicants should have a history of effective and sustained working relationships with multisector partners/collaborators whose involvement will be critical to achieving the project objectives and leveraging the assets of the field. Applicants should have the ability to serve as bridge-builders across and among diverse stakeholders and the ability to work across sectors and with nontraditional partners.

**Institutional infrastructure, including administrative capacities.** Applicants should demonstrate financial stability as well as legal and administrative capacity. This includes the ability to develop and manage budgets in a cost-effective manner in keeping with the Foundation's guiding principle of ensuring good stewardship of its resources. Applicants should have the experience, infrastructure, and internal controls to provide ongoing financial oversight and management of the program.

**Nonpartisan reputation.** Applicants should have a demonstrated ability to both identify and navigate partisan lines.

**Conflicts of interest disclosure.** Applicants should identify any activities that represent or *could be perceived as* a conflict of interest or efforts counter to producing healthy school environments. Such conflicts are *not* an automatic disqualification for funding but are part of an ethos of transparency.

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Nondisclosure of such conflicts of interest will put an applicant or grantee at immediate risk of termination of eligibility or funding through the duration of the effort.

**Areas of growth.** Applicants should note eligibility criteria or selection criteria that may be difficult to meet based on organizational capacities. They should identify what supports they might need from RWJF to meet these criteria—or other plans and partnerships to help strengthen capacity to meet the criteria.

## 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 organizations that 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 team of external and internal reviewers will evaluate all applications. In addition to the qualifications described above, the following factors for each body of work will be considered in the applicant's review.

### *Applied Research and Translation*

- **Deep expertise in core priority areas.** Applicants must have core subject matter expertise, including knowledge of the WSCC framework and the mechanisms that help promote integrated efforts to foster healthy school environments and health equity and to reach students with various levels of health needs. They should be well versed in factors that influence children's health and development, including the ability to achieve healthy social and emotional development and a healthy weight.
- **Strong grounding in school health research data and methodology.** Applicants must have expertise in how healthy school environments are measured, including (but not limited to) knowledge with the data systems used to measure student, staff, and overall school health and well-being. This should include expertise in linking the measures of healthy school environments to existing education data systems. Applicants must have the ability to translate this knowledge into methodologies for practitioners, policymakers, and advocates on school health and the ability to identify the current state of research and produce strong approaches reflecting that understanding.
- **Standing among other research entities.** Applicants must be able to connect with and influence other researchers and decision-makers. This includes the ability to engage collaborators/partners in content or areas where their own organization does not have a high level of proficiency.

### *Policy Analysis and Development*

- **Knowledge of general policy processes and core content expertise.** Applicants must possess expertise in education policy, including an understanding of policy levers at the federal, state, and local levels that can be optimized and strengthened to improve healthy school environments.

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Applicants should have a knowledge base in the core areas of this work, including education, public health, health equity, and child development. Applicants should provide evidence of expertise in the intersection of two or more of these areas.

- **Demonstrated expertise in policy analysis and development.** Applicants must be able to conduct analysis and synthesis that is highly objective and strategic. Where there are policy gaps, applicants should have the capacity to tap in to expertise in order to develop policy solutions. Applicants should be able to demonstrate expertise with policy at multiple levels of governance.
- **Advocacy/lobbying capacity.** Ideally, applicants should have established protocol, procedures, and experience using a mix of lobbying and non-lobbying funds to advance policy goals. They must have funds—separate from those awarded by RWJF—available for lobbying. We expect applicants to have established tracking mechanisms and legal counsel with experience with IRS lobbying rules, or to be willing to engage counsel (using RWJF funds) to build this capacity.

### *Strategic Action and Alignment*

- **Knowledge of social change approaches and core content expertise.** Applicants must possess expertise in scope of practices that help build political will and broad demand for social change. Applicants should have a knowledge base in the core areas of this work, including education, public health, health equity, and child development. Applicants should provide evidence of expertise in the intersection of two or more of these areas.
- **Network and partnership capacity.** The lead applicant for this area of work must demonstrate a commitment to partnership and an ability to tap in to a broad array of sectors in order to achieve program goals. Applicants should demonstrate a history of partnership and collaboration, including a recent history of coordination with multiple organizations. Applicants with established networks to draw upon and activate are preferred.
- **Engagement of core collaborators.** For this area of work, the lead applicant organization must identify core partners/collaborators with specific roles and responsibilities whose involvement will be critical to achieving the aims of the program. Core partners identified in the application must provide a brief letter of support indicating their willingness to collaborate with the lead organization.
- **Process of continuous input and feedback from direct stakeholders.** The lead organization and core partners must demonstrate capacity in and a track record of seeking input and guidance from direct stakeholders, including current students, parents/families, caregivers, and educators. They will be required as part of the grant to establish an advisory committee, or feedback mechanism, that will provide input on strategies and help ensure accountability to stated goals. Core partners should also be able to demonstrate past experience with engaging direct stakeholders.
- **Ability to identify leverage points for action and broaden stakeholder base.** The lead organization must have the ability to conduct landscaping activities, including (but not limited to) identifying leverage points for action and for broadening the base of stakeholders pushing for supportive schools.
- **Ability to regrant.** The lead applicant organization must possess the infrastructure, fiscal capacity, and program management capacity to regrant funds to other organizations based on emerging

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opportunities. The organization also must have the fiscal and program management capacity to manage funding of core collaborators involved in the project, which may include subcontracting or other fiscal sponsorship.

- **Advocacy/lobbying capacity.** Ideally, the lead applicant organization should have established protocol, procedures, and experience using a mix of lobbying and non-lobbying funds to advance policy goals. It must have funds—separate from those awarded by RWJF—available for lobbying. We expect applicants to have established tracking mechanisms and legal counsel with experience with IRS lobbying rules, or be willing to engage counsel (using RWJF funds) to build this capacity.

### EVALUATION

RWJF will support a third-party evaluation of all programs, and all funded organizations will be required to participate in these activities as directed by the respective RWJF program officer(s) in close collaboration with RWJF program and Research-Evaluation- Learning staff.

### COORDINATION ACROSS AREAS

RWJF will identify an additional entity to provide support to grantees and project officers across all three work areas. This will include (but is not limited to) convening grantees at the beginning of the grant period and identifying mechanisms for sharing and coordination. All funded organizations will be required to participate in these activities as directed by the respective RWJF program officer(s).

### USE OF GRANT FUNDS

Grant funds may be used for project staff salaries, consultant fees, data collection and analysis, meetings, supplies, project-related travel, and other direct project expenses, including a limited amount of equipment 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, for political activities, or as a substitute for funds currently being used to support similar activities.

### HOW TO APPLY

This is Phase I of the application process—Call for Qualifications.

Applicants will submit an application (maximum five pages) outlining their qualifications to lead the specific area of work. Applicants may submit qualifications for more than one area of work (e.g., Applied Research and Translation; Policy Analysis and Development; or Strategic Action and Alignment), but they *must submit a separate application for each area*. Applications are due by November 30, 2016 at 3:00 p.m. ET.

All application details and instructions are available via the RWJF online application system. **Applicants should not begin drafting their application until they have familiarized themselves with the detailed**



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**instructions and formatting requirements displayed in the online application system.** Applications must include the following elements:

1. A proposal narrative (maximum five pages, 12-point font, single spaced).
2. Supporting documentation, including CV/resume/biosketch of the project lead (and co-lead if applicable). Brief letters of support from any confirmed key partner organizations are required only for the Strategic Action and Alignment work area.
3. Optional appendix with material in support of your application.

*See also “Applying for More Than One Area of Work”(p. 3) and “Collaborative Applications”(p. 4) for more information.*

Applications for this solicitation must be submitted electronically. Visit [www.rwjf.org/cfq/WSCC](http://www.rwjf.org/cfq/WSCC) and click on the “Apply Online” link for this solicitation. If you have not already done so, you will be required to register at [MyRWJF](http://MyRWJF) before you begin the application process.

Please direct inquiries to:

Vanessa Farrell, MPH, MCHES, program associate, at [healthyschools@rwjf.org](mailto:healthyschools@rwjf.org).

Responsible staff members at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation are:

- Jennifer Ng’andu, *senior program officer*
- Donald Schwarz, MD, *senior vice president*
- Kristin Schubert, MPH, *managing director*
- Vanessa Farrell, MPH, MCHES, *program associate*
- Paul Cheh, MPH, *program associate*
- Sue B. Halucka, *program financial analyst*

### KEY DATES AND DEADLINES

#### Phase I: Call for Qualifications

- *October 28, 2016 (3 p.m. ET)*  
Applicant webinar. Please register at <https://cc.readytalk.com/r/cse1bmlnyuop&eom>.
- *November 30, 2016 (3 p.m. ET)*  
Deadline for receipt of Phase I applications.\*

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- *Week of January 9, 2017*

Applicants notified of Phase I decisions. Top-rated applicants invited to participate in Phase II Request for Proposal process.

### **Phase II: Request for Proposals**

*February 16, 2017 (3 p.m. ET)*

Deadline for receipt of Phase II proposals (from invited organizations).\*

*March*

Invitations extended to finalist organizations to participate in Site Visits.

*Late March–Mid April*

Site visits with finalist organizations.

*Late April*

Applicants notified of Phase II decisions.

*July 15, 2017*

Grants start date.

*\* All proposals for this solicitation 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.*

***The RWJF online application process for THIS SOLICITATION will open on October 14, 2016, and close at 3:00 p.m. ET on November 30, 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](http://www.rwjf.org). Follow the Foundation on Twitter at [www.rwjf.org/twitter](http://www.rwjf.org/twitter) or on Facebook at [www.rwjf.org/facebook](http://www.rwjf.org/facebook).

Sign up to receive email alerts on upcoming calls for proposals at [www.rwjf.org/manage-your-subscriptions](http://www.rwjf.org/manage-your-subscriptions).

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