

## 2022 Call for Proposals

Registration Deadline: April 20, 2022 (3 p.m. ET)

Proposal Deadline: May 26, 2022 (3 p.m. ET)



Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

# Data to Improve Community Conditions Shaped by Structural Racism

## OVERVIEW

This call for proposals (CFP) invites eligible nonprofit organizations to apply for a grant to **use data** to inform efforts to improve **community conditions** shaped by **structural racism**, and ultimately work towards achieving **health equity**. The [Robert Wood Johnson Foundation \(RWJF\)](#) expects to award up to 35 individual grants of \$40,000 each, with a period of performance of nine months. Nonprofit organizations based in the U.S. are eligible to apply for this opportunity. The [National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership at Urban Institute](#) is collaborating with RWJF on program design and grantee support. Additional information about this CFP including eligibility and selection criteria and application guidance follows.

## BACKGROUND

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) is committed to building a Culture of Health where everyone in America has a fair and just opportunity to live the healthiest life possible. But the current reality is that gaps in opportunities for health and well-being across neighborhoods and communities are large, persistent, and increasing. To achieve health equity, RWJF works to identify and remove the barriers that create such disparities.

With this current opportunity, [RWJF is building on its earlier effort](#) to provide support for data-related work on timely issues within communities, believing that such support is critical for building data capacity in communities to advance an equitable future.

## PURPOSE

The COVID-19 pandemic underscored that wealth, racism, and privilege continue to play an outsized role in how long and how well people live. It's important that our [data can capture and help address structural racism](#) that creates inequities in community conditions.

The purpose of this CFP is to provide grants for organizations to **use data** to inform efforts to improve **community conditions** shaped by **structural racism**, and ultimately work toward achieving **health equity**.

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Equity is an important consideration in the process of how data are collected and, ultimately, in who gets to interpret, disseminate and leverage data to take action. People most affected by racial, economic, and geographic inequities in health and well-being need to be able to access, interpret, and contribute data to assess structural inequities in their communities. Also, they should have the opportunity to participate in decision-making about how to address barriers and design solutions to improve community health based on that data.

To provide local leaders of community change the information they need, local organizations with relevant expertise can be collaborators to create new data; facilitate accessing and interpreting data; and help with communication of data about community conditions and health equity.

## **APPLICATION AND PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

Applicants should take the following guidance into account as they plan their project approach, timing, and budget.

- Applicants must focus their projects on local geographies in the United States such as neighborhoods, cities, counties, or metropolitan areas.
- Applicants must execute proposed work within a nine-month period of performance.
- Applicants may propose work that expands the scope of an ongoing project that is aligned with this funding opportunity.
- If a project requires review by an institutional review board (IRB), applicants should account for IRB preparation and review.
- Grantees are encouraged to share detailed methodologies (and code as applicable) to assist the Urban Institute in disseminating information on the work for potential replication of the projects in other communities.
- Applicants are strongly encouraged to make any underlying data that are not confidential or proprietary available for download and re-use and to use open-source technology where possible.

### *Program Benefits*

- RWJF will provide \$40,000 in grant funding.
- The Urban Institute will facilitate a peer learning community for grantees across four to six virtual sessions that will feature grantees sharing their activities and learning from one another. Participation is encouraged but not required.
- Grantees may also request technical assistance from the Urban Institute. Examples of technical assistance that will be available to grantees include reviewing data collection

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instruments and protocols, consultations with subject matter experts, and referrals to tools and examples that are relevant to grant projects.

## *Examples of Activities That Will Be Considered for Funding*

RWJF seeks to fund organizations that will meaningfully engage with community members to address the issues that matter to the community. Organizations should collaborate with community members to define questions of interest; determine what data and analysis are needed; collect, analyze, and interpret data; share data in accessible formats; and/or translate findings for local audiences.

Examples of these kinds of activities follow. This list is far from exhaustive and RWJF welcomes creative and innovative ideas. We also recognize that the changes needed to address community conditions shaped by structural racism are going to take time. This grant opportunity is intended to catalyze initiatives and collaborations working with community members to bring about these changes.

- To understand community safety priorities, collaborate with a local community group to collect data virtually or in person. New surveys, interviews, or focus groups, perhaps analyzed together with quantitative data, could incorporate the lived experience of residents in understanding perceptions of safety and the structural drivers of crime. Residents can use this analysis to identify the strategies and investments they would want local government to prioritize to improve community safety.
- To address poor air quality, work with residents to measure sources of pollutants in their neighborhoods, such as refineries, bus depots, etc., and inform advocacy strategies to promote mitigation and clean-up.
- To develop new strategies to address structural barriers to employment, work with a coalition of regional funders to analyze how discriminatory and racist policies and practices in transportation have contributed to inequities in access to employment. This analysis could be combined with an assessment of how COVID-19 has exacerbated those inequities for particular neighborhoods and how to begin to shape a broader geography of opportunity.
- To ensure emergency rental assistance is reaching the households that need it most, work with service providers and housing counselors to analyze data to reveal the spatial patterns of evictions. This analysis can be used by service providers and housing counselors to target outreach to neighborhoods most affected and demonstrate the need for additional resources.
- To create a plan to improve childcare services, assist local agencies and networks to analyze data on childcare needs, and/or collect surveys to learn about concerns and priorities of parents and staff; and highlight the gaps between the need for quality daycare services and availability by neighborhood.

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- To advance equitable access to quality recreation spaces, collaborate with a local recreation department and community groups to use data to assess the distribution of recreation spaces and identify priority locations for future investments.

## *Examples of Activities That Will Not Be Considered for Funding*

All proposed projects need to demonstrate an alignment with this funding opportunity. This funding opportunity will not support projects that are:

- research not connected to near-term decision-making and actions
- programmatic evaluation
- analyses for individual social needs or medical treatments
- community health needs assessments
- health impact assessments
- data collection to support grant writing for other opportunities
- national- or state-level activities
- lobbying or political activities

In addition, projects that develop data tools or dashboards without designing for specific audiences or defined uses will not be supported. We will only support the development of data tools in cases where named local organizations, initiatives, or other user groups have articulated why they need the data and how the tools will be used.

In addition, all applicants must meet the eligibility criteria noted below. Proposals that include activities not eligible for funding or that fail to meet eligibility criteria will not be considered.

## **ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

- Awards will be made to organizations, not individuals.
- Applicant organizations must be either public entities or nonprofit organizations that are tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) or Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code.
- Universities, whether public or private, are ineligible to apply, but are eligible to partner with an applicant that is a 501(c)(3) or Section 501(c)(4) organization.
- Applicant organizations must be based in the United States or its territories.

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- Organizations may only submit one proposal.
- Applicants may include funding in their budget for up to 50 percent of the total budget for collaborating organizations.

## HOW TO APPLY

All proposals for this solicitation must be submitted via the RWJF online system. Visit [www.rwjf.org/cfp/DHC2](http://www.rwjf.org/cfp/DHC2) and use the “Apply Online” link. If you have not already done so, you will be required to register at <http://my.rwjf.org> before you begin the proposal process.

There are two phases in the competitive proposal process:

### *Phase 1: Registering an Intent to Apply*

Applicants must register their intent to apply for this grant opportunity. Registration requires applicants to indicate their intent to apply and provide contact and organizational information. In this registration step, applicants will also be asked to indicate where they first learned about this CFP. Registering intent to apply is nonbinding but is required to be eligible to submit a full proposal.

### *Phase 2: Full Proposal:*

Phase 1 registrants who we have determined to be eligible to apply will be invited by RWJF to submit a full proposal. Applicants should not begin drafting their full proposals until they have familiarized themselves with the detailed instructions and formatting requirements displayed in the online application system. Proposals must include brief responses within the designated word counts to the following questions:

1. Provide a brief overview of the question(s) your project seeks to answer and why they are relevant to your community. Explain how the project is responsive to (1) community conditions shaped by structural racism; and (2) achieving health equity. **(250 words)**
2. List a ***specific*** local audience(s) and organization(s) and describe how they will use the data or benefit from the data. **(100 words)** *Examples of specific local audiences and organizations include a community foundation, community groups in selected neighborhoods, a local collective impact initiative, a city council budget committee, a county health department, or the city economic development department.*
3. Describe the project activities, methods, and data sources and how these will address the project question(s). **(350 words)**

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4. Describe how individuals who have lived experience/expertise, or organizations that have credibility and relationships with these communities, will participate in and/or contribute to the proposed activities. **(250 words)**
5. Describe what the activities will produce—including any outputs, products, services, events, and other forms of project documentation. **(100 words)**
6. Describe the expected impact or change that will result from this project. **(100 words)**
7. List key milestones and timing for your project, considering what is feasible for the nine-month grant period. **(150 words)**
8. Please describe your project team and roles, and their experience with providing data and data assistance to communities and expertise with community engagement. Include any collaborating partner organizations and a description of their role, and their experience with the proposed work. **(250 words)**

## *Required Supplemental Documents:*

One-paragraph bio sketches that identify the roles on the proposed work for a maximum of two key team members of the applicant organization, and if collaborating with a partner, for a maximum of two key team members of the collaborating partner organization. These should include any relevant skills or experience needed to complete the proposed activities.

Questions about this opportunity are welcome and should be directed to Urban Institute staff at [data2action@urban.org](mailto:data2action@urban.org) (preferred) or (202) 261-5350.

RWJF does not provide individual critiques of proposals submitted.

## **SELECTION CRITERIA**

A team of reviewers from RWJF and the Urban Institute, and possibly external reviewers, will evaluate all proposals. The review process will consider how the applicant's proposal addresses the following selection criteria:

- **Responsiveness to CFP Goals:** Poses clear question(s) that are related to local needs and are related to (1) community conditions shaped by structural racism; and (2) achieving health equity.
- **Specific Local Audience:** Names a specific local audience(s) and organization(s) and how they will use the data or benefit from the data.
- **Activities, Methods, Data Sources:** Outlines project activities, methods, and data sources that will effectively address the project question(s).

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- **Community Participation:** Identifies how individuals who have lived experience/expertise, or organizations that have credibility and relationships with these communities, will participate in and/or contribute to the proposed activities.
- **Deliverables:** Identifies what the activities will produce—outputs, products, services, events, and other forms of project documentation.
- **Impact and Change:** Identifies the impact and/or change that will result from the project.
- **Timeline:** Outlines a timeline that is feasible and scope of work that can be completed in nine months.
- **Team Capacity:** Proposes a project team, including any collaborating partner organizations, that have experience with providing data and data assistance to communities, and that have expertise in community engagement.

Description of Key Terms Used in This CFP
<b>Health equity</b> means that everyone has a fair and just opportunity to be as healthy as possible. This requires removing obstacles to health such as poverty, discrimination, and their consequences, including powerlessness and lack of access to good jobs with fair pay, quality education and housing, safe environments, and health care.
<b>Community conditions</b> include but are not limited to: the built environment, community safety and policing, employment, environmental conditions, food insecurity, housing, racial segregation, and transportation.
<b>Structural or systemic racism</b> is race-based unfair treatment built into policies, laws, and practices. It's also called "systemic" racism because it's fostered through mutually reinforcing systems, policies and practices in housing, education, employment, earnings, benefits, credit, media, health care, and criminal justice. These patterns and practices reinforce discriminatory beliefs, values, and the distribution of resources, which affect health.
<b>Data</b> are any collected statistics or information. Data may be quantitative, like information from surveys or administrative operations of governments, foundations, or nonprofits. They may also be qualitative, such as stories from lived experience or material from structured data collection like focus groups or interviews.

## 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

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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.

## **MONITORING**

RWJF monitors the grantees' efforts and careful stewardship of grant funds to assure accountability. Grantees will be expected to participate in a small number (3–4) of periodic phone calls with the Urban Institute to share insights and challenges as the grant proceeds and at the end of the grant period.

## **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 GRANT FUNDS**

The applicant organization must retain at least 50 percent of the budget.

Grant funds may be used for project staff salaries, consultant fees, data collection and analysis, meetings, supplies, project-related travel, other direct project expenses, including a limited amount of equipment essential to the project, and indirect costs to support the applicant organization's general operations. 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

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lobbying, for political activities, or as a substitute for funds currently being used to support similar activities. Additional budget guidelines are provided in the online application materials.

## OPEN ACCESS

In order to ensure RWJF supported research is made accessible to a wide and diverse audience, grantees 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).

## PROGRAM DIRECTION

Responsible staff members at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation are:

George Hobor, PhD, *senior program officer*

Email: [ghobor@rwjf.org](mailto:ghobor@rwjf.org) (preferred)

Phone: (609) 627-5967

Oktawia Wojcik, PhD, *senior program officer*

Email: [owojcik@rwjf.org](mailto:owojcik@rwjf.org) (preferred)

Phone: (609) 627-6228

In addition, guidance on the design and implementation of this grant initiative, as well as technical assistance specific to this CFP are being provided by the Urban Institute and its team who operate the National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership:

Urban Institute

500 L'Enfant Plaza S.W.

Washington, D.C.

Email: [data2action@urban.org](mailto:data2action@urban.org) (preferred)

Phone: (202) 261-5350

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

Responsible staff members and consultants at the Urban Institute are:

- Kathy Pettit, MPP, *co-principal investigator*
- Leah Hendey, MPP, *co-principal investigator*
- Jake Cowan, MPA, *consultant*

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## KEY DATES AND DEADLINES

- **April 6, 2022 (3 p.m. ET)**  
Optional applicant webinar. The webinar will be recorded and included as a resource in the applicant portal. [Registration is required through this link.](#)
- **April 20, 2022 (3 p.m. ET)**  
Deadline for receipt of registration of intent to apply.
- **May 26, 2022 (3 p.m. ET)**  
Deadline for receipt of full proposals.
- **Mid-July 2022**  
Award notifications.
- **September 1, 2022**  
Grant award start date.

## Applicant Deadline Policy

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All applicants should log in to the system and familiarize themselves with online proposal requirements well before the final submission deadline. Please note that, in the 24-hour period leading up to the proposal deadline, staff may not be able to assist all applicants with any system-related issues. Therefore, we encourage you to submit your proposal well before the deadline so that any unforeseen difficulties or technical problems may be addressed in advance.

**Late submissions will not be accepted for any reason.** While late submissions will not be accepted, RWJF may choose, at its sole discretion, to extend the proposal deadline for all applicants. Such extensions generally will be granted only in the event of: (1) a verified issue with the RWJF proposal system that prevented completion and submission of proposals; or (2) a disaster, emergency, or significant internet outage that affects one or more regions. For purposes of this policy, a region is generally considered to be one or more states. RWJF strives to give all applicants any support needed to successfully submit their proposal prior to the deadline. Submission is defined as all sections completed, marked finished, the proposal “submit” button used, and the proposal status shows “Submitted.” If the deadline is extended for any reason, the extension will be posted on the Funding Opportunities page at [rwjf.org](http://rwjf.org). In addition, an email will be sent to all individuals that have started a proposal in the RWJF online system.

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## **ABOUT THE ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON FOUNDATION**

For 50 years, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation has worked to improve health and health care. In partnership with others, we are working to develop a Culture of Health rooted in equity that provides every individual with a fair and just opportunity to thrive, no matter who they are, where they live, or how much money they have. For more information, visit [rwjf.org](https://www.rwjf.org). Follow the Foundation on Twitter at <https://www.rwjf.org/twitter> or on Facebook at <https://www.rwjf.org/facebook>.

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

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