

2017 Call for Proposals

Brief Proposal Deadline: March 10, 2017

Full Proposal Deadline: June 16, 2017



Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

POLICIES FOR ACTION:

POLICY AND LAW RESEARCH TO BUILD A CULTURE OF HEALTH

BACKGROUND

Policies for Action: Policy and Law Research to Build a Culture of Health (P4A) is a research program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF). 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 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.

With this second solicitation for research proposals, P4A reiterates our enthusiasm to work with scholars and other experts from any field on the many potential drivers of population health, well-being, and equity. These drivers include, but are not limited to:

- Health care, mental and behavioral health care, and public health;
- Early childhood, primary, secondary, and post-secondary education; vocational and workforce training;
- Labor market, employment, and job quality issues;
- Housing and community development;
- Community safety and criminal justice;
- Planning and transportation;
- Energy and the environment; and
- Technology and communication.

We want to better understand how policies generated from many sectors impact these drivers and also impact population health, well-being, and equity. By *policies*, we mean not just laws and regulations at the local, state, and federal level, but also private sector practices, such as those affecting community development and family and child well-being.

The goal of this call for proposals is to develop research that generates actionable evidence about how, and how well, laws and policies work—the data and information that can guide legislators and other policymakers, public agencies, private firms, educators, advocates, community groups, and individuals concerned with developing and implementing policies for community and population health. The research may examine established laws, regulations, or policies; new policies or approaches; and/or funding or other mechanisms for implementing, enforcing, or sustaining them.

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This year, in addition to supporting research on a broad range of topics, RWJF has set aside supplementary funds for research on actionable policies that support children's healthy weight and/or reduce childhood obesity. The goals of this set-aside are the same as those of the overall call for proposals: to generate evidence that policymakers and other stakeholders can act upon with the aims of improving population health, well-being, and equity.

Building a Culture of Health

Expanding the evidence base on the health impacts of public- and private-sector policies in different sectors can help us better understand what levers can be used to build a national *Culture of Health*—a culture that aims to reduce health disparities and promote health equity by giving everyone in our diverse society an equal opportunity to lead healthier lives, now and for generations to come. In a Culture of Health, we recognize that health and well-being are greatly influenced by where we live; how and where we work; the condition of our built and natural environments; access to education, food, and other resources that promote healthy development over the life course; and the strength of our families and communities—factors that lie both inside and outside the traditional health care system.

This vision is driven by the belief that we will make true progress when we work together toward a shared goal. 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 population health, well-being, and equity. The Framework is intended to broaden our understanding of what influences health, and help catalyze and chart progress. Progress can be achieved through new innovations, spreading and scaling best practices, or better implementation of best practices.

THE PROGRAM

Policies for Action: Policy and Law Research to Build a Culture of Health (P4A) was created to help build the evidence base for policies that can help build a Culture of Health. P4A seeks to engage long-standing health care, mental and behavioral health, and public health researchers, as well as experts in areas that we recognize have strong influence on health, well-being and equity—such as labor, criminal justice, education, transportation, housing, and the built environment.

The research funded under this call for proposals (CFP) should help fill significant gaps in our knowledge about what policies can serve as positive drivers of change, including how the social determinants of health can be used to achieve improvements in population health, well-being, and equity.

Submissions in any area of research that aligns with the program's broad objectives are welcome. We are particularly interested in innovative research on existing and/or potential policies that:

- Focus on critical periods over the life course and that have lifelong or multigenerational benefits;
- Are preventive rather than remedial;
- Advance a community's own priorities;

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- Address people or places or systems that have been traditionally underserved or overlooked;
- Foster stability and continuity in health-promoting conditions at the neighborhood, community, state, or federal levels;
- Transform or bridge major service systems, such as health care and public health, or other systems that influence health in communities, such as social services or education;
- Involve collaborations between the public and private sectors, or innovations within the private sector alone;
- Could feasibly be implemented (potential policies) or maintained, scaled, and/or spread (existing policies); and
- Influence values and beliefs integral to a Culture of Health.

This CFP encourages collaborations, as well as innovative research designs that will inform policy action, innovation, or change. We strongly encourage applicants to propose cross-sector and interdisciplinary research teams. The program seeks to fund studies that can be conducted expeditiously using valid and appropriate research designs and analytic strategies. The research approach and methods employed may be drawn from outside those commonly used in health or policy research. Methods and designs that have been successful are broad and include, but are not limited to, natural experiments, micro-simulation studies, randomized controlled trials, linkages and analyses of existing data sources, mixed methods analyses, and qualitative research approaches. New sources of data can also be proposed and mined; for example, health and social service records, other public records, restricted-access survey or administrative data, social media data, or marketing data. Investigators may also consider proposing research that would serve as a continuation or supplement to other existing programs or research studies.

Here are a few examples of projects that have been funded that illustrate this approach:

- *Housing for health: Assessing the impact of a prioritized Section 8 distribution policy on key Culture of Health indicators*
- *Addressing the roots of inequities to build a Culture of Health: The impact of early childhood income supplements on long-term health and well-being*
- *Understanding the health effects of California's paid family leave law*
- *Qualified Allocation Plans' role in producing and shaping healthier housing: Current reach, promising potential*
- *The effect of SNAP on food purchases and family nutrition*
- *The health and social returns to early childhood education*

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In addition to carrying out the proposed research activities, each applicant funded under the P4A program will:

- Work collaboratively with RWJF, the P4A national coordinating center, and other P4A investigators to identify and leverage potential synergies across research projects and to disseminate results broadly.
- 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. This will also include attending RWJF's annual Sharing Knowledge conference during each year the grant is active.

TOTAL AWARDS

- Approximately \$2 million will be awarded through this CFP. Each grant will award up to \$250,000 (in total direct and indirect costs) for a maximum funding period of 24 months.
- Approximately \$500,000 of the \$2 million will be awarded for research on the implementation and/or impact of policies relevant for early childhood or school environments that aim to support children's healthy weight and/or reduce childhood obesity. Such policies could focus on children's nutrition, physical activity, or other determinants of health that have important implications for children's healthy weight. We are particularly interested in studies of new or novel policy approaches that have not been widely disseminated or studied to date.
- The grant opportunity outlined in this CFP is contingent upon final funding confirmation from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation for such grants.

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 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.
- 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 diverse areas and disciplines, including but not limited to architecture, business, communications, community planning, economics, education, epidemiology,

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health policy, law, medicine, political science, public administration, public health, social work, sociology, urban planning and system engineering; 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 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

Proposals will be reviewed by a committee composed of RWJF staff, leaders of the P4A national coordinating center at the Urban Institute, the program's national advisory committee, and other expert reviewers as needed. Final funding decisions are made by RWJF staff and leadership.

Brief proposals will be evaluated on the basis of:

- Importance and policy relevance of the question(s) to be addressed;
- Alignment with 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:

- The study's research aims and hypothesis, theoretical framework, conceptual model or rationale;
- The proposed methodology and data sources;
- The expected results or outcomes (clearly stated, measurable, and achievable within the allotted time frame);
- Approach to dissemination, communication, and translation of research findings to policymakers and practitioners;
- Research qualifications and experience of the investigator(s) and appropriateness of disciplines and perspectives represented;

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- Use of available funds within individual proposals and across the set of funded proposals; and
- Proposed budget and project timeline.

EVALUATION AND MONITORING

An independent research group selected and funded by RWJF will conduct an evaluation of the program. As a condition of accepting RWJF funds, we require grantees to participate in the evaluation.

Grantees are expected to meet RWJF requirements for the submission of narrative and financial reports, as well as periodic information needed for overall project performance monitoring and management. We may ask project directors to participate in periodic meetings and give progress reports on their grants. At the close of each grant, the lead agency is expected to provide a written report on the project and its findings suitable for wide dissemination.

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(s) listed in proposals submitted under this call for proposals. Shortly after the proposals deadline, the Principal Investigator(s) 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/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 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. RWJF budget preparation guidelines are available [here](#).

Grantees should include in their proposal budgets, or otherwise indicate funding for travel, to RWJF's annual Sharing Knowledge conference during each year the grant is active.

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HOW TO APPLY

Proposals for this solicitation must be submitted via the RWJF online system. Visit www.rwjf.org/cfp/p4a2 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 application process. You will receive an email invitation with a link to the RWJF online system and additional instructions. To begin your proposal, select the link in the email and follow the instructions.

There are two phases in the competitive proposal process:

Phase 1: Brief Proposals:

Applicants must submit a brief proposal that describes the project and includes a preliminary budget.

Phase 2: Full Proposals (if invited):

Selected Phase 1 applicants will be invited to submit a full proposal of no more than 10 pages accompanied by a detailed budget, budget narrative, and additional information.

Please direct inquiries to:

Policies for Action National Coordinating Center

Urban Institute

Phone: (202) 261-5300

Email: Policies4Action@urban.org

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.

This program has a national advisory committee that makes recommendations about grants to Foundation staff. RWJF will make all final grant decisions.

Guidelines and information, including a list of frequently asked questions are available on the P4A website at www.policiesforaction.org/.

An information webinar for applicants will be held on Wednesday, February 15 at 1–2:30 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. The webinar will be archived and available for review on the *Policies for Action* website.

PROGRAM DIRECTION

Direction and technical assistance for this program are provided by the Urban Institute, which serves as the national coordinating center, located at:

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Policies for Action National Coordinating Center

Urban Institute

2100 M Street NW

Washington, D.C. 20037

Phone: (202) 261-5300

Email: Policies4Action@urban.org

Website: www.policiesforaction.org/

Responsible staff members at the national coordinating center are:

- Lisa Dubay, PhD, *co-director*
- Laudan Aron, MA, *co-director*
- Vanessa Forsberg, MPP, *deputy director*

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, *associate vice president, Research-Evaluation-Learning*

KEY DATES AND DEADLINES

February 15, 2017 (1 p.m. ET)

Optional applicant Web conference call. Registration is [required](#).

March 10, 2017 (3 p.m. ET)

Deadline for receipt of brief proposals.*

Early May 2017

Notification to brief proposal applicants, including invitations to submit full proposals.

June 16, 2017 (3 p.m. ET)

Deadline for receipt of invited full proposals.*

Early to mid-August 2017

Notification to full proposal applicants, including invitations to finalists to proceed with grant initiations.

October 1, 2017

Grants initiated.

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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.

Sign up to receive email alerts on upcoming calls for proposals at www.rwjf.org/manage-your-subscriptions.

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