

# 2018 Call for Proposals

*Brief Proposal Deadline: March 1, 2018 (3 p.m. ET)*



Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

## NEW JERSEY HEALTH INITIATIVES: UPSTREAM ACTION ACCELERATION

### BACKGROUND

Recognizing a special commitment and responsibility to its community and to its state, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) established the New Jersey Health Initiatives (NJHI) program 30 years ago to honor the philanthropic legacy of RWJF's founder, Robert Wood Johnson. Like the rest of the nation, New Jersey faces an array of challenges that may prevent those working and residing in the state from living the healthiest life possible. RWJF, through NJHI's grantmaking programs, is committed to supporting initiatives that address those problems in the state.

The goal of NJHI: Upstream Action Acceleration is to support existing cross-sector coalitions to adopt and implement "upstream" environmental-, policy- and systems-change strategies, and accelerate their work in areas they have already identified as priorities to improve community health. By upstream, we mean working with all community stakeholders to address the factors that influence health prior to the onset of disease and illness. These factors include: income, employment, education, early childhood development, housing, nutrition and the built environment. Accordingly, areas of focus for proposed action acceleration might include, but are not limited to: Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs); New Sector Engagement (e.g., business, library, law enforcement); Effective Use of Data Tools and Resources to Guide Actions; Civic Engagement; Environment/Open Space; Medical-Legal Partnerships; and Transportation.

### ***Building and Maintaining a Culture of Health in New Jersey***

Historically, the strategy for good health in New Jersey and the nation has been to focus the majority of our resources on building and supporting a health care system that diagnoses and treats illness. While the diagnosis and treatment of illness will always be important, there is growing consensus that the strategy to improving health in our increasingly diverse society lies in building and maintaining a Culture of Health in all communities.

Building a Culture of Health requires everyone to think about improving health differently. It is driven by the belief that we will make true progress when we work together toward health equity where everyone has a fair and just opportunity to be healthier. As the [life expectancy maps](#) created by Virginia Commonwealth University clearly illustrate—social, economic, and environmental factors influence health equity. These factors, referred to as the social determinants of health, include early childhood development; employment opportunities; food insecurity; air and water quality; transportation; educational attainment; public safety; and housing.

Achieving a Culture of Health requires unprecedented collaboration from communities, policymakers, businesses, and others. A growing number of communities in New Jersey and across the nation have assembled cross-sector coalitions that include community residents, nonprofits, schools, municipal governments, local business, and faith-based groups. Many of these coalitions are adopting upstream approaches to address the social determinants of health that contribute to poor health outcomes, such as heart disease, diabetes, and premature death. While there will always be the need for health care providers

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and systems, upstream approaches focus on addressing the social determinants of health to give every member of our society the opportunity to live healthier. In this approach, it is equally as important to promote health as it is to treat illness.

Examples of upstream approaches that coalitions could consider to address social determinants of health include:

- Create activities/strategies to help develop or strengthen a system that results in better continuity of services or fills gaps within one or more of the focus areas. Example scenario and activities: strengthen existing key partnerships and engage new needed partners involved in identifying and providing services to children affected by ACEs (or other focus area); develop a shared system to identify, refer and track children and families to ACEs services/supports; implement institutional policy changes across organizations to provide services/supports to address ACEs.
- Build on existing resident leader groups to further develop and implement a structure and approach that is sustainable (beyond a training or a curriculum). Build capacity for resident-driven community change across health focus areas to address specific health inequities.
- Develop supports/strategies to create and sustain community hubs (e.g., in libraries or schools) that make multiple needed services more accessible to community members at greatest risk of poor health outcomes. Create community environments that support physical and mental well-being.

## ***Intersection With Foundation Priorities***

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation is leading the movement to improve health and health care for an increasingly diverse American society by building and maintaining a Culture of Health. The Upstream Action Acceleration initiative intersects with RWJF's vision by building healthier communities across New Jersey. The program contributes to the continued development of healthier communities in New Jersey by supporting community-focused, cross-sector partnerships to better focus their efforts on addressing social determinants of health; encouraging communities to think broadly about health; and approaching community change by thinking strategically about policy and environmental change and systems change.

## THE PROGRAM

The NJHI Upstream Action Acceleration initiative will provide up to 16 grants of up to \$100,000 over two years to support existing cross-sector coalitions to adopt and implement “upstream” environmental-, policy- and systems-change strategies, and accelerate their work in areas they have already identified as priorities to improve community health. Areas of focus might include, but are not limited to: Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs); New Sector Engagement (e.g., business, library, law enforcement); Effective Use of Data Tools and Resources to Guide Actions; Civic Engagement; Environment/Open Space; Medical-Legal Partnerships; and Transportation.

NJHI will recruit and select a grantee cohort that has geographical representation across the state and leverages past and current work to advance health equity by addressing the social determinants of health (e.g., educational opportunities, housing, safe environments). It also recognizes that this initiative presents an opportunity to build a smart network of varied coalitions across the state for cross-site and cross-sector learning, as well as broad impact and contributions to the healthy communities field.

The Upstream Action Acceleration initiative is an opportunity to build on past or current strategies toward health improvement within New Jersey communities and achieve statewide impact across the selected focus areas. To foster both local and statewide outcomes, awardees will be part of a learning network and

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participate in opportunities for peer sharing through in-person and virtual convenings. These collaborative learning activities will help coalitions implement their local projects, and inform the field about practice-tested strategies to improve community health.

In addition to grant funding and collaborative learning supports, coalitions will receive:

- Ongoing coaching focused on the process of policy, environmental, and systems strategies supporting community change.
- Technical assistance and resources related to the initiative focus areas.
- Communications assistance to promote and share their successes, challenges and lessons learned via social media (e.g., Twitter, blogs), and other channels.

Active Living by Design is partnering with NJHI in the planning and implementation of Upstream Action Acceleration and will coach invited applicants in the development of full proposals. It will lead and facilitate the learning collaborative, and provide coaching and technical assistance to awardees. Active Living by Design has more than 15 years of experience, including serving as a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation program office for healthy community initiatives nationwide. The team has provided long-term technical assistance, coaching, and consultation to hundreds of community coalitions across the country, and has worked with more than two dozen philanthropic organizations focused on healthy community change.

## TOTAL AWARDS

- Up to 16 awards will be made through this initiative.
- Grants of up to \$100,000 each will be awarded.
- Grant duration will be two years.
- Grants will begin on December 1, 2018.

## ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- Applicant organizations must be located in New Jersey.
- Applications for this initiative must represent a community-focused coalition. For the purpose of this initiative, a community could be a town, township, municipality, city or county.
- Applicants must be part of an existing coalition that has a track record of working to address community health priorities.
- 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 as part of its due diligence process.
- Examples of applicant organizations include, but are not limited to: local health and human service agencies; K–12 education; colleges and universities; hospital systems; faith-based organizations; local

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government; government agencies or departments; nonprofits; or other eligible entities interested in making lasting changes to build a Culture of Health in their communities. While the applicant organization will be one entity, grant funding is intended to support the strategies and work of the coalition. The applicant organization may serve as a fiscal sponsor for the coalition. If applicable, the applicant should review and sign a fiscal sponsor letter (included in the online application), which outlines the expectations of fiscal sponsors.

## 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

In addition to the criteria listed below, projects will be selected with the intention of funding a diverse group of grantees based on several criteria—such as location (e.g., region of the state, urban/rural); community characteristics; and types of stakeholders involved in the project. Priority will be given to cross-sector coalitions working to address barriers to health in low-income communities. In addition, the coalitions represented by applicants for this initiative are expected to be broad-based, representing multiple sectors, and representative of the community rather than issue-focused. For this reason, we will not fund more than one coalition in any community.

Community coalition requirements:

- Vision, passion, and capacity to build and maintain a Culture of Health in their community, as evidenced by a commitment to addressing the factors that influence health—including health behaviors, clinical care, social and economic factors, and the physical environment;
- A commitment to sustainable systems change, environmental change, and policy-oriented, long-term solutions;
- Representation from a diversity of residents, organizations, and agencies from the community, all committed to improving health in the community;
- Understanding of community makeup, trends, and needs through interpretation and application of available community-level data (e.g., County Health Rankings, community health assessment data).

## EVALUATION AND MONITORING

Grantees will receive ongoing technical assistance to systematically collect and share information with the NJHI team and consultants. This information will be used to assess and monitor progress, identify problems, and develop grantee supports such as face-to-face trainings and webinars.

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

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may ask project directors to participate in periodic meetings and give progress reports on their grants. At the close of each grant, the grantee is expected to provide a written report on the project and its findings suitable for wide dissemination.

To promote the delivery of services on a broader scale, NJHI supports projects that represent learning opportunities for organizations in a region or throughout the state. Therefore, grantee coalition members will be expected to participate in a learning network with other Upstream Action Acceleration partners. In addition, grantees will be encouraged to actively participate in efforts to communicate the results of their projects to stakeholders across New Jersey, regionally and nationally, to spread the use of best and promising practices.

## 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. Shortly after the proposal deadline, the project director will be contacted by 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 the independent research firm will not impact the funding decision for the proposals in any way.

The independent research firm 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](mailto: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.

## HOW TO APPLY

All proposals for this solicitation must be submitted via the RWJF online system. Visit [www.rwjf.org/cfp/njhi18-AG](http://www.rwjf.org/cfp/njhi18-AG) and use the Apply Online link. If you have not already done so, you will be required to register at [my.rwjf.org](http://my.rwjf.org) before you begin the proposal process. 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.

There are three phases in the competitive proposal process:

### ***Phase 1: Brief Proposals***

All applicants must submit a brief proposal that describes:

- Background about the community to be served and the cross-sector coalition's experience in addressing upstream opportunities for health improvement in the community.

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- Why this funding would help the coalition build on previous accomplishments and accelerate action toward health improvement.
- How this funding would support the coalition in effectively achieving upstream policy, environmental or systems change.
- Any identified needs or opportunities to build or strengthen the capacity of the coalition to improve the health of its community and how the grant and technical assistance would support this.
- At a high level, proposed project ideas, potential strategies, and general use of funds.

Viable brief proposals will clearly articulate how the proposed project will accelerate the coalition's work in specific focus areas, and support the coalition in adopting and implementing upstream environmental, policy or systems change strategies.

**Applicants should not begin to draft their proposal until they have familiarized themselves with the detailed instructions and formatting requirements available in the online application system.**

Registration at the RWJF online system will open on January 18, 2018, giving interested applicants access to important information on the proposal submission process, including detailed instructions for content preparation.

Complete details for the brief proposal submission are available at the RWJF online system. Brief proposals must be submitted by March 1, 2018 by 3 p.m. ET.

An informational webinar for interested applicants will be held on Friday, February 2, 2018 from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. ET. The webinar will be recorded and made available on the NJHI website and the RWJF online application site. Registration for this webinar is required. Registration details are available on the NJHI website and at the RWJF online application site.

## ***Phase 2: Full Proposals***

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.

Prior to submitting the full proposals, selected Phase 1 applicants will participate in a mandatory 60-minute coaching call with Active Living by Design staff to strengthen the concepts from their brief proposals into an actionable proposal for an Upstream Action Acceleration award.

Proposals will be evaluated on criteria that include the following:

- How the proposed activities will accelerate or advance previous or current efforts to build a Culture of Health in the community;
- The action or impact that will occur at the community-level, and the upstream change(s) that will result from the proposed activities;
- How the proposed work addresses health equity and is a priority for the community;
- Likelihood that the proposed activities will have a lasting community impact;
- How the proposed activities will be implemented by a diverse cross-sector coalition;
- Commitment to share learning in ways that positively impact other communities (e.g., active engagement in the initiative learning network; leading virtual learning sessions or webinars; presenting at regional or national conferences; contributing to blog posts).

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## ***Phase 3: Final Selection and Site Visits***

Applicants selected to proceed to the final stage of review will be asked to host a site visit in their community or participate in a site visit at a central location within the region with members of their coalition and the review team. The purpose of the site visit is to gain a deeper understanding and fuller context about the community and coalition; assets and opportunities for improvement; and the proposed work. The site visits also provide an opportunity for the applicant and its partners to ask questions of the review team, NJHI and its advisers. The site visits will be scheduled at a time that best accommodates the review team members' schedules.

Please direct inquiries to:

New Jersey Health Initiatives

Phone: (856) 225-6733

Email: [info@njhi.org](mailto:info@njhi.org)

Website: [www.njhi.org](http://www.njhi.org)

## PROGRAM DIRECTION

Direction and technical assistance for this program are provided by New Jersey Health Initiatives, which serves as the national program office located at:

Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey  
Institute for Health, Health Care Policy and Aging Research  
323 Cooper Street  
Camden, NJ 08102  
Phone: (856) 225-6733  
Fax: (856) 225-6736  
Email: [info@njhi.org](mailto:info@njhi.org)  
Website: [www.njhi.org](http://www.njhi.org)

Responsible staff members at the NJHI program office are:

Robert Atkins, *director*

Milton Ellis, *deputy director, Operations*

Diane Hagerman, *deputy director, Programs*

Responsible staff members at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation are:

Marjorie Paloma, *senior director*

Marco Navarro, *senior program officer*

Susan Halucka, *program financial analyst*

## KEY DATES AND DEADLINES

*January 18, 2018*

Call for proposals announced.

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*February 2, 2018 (11 a.m.–12 p.m. ET)*

Optional applicant webinar. Registration is required; visit [www.njhi.org](http://www.njhi.org) for details and to register.

*March 1, 2018 (3 p.m. ET)*

Deadline for receipt of brief proposals.\*

*March 28, 2018*

Applicants notified if invited to submit full proposals (Phase 2).

*May 23, 2018 (3 p.m. ET)*

Deadline for receipt of full proposals.\*

*Early July 2018*

Phase 2 applicants notified if invited to final selection and site visit phase.

*Mid-July–August 2018*

Site visits with selected applicants.

*October 2018*

Notification of awards.

*December 1, 2018*

Start of grants.

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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 [rwjf.org](http://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).

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50 College Road East  
Princeton, NJ 08540-6614