

Identifying the Next Phase of Leadership and Management for the RWJF Culture of Health Prize

OVERVIEW OF THE RWJF CULTURE OF HEALTH PRIZE AND PURPOSE OF THIS CALL FOR PROPOSALS

This request seeks an entity to re-imagine, lead, and manage the next two-year phase of the leadership and management of the national RWJF Culture of Health Prize. This call for proposals provides background on the RWJF Culture of Health Prize and outlines responsibilities for an organization selected to take on the next phase of leadership and management.

A Culture of Health recognizes that where we live—such as our access to affordable homes, quality schools, good jobs, and reliable transportation—affects how long and how well we live, and that improving health and well-being requires collective efforts to create the conditions to ensure all residents have a fair and just opportunity for health. The coronavirus pandemic, recent police violence, and growing inequity across the nation underscore the importance of community conditions and collective efforts for *all* residents to have a fair and just opportunity for health.

As the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) works to build a Culture of Health with partners across the country, [the RWJF Culture of Health Prize](#) (the Prize) is one way that RWJF lifts up examples of communities working at the forefront of advancing health, opportunity, and equity. The Prize elevates the compelling stories of community members and leaders across the country who are working together to transform neighborhoods, schools, businesses, and more—so that the opportunity for better health flourishes for *all*. We recognize Culture of Health is happening in different ways and in diverse places—in cities, counties, tribes, regions, and rural towns—and that each of these places has a myriad of physical, economic, and social strengths and challenges. Though each place's journey looks different, Prize winning communities show us what a Culture of Health can look like.

As a national recognition prize, the Prize honors work that communities have *already accomplished* to address community conditions that enable health, equity, and opportunity and demonstrates what it takes to make lasting change. The characteristics that the Prize lifts up are exemplified in the current Prize [criteria](#). The Prize honors whole communities (geographically defined jurisdictions) from across the country, not single individuals, organizations, neighborhoods, or initiatives. RWJF awards Prize funds to a designated entity, on behalf of the winning community. By honoring Prize-winning communities and elevating their stories with national and local media and with other influential audiences, the Prize seeks to showcase what is possible; inspire others to apply the principles exemplified in the current Prize criteria; and contribute to a broader narrative about and demand for how we as a nation can create a Culture of Health for *all*. More details on the current components of the Prize can be found in the Appendix.

After seven years of awarding the annual Prize, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation reflected on the strengths of the program and wanted to increase its reach, visibility, and influence in line with its Culture of Health vision and commitment to [health equity](#). Given its commitment to fairness, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation is working to open up the opportunity for leadership across our grant-funded programs, including long-standing programs. In that spirit, RWJF has decided to re-compete the leadership and management of the RWJF Culture of Health Prize in its entirety, where the new phase will begin with informing the 2021 Prize winner celebration and planning for the 2022

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Prize cohort. RWJF's decision in no way reflects concerns about the performance of the current program lead, the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute (UWPHI). This decision strictly reflects RWJF's commitment to re-competing long-standing programs. UWPHI will continue to lead this work through the completion of 2020 and 2021 Prize cycles. UWPHI also is eligible to and is anticipated to compete under this solicitation. UWPHI will play no role in selecting the awardee chosen through this call for proposals (CFP).

This solicitation provides applicants the opportunity to put forward a vision and approach to re-design the national Prize, responsive to the goals and design parameters set forth in this CFP. The Prize will continue as a national recognition prize that honors whole communities (geographically defined jurisdictions) in line with RWJF's Culture of Health vision. *RWJF seeks applicants to propose approaches to the selection, strategic communications, celebration, and learning activities in ways that advance the Prize's reach, influence, visibility, and the Foundation's commitment to health equity.* Applicants do *not* need to replicate the Prize program as outlined in the Appendix.

OVERVIEW OF LEAD ENTITY'S RESPONSIBILITIES

The applicant selected through this call for proposals will have the following responsibilities:

Prize program vision, strategy, and implementation

- In consultation with RWJF, set a vision and direction for the national Prize program. This vision and direction includes, but isn't limited to, cultivating and implementing new ways a recognition prize can advance RWJF's vision for a Culture of Health and increase the program's reach, visibility, and influence—such as determining any changes needed to existing Prize criteria; redesigning the selection process; and re-imagining ways to elevate, celebrate and learn with new and past winners.
- Position residents and leaders from winning communities as ambassadors for a Culture of Health with their peers, with other communities, and with influential audiences in order to increase awareness about the role of community conditions on health, equity, and well-being; to offer new and alternative strategies for creating healthier, more equitable communities; and to build demand for what's possible.
- Use learning and evaluation to both improve and evolve the program's impact over time and add knowledge to the field about community change strategies and approaches to creating more equitable community conditions.

Prize program relationships

- Work with RWJF and, as needed, RWJF's contracted communications firms and evaluation firms to develop working relationships, including agreements that facilitate collaboration (such as a work plan or agreements about roles, responsibilities, decision rights, and management).
- Work with UWPHI, as needed, to develop working relationships for transitioning operations and relationships with past winners from the 2013–2021 cohorts.

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Selection process

- Design and implement a refined selection process for annual winners in 2022 and 2023 (RWJF will make the final decision on winners resulting from the process or any recommendations from a Prize advisory group; RWJF will directly make the Prize awards to communities).
- Identify and track changes to the selection process to improve effectiveness and efficiency.
- Track interactions with RWJF, advisory group members, applicants, winners, finalists, and other key constituents that would inform adjustments to the program.
- Track and share trends and themes in applications, finalists, and winning communities.
- Begin planning for the 2024 cohort, based on learning from the previous cohorts.

Celebration & learning activities with new winners and alumni, including strategic communications

- Inform RWJF's activities for a fall 2021 celebration event, which is anticipated to contribute to the lead entity's preparation for the 2022 cohort.
- Design and implement opportunities for celebrating and learning with Prize winners across all cohorts of winning communities, fostering connections that bridge across leadership phases (i.e., that bridge 2013–2021 and 2022–2023 cohorts).
- Design and implement strategic communications efforts, in consultation with RWJF, to increase relevance, influence, and reach of the national Prize program; this includes:
 - Cultivating opportunities for residents and leaders from winning communities to serve as spokespersons for a Culture of Health with their peers, with other communities, and with influential groups in order to increase awareness about the role of community conditions on health, equity, and well-being; to offer new and alternative strategies for creating healthier, more equitable communities; and to build demand for what's possible.
 - Managing the 600+ email distribution list consisting of representatives from existing Prize winning communities and add new community representatives as additional communities win the Prize.
 - Tracking audience engagement, including spokesperson activities and results.
 - Synthesizing trends and themes; cultivating insights on health and equity; and engaging core audiences with the synthesis(es) at regular intervals.

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Ongoing project management and quality improvement

- Draw on existing lessons learned, assessment findings, and tracking efforts from the Prize program.
- Lead program management, such as scheduling project management calls, facilitating and managing agendas, tracking progress on next steps, and serving as content lead where appropriate.
- Develop and implement, in consultation with RWJF, ongoing quality improvement efforts to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the program.
- Make recommendations to RWJF on year-to-year improvements related to the criteria, the selection process, strategic communications activities, the celebration and learning activities, and other components of the Prize program—incorporating agreed-upon improvements in future activities.
- Work with RWJF to design any third party evaluation and assessment to understand the reach, influence, and visibility of the Prize and inform any third party evaluator's design and findings.

As part of these responsibilities, the lead entity would be expected to have the capacity to coordinate and facilitate logistics and reimburse stipends, honoraria, meals, and other travel expenses. This capacity may include coordinating with RWJF's Foundation Services or RWJF-contracted vendors related to meetings and travel.

TOTAL AWARDS

- One contract (February 1, 2021 through December 15, 2023, up to \$4M) will be provided to the selected entity to provide leadership and management of the Prize for the 2022 and 2023 cohorts, in line with the responsibilities outlined in this CFP. The lead entity is expected to have designated milestones that would determine success of planning and demonstrated readiness and capacity to take on implementation; RWJF may decide to end the contract should milestones not be met. Milestones will also help RWJF determine renewal of this contract for cohorts for 2024 and beyond.
- RWJF will award, directly, prizes in each Prize cohort (2022 and 2023). RWJF will also provide separate funds to: (a) contracted communications firms to support strategic communications efforts; and (b) contracted evaluation firms to support external evaluations related to the program. These funds are intended to complement the capacities of the lead entity selected through this CFP.
- The selected entity may be invited to join Prize celebration and learning events in advance of their contract start date as a way to understand the program to date.

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ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Important qualities of organizations invited for this opportunity include:

- Commitment to improving health and equity, including understanding the multiple and structural determinants of health and engaging with and lifting up the voices of diverse places, cultures, and partners.
- A clear track record of successful engagement with diverse constituencies in local communities and across different types of communities and cultures.
- Understanding and experience with influence strategies, strategic communications, campaigns, and/or prize philanthropy as mechanisms for creating social change.
- Complex project management expertise and experience working collaboratively in a complex program, with multiple components and collaborators, in ways that build relationships and facilitates decision-making between multiple parties.
- Experience running competitive selection processes and providing logistical support for these processes, such as producing site visits, managing and facilitating reviewers and advisory group meetings, and providing reimbursements (e.g., stipends) to community organizations and reviewers.
- Willingness to tolerate ambiguity and to adjust processes and activities as learning occurs, including uncertainty brought on by the coronavirus pandemic or other events affecting communities.
- Willingness to bring experience and new thinking to bear and provide guidance based on those experiences, while recognizing the national Prize is, and will continue to be, branded in a way that ties directly to RWJF's vision.
- Commitment to budgeting and managing funds in a manner that reflects responsible stewardship of resources, including the ability to enter into and manage subcontracts.

Applicants may be public entities; nonprofit organizations that are tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code; or for-profit organizations. The Foundation may require additional documentation as part of its due diligence prior to making an award, such as but not limited to submitting financial statements or completing a financial/organization questionnaire.

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

While we are seeking the most qualified applicant to complete this work, competitiveness of rate structures also will be taken into consideration. To be able to accurately compare various bids, we ask that you supply billable rates for the various staff members included in your proposal. The Foundation will not accept fixed-price contract proposals.

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OUR EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION COMMITMENT

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation is committed to building a Culture of Health that provides everyone in America a fair and just opportunity for health and well-being. Achieving this goal requires focus on equity, diversity, and inclusion. To that end, we are committed to fostering diverse perspectives. We recognize that individuals' perspectives are shaped by a host of factors, such as their race, ethnicity, gender, physical and mental ability, age, socioeconomic status, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, familial status, education, religion, legal status, military service, political affiliation, geography, and other personal and professional experiences.

We know that the presence of diverse perspectives alone is not sufficient. Therefore, we also are committed to creating inclusive environments where all individuals are encouraged to share their perspectives and experiences. We believe that only through valuing our differences and similarities, and remaining vigilant in advancing equity, will we be able to maintain an equitable workplace and actively pursue equity in all aspects of our work. We commit to being continuous learners and working alongside others to cultivate equity, diversity, and inclusion.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Applicants will be selected based on the qualities outlined in the Eligibility Criteria section, including:

- Commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion and evidence of their application in its proposed approach
- Creativity in approach and an ability to balance vision with implementation
- Understanding of the multiple and structural determinants of health and equity, as well as of community-led strategies for social change
- Experience with influence strategies, strategic communications, campaigns, and/or prize philanthropy
- Experience working with communities and with tasks related to the roles and responsibilities outlined in the section *Overview of Lead Entity's Responsibilities*
- Capacity for implementation, such as running a selection process, planning and producing event(s), and having relevant financial systems needed to process reimbursements
- Appropriateness of budget vis-a-vis project activities

EVALUATION AND MONITORING

Independent research group(s) selected and funded by RWJF will conduct an evaluation or an assessment of the program. The purpose of evaluation at RWJF is learning rather than accountability. RWJF intends for this project to contribute to national efforts to build a Culture of Health. Therefore, the program will publicly release results from this evaluation. As a condition of accepting RWJF funds, we require grantees and contractors to participate in the evaluation, including assisting with necessary data collection to accomplish the evaluation objectives.

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Grantees and contractors 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. RWJF monitors the awarded entities' efforts and careful stewardship of funds to assure accountability.

We may ask project directors to participate in periodic meetings and give progress reports on their awards. Given the importance of evidence in RWJF's [Guiding Principles](#), findings from evaluations, as well as curated learnings conducted by the selected entity, are intended to be suitable for wide dissemination.

APPLICANT SURVEY PROCESS

The project director of the proposal may be contacted after the submission deadline by SSRS, an independent research firm. The project director will be 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 SSRS will not impact the funding decision for your proposal in any way.

SSRS will protect the confidentiality of your responses. RWJF will not receive any data that links your name with your survey responses.

USE OF FUNDS

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, funds may *not* be used 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.

OPEN ACCESS

In order to ensure RWJF-supported research is made accessible to a wide and diverse audience, grantees and contractors who publish findings in peer-reviewed publications must do so in open access journals and/or must include funds in their budgets to cover the cost of making the resulting publications open access (typically \$2,000–\$5,000 per manuscript).

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HOW TO APPLY

Applicants will be asked to submit a full proposal. Proposals will ask applicants to describe their:

- Interest in this opportunity and how this opportunity fits their mission
- Philosophy on and experience with influence strategies, strategic communications, campaigns, and/or prize philanthropy, including at least two examples; lessons learned from these experiences; and the application of those lessons to this opportunity
- Approach to and experience with engaging diverse communities
- Evidence of commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, as well as understanding of the multiple and structural determinants of health and of community-led strategies for social change
- Experience with highly visible, complex programs, including working with multiple constituencies
- Experience of the proposed team, including CVs of the project director(s)
- Creativity and intentionality in approach to the responsibilities named above in ways that increase the influence, visibility and reach of this national recognition Prize, particularly:
 - Ideas and approach related to re-imagining the Prize program (note: Prize winners are expected to be announced annually, e.g. cohorts in 2022 and 2023)
 - Ideas and approach related to re-imagining the celebration and learning activities and strategic communications; this focus includes ways to position winners as ambassadors for a Culture of Health and ways to foster connections between 2013–2021 and 2022–2023 cohorts
 - Insights on how to foster strong working relationships while managing a complex program
 - High-level timeline for key activities and approach to a realistic transition, as we anticipate 2021 Prize cohort to be a transition year; the lead entity will help to inform RWJF's activities for a fall 2021 celebration event, as we anticipate this to be an important moment for the selected entity's 2022 cohort planning
 - Milestones for the program, which can help identify the selected entity's readiness for implementation, as well as progress toward goals related to visibility, influence, and reach
 - Mitigation strategies to consider in light of the pandemic, civil unrest, and other challenges facing communities
- Proposed budget that reflects the attention to detail needed to complete the outlined scope of work; that demonstrates a commitment to responsible stewardship of the funds; and that demonstrates the organizational capacity to meet the outlined responsibilities in this call for proposals.

To select this next phase of leadership and management for the Prize program, RWJF will work with external reviewers to inform its decision. After initial review of submitted proposals, up to three finalist organizations will be asked to meet individually for a half day with select RWJF staff and possibly external reviewers to further elaborate

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on their approach and address questions. If selected as a finalist for this solicitation, additional details and materials for this virtual conversation will be provided in advance of the discussion. RWJF will make all final award decisions.

A webinar for interested applicants will be held on June 12, 2020 (1:30 p.m. ET) to describe the opportunity and answer questions. Registration is required; see next page.

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

Please direct inquiries to:

Katie Wehr, *senior program officer*

Phone: (609) 627-6384

Email: COHPrize@rwjf.org

All applicants should log in to the system and familiarize themselves with online proposal 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.

RWJF does not provide individual critiques of proposals submitted.

PROGRAM DIRECTION

Responsible staff members at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation are:

- David Adler, DrPH, MPA, *theme operations lead*
- Abbey Cofsky, MPH, *managing director*
- Katie Meirs, MPH, *program associate*
- Chris Phares, *program financial analyst*
- Katie Wehr, MPH, *senior program officer*

KEY DATES AND DEADLINES

- **June 19, 2020 (1:30 p.m. ET)**
Optional applicant webinar. You must register [through this link](#).
- **July 31, 2020 (3 p.m. ET)**
Deadline for receipt of full proposals.
- **Early October 2020**
Virtual discussions with selected finalists.
- **February 1, 2021**
Contract start date

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Late Submissions

RWJF will accept only those proposals that are completed/submitted at the time of the deadline. Because one of our Guiding Principles is to treat everyone with fairness and respect, RWJF's deadline policy applies to all applicants. If an applicant experiences a problem with the online application system that may prevent them from submitting on time, please notify the program administrator immediately. To do so, click on the “Contact Us” link found in the “Resources” area on the left side of most screens within the online proposal site. We encourage you to submit your proposal in advance of the deadline so that any unforeseen difficulties, e.g., technical problems, may be addressed well before the deadline.

ABOUT THE ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON FOUNDATION

For more than 45 years, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation has worked to improve health and health care. We are working alongside others to build a national Culture of Health that provides everyone in America a fair and just opportunity for health and well-being. For more information, visit 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.html.

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APPENDIX: CURRENT PRIZE PROGRAM COMPONENTS

In order to achieve the program's goals, the Prize is currently made up of multiple components:

- (1) Competitive application, review, and selection process, including Phase 1, Phase 2, and site visits—this process includes writing and releasing a call for applications and modules within the RWJF online application and review system; assisting and orienting applicants throughout the process; facilitating reviews at each stage of the process, including identifying, engaging, and facilitating external reviewers (advisory group) in discussions for the Phase 2 and site visit phases; conducting site visits to confirm winners among the finalists; working with the advisory group to recommend winners to RWJF based on site visit results; providing feedback to finalists and winners; and cultivating connections between winning communities and communications firms for story development.
- (2) Prize awards and winner benefits, including:
 - a. a cash prize;
 - b. customized communications materials about their community, including videos, photos, and stories captured by journalists and other communications professionals;
 - c. strategic communications guidance leading up to, during, and in follow-up to the Prize winner announcement to make the most of the Prize announcement;
 - d. national and local promotion of their stories and successes to inspire others' efforts, such as outreach to media, policymakers, and networks of influential organizations; and
 - e. learning with other national and local leaders working to build a Culture of Health, including past Prize winners (alumni).
- (3) National celebration and learning event to announce the winners and facilitate connections between new winners, previous winners, RWJF and University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute (UWPHI) staff, and other national organizations, held in Princeton, N.J., at RWJF headquarters;
- (4) Local celebration opportunities in winning communities;
- (5) Opportunities for winners to speak at conferences and events, as well as with the media;
- (6) Knowledge management of the competition process, as well as of winners, finalists, and applicants;
- (7) Curation and dissemination of lessons from Prize winners; and
- (8) Ongoing tracking of program trends and collecting feedback across the phases to inform quality improvement of the program.

The Prize selection process is an annual cycle. The Prize call for applications is typically released in August; Phase 1 is completed in December; Phase 2 is completed in February; site visits are completed in April and May; selections are made in June; story development for winners occurs in July–September; the national winner announcement is made in September/October; and the celebration and learning event is held in October/November.