



# Data Visualization of Structural Racism and Place

## BACKGROUND

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) and its grantees and partners have demonstrated the impact of using data as a communications tool to increase the understanding of how the conditions of place influence health and health equity. A well-known example of using data this way are the [life expectancy maps](#), which have been instrumental in communicating the concept of place and its impact on health inequities to various audiences. Increasingly, is being used to illustrate the drivers of inequitable conditions of place (e.g., redlining maps overlaid with health and wellbeing outcomes) as a way to catalyze action that addresses systemic and structural barriers to health and wellbeing.

Based on how influential earlier projects have been in connecting place to health, RWJF seeks visualizations to better address the role of structural racism, place, and the implications racism has on population health for these to serve as clear and effective communication tools on a variety of digital platforms. While beneficial to communicate about redlining, there is a particular need for new ways to communicate data on topics of race and place that go beyond the implications of redlining.

RWJF is launching this call for proposals (CFP) to enhance and support new and novel efforts by data creators and/or data users to effectively communicate, using data, how conditions of place are shaped by structural racism in ways that negatively impact community health.

Conditions of place, or “community conditions,” refers to the social, economic, physical, environmental, and political determinants of health and wellbeing, and how they create the context for a place (e.g., neighborhood, city, region). Conditions of place can consist of tangible concepts such as the built environment, including water infrastructure and housing, and more abstract concepts such as safety or belonging.

RWJF’s Healthy Communities theme supports equitable community development, whereby cities and regions develop the conditions of place that help all residents, and specifically residents from populations that historically have been marginalized, reach their best possible health and wellbeing. Therefore, we are inviting proposals that enhance communications highlighting evidence connecting the impacts of structural racism on the built environment,

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income, wealth, employment, community safety and policing, environmental conditions, housing, racial segregation, transportation, and other conditions, with inequitable outcomes for health and wellbeing.

The data visualizations that result from this work will not only visualize structural racism's impact on communities but can also be a powerful communications tool to advance policy change efforts and programming by persuading audiences (e.g., policymakers, media, community advocates) of the legacy and current consequences of racism.

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this CFP is to provide grants to up to eight interdisciplinary teams that each consist of researchers/data producers, data scientists, communications experts, designers, and national social change networks/alliances or national-level social change organizations. The teams will create data visualizations or data visualization tools that have national coverage and can be disaggregated down to smaller geographies as a tool to create easy-to-understand visualizations of structural racism's impact on place, health, and wellbeing.

Collaboration is needed across organizations that address different sectors such as academia, design, media, policy, public health, social services. Organizations in individual sectors may struggle on their own with communicating an effective and nuanced understanding of the impact of structural racism to diverse audiences, such as policymakers, advocates, funders and investors, or the media. While the primary deliverables of this project will be data visualization tools and other methods of communicating using data, we anticipate that the deliverables will inform and support advocacy campaigns and should center the experience and needs of communities most affected by structural racism.

Structural racism is deeply embedded in communities, such as in laws, written or unwritten policies, and widespread practices, beliefs, and attitudes that produce, condone, and perpetuate unfair treatment of communities of color. Structural racism produces a complex set of barriers that undermines opportunities for health and wellbeing for those impacted. These barriers are not always visible. Improving communication by visualizing complex measures can be a powerful tool to show structural racism's impact on communities and to contextualize the legacy of racism.

Structural racism can affect community conditions including but not limited to the built environment, community safety and policing, employment, environmental conditions, food insecurity, housing, racial segregation, and transportation. One purpose of the CFP is to understand the legacy of racism beyond the current visualizations of place we have now, which are often based on redlining maps.

Funding will support the creation of data visualizations as tools for national social change networks, alliances or national-level social change organizations to apply to their communications work and that of local partners or affiliates. Each overall partnership should demonstrate the unique potential of combining national coverage data with the perspective of impacted communities on indicators of structural racism.

Determining research questions based on community needs, deciding which measures to use, and sharing a compelling story are some of the challenges of designing solutions to improve

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population health. Often national-level organizations/networks, researchers/data producers, data scientists, and communications experts hold parts of this information, but each field or discipline offers different strengths and encounters varying barriers. Together, these sectors can combine their relevant expertise to design new ways to understand and communicate the impacts of structural racism, place, and health.

## FUNDING DETAILS

- **Type of Award:** Will be structured as grants.
- **Number of Awards:** Up to eight awards.
- **Total Awards:**
  - The total funding available for grants is \$2,000,000 under this CFP.
  - Individual grants will typically range from \$100,000 to \$250,000; however, higher requests will be considered. Therefore, we recommend you request the amount you will need to complete your proposed project. The size of the budget will be weighed in relation to the proposed activities and the likely contribution of the proposed project.
  - We expect to fund a diverse range of projects with varying budgets.
- **Award Duration:** One year with no further commitments planned at this time.
- **Use of Funds:** Award funds should cover actual costs of the project including personnel and other direct costs. If the grantee is a public charity, grant funds will also cover 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, and for lobbying or political activities. Additional budget guidelines are provided in the online application materials.
- **Payment of Awards:** Payment of the award generally will be based upon spending against approved budgets or milestones (not invoices).

The grant opportunity outlined in this call for proposals (CFP) is contingent upon final funding confirmation from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation for such grants.

Under the terms of the Foundation's standard [Grant Agreement](#), the Foundation will receive a nonexclusive, irrevocable, perpetual, worldwide, royalty-free license to reproduce, publish, republish, summarize, excerpt, or otherwise use and license others to use, in print or electronic form, including in electronic databases or in any future form not yet discovered or implemented, for charitable purposes, any and all deliverables produced with Foundation grant funds.

## ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- A collaboration of multiple organizations or parties is required. The collaboration must include at least one individual or organization in each of the following sectors: (1) researcher/data producer; (2) communications expert (e.g., generalist, creative lead, or graphic designer); and (3) national-level social change organization, network, or alliance committed to advancing racial and health equity, who have relationships and/or reach to

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engage aligned community organizations or affiliates.

- While each collaborating organization must be described in detail in the proposal, only one organization may represent the collaboration and be the lead contact in the application process.
- Awards will be made to organizations, not individuals.
- Lead organizations may only submit one proposal.
- Preference will be given to applicants that are either public entities or nonprofit organizations that are tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and are not private foundations or Type III supporting organizations. The Foundation may require additional documentation. Members of the collaboration can be from for-profit organizations.
- Applicant organizations must be based in the United States or its territories.
- Data resources with national coverage and the ability to scale down to smaller units of analysis, like county, city, and/or census tract and that can provide disaggregated data will be preferred. However, data resources that have wide coverage of multiple cities, rural areas, or regions will also be considered. Single state, county, or city datasets do not qualify.

## SELECTION CRITERIA

A team of reviewers from RWJF 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 structural racism's impact on conditions of place (see definition above), health, and wellbeing in a way that complements the work and programming needs of a national-level organization/network/alliance.
  - Clearly describes how the proposed activities will enhance the communications capacity of the data provider to be a better partner to national entities advancing policy efforts that needs support from conveying or measuring racism, health, and community conditions of place.
  - Identifies a specific intended audience for the visualization and/or policy debate to which the data and resulting visualizations can be applied.
- **Data Source:** Data source that will effectively address the project question(s) and meet the criteria outlined above in the eligibility criteria (national resource that can scale down to smaller units of analysis or, e.g., multiple cities, regions, counties). Data sources should already exist at the time the proposal is submitted, and members of the proposed team must already have access to the data at the time the proposal is submitted. This project will not fund data collection.

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- **Deliverables:** Identifies what product(s) will be produced, how they address the work or programming needs of the national-level organization/network/alliance, and how novel they are at communicating the connection between racism, place, and health.
- **Timeline:** Outlines a timeline that is feasible and scope of work that can be completed in one year.
- **Team Capacity and Expertise:** Proposes a project team with in-house subject matter expertise, including any partner organizations that have experience in (1) data visualization, (2) data science, (3) communications, and (4) national-level organization/network/alliance.
- **Track Record:** Experience collaborating with experts and practitioners in theoretical and operational understanding of how racism works.
- **Budget:** Appropriateness of budget vis-à-vis project activities and capacities needed to support those activities.
- **Overarching requirement:** Alignment of organizational vision and values, excitement about this work, and commitment to close collaboration and thought partnership with RWJF.

## 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).

## HOW TO APPLY

**Please note you will be asked to upload your full proposal narrative as a PDF** to the Project Proposal Narrative section of the online system. The proposal narrative cannot exceed **eight (8)** pages. Please use Arial font at size 11 with 1-inch margins and single-spaced line spacing.

The proposal narrative should contain the following information:

- Provide a brief overview of the research/project question(s) that your visualization seeks to answer and why they are relevant to addressing structural racism, place, and health.
- Describe the project methods and data sources, how it meets the eligibility criteria, and how these will address the project question(s).
- List a specific audience and or policy debate to which the resulting visualization(s) can be applied.
- Describe what the activities will produce and how the expected need will be met, impacted, or changed as a result of this project.

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- Describe your project team and roles, organizational qualifications, and their experience with addressing structural racism, data science, data visualization, influencing mindsets, and connecting with local needs. Provide their experience with developing and disseminating data visualization to communities and expertise with community engagement.
- Timeline of key activities related to objectives and milestones related to implementation and impact.
- A budget and budget narrative that reflects program activities and responsibilities, outlines how resources are allocated for major benchmarks, and demonstrates commitment to responsible stewardship of funds.
- **Required Supplemental Documents:** These documents are not counted as part of the proposal narrative page limit:
  - Abbreviated bios for lead individuals at the organization(s) represented in the proposal. Provide a maximum of two key team members at each of the collaborating organizations. These should include any relevant skills or experience needed to complete the proposed activities. There should be a brief bio for each sector on the collaboration.
- **Optional:**
  - An optional applicant webinar will be hosted by RWJF on **May 9, 2023, at 4 p.m. ET** (see more information below). Prospective applicants can have the questions answered.
  - During the review process prior to award notifications some applicants may be contacted via email to set up a 30-minute phone conversation to answer follow-up questions regarding the proposal. A phone call or absence of a phone call do not indicate chances of an award.

Proposals for this solicitation must be submitted via the RWJF online system. Visit [www.rwjf.org/cfp/dataviz](http://www.rwjf.org/cfp/dataviz) 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.

Please direct inquiries to:

Katie Corbit, *program associate*  
Email: [kcorbit@rwjf.org](mailto:kcorbit@rwjf.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.

RWJF does not provide individual critiques of proposals submitted.

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## PROGRAM DIRECTION

Responsible staff members at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation are:

- Katie Corbit, MPH, *program associate*
- Elías Enenbach, MA, MPhil, *senior communications officer*
- George Hobor, PhD, MA, *senior program officer*
- Christine Phares, *program financial analyst*

## KEY DATES AND DEADLINES

- **April 27, 2023**  
Call for proposals released.
- **May 9, 2023 (4 p.m. ET)**  
Optional applicant webinar. [Registration is required through this link.](#)
- **June 2, 2023 (3 p.m. ET)**  
Deadline for receipt of full proposals.
- **Mid-July 2023**  
Award notifications.
- **September 1, 2023**  
Grant award start date.

## Applicant Deadline Policy

All proposals for this solicitation must be submitted via the RWJF online system. Visit [www.rwjf.org/cfp/dataviz](http://www.rwjf.org/cfp/dataviz) 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 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

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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 opportunity 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.

## 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 project lead is expected to provide a written report on the project and its findings suitable for wide dissemination.

## APPLICANT SURVEY PROCESS

The project director (PD) of the proposal may be contacted after the submission deadline by SSRS, an independent research firm. The PD 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.

## 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 wellbeing. 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.



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

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) is committed to improving health and health equity in the United States. 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 [www.rwjf.org](http://www.rwjf.org).

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

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