

2023 Call for Proposals  
Letter of Intent Deadline: February 16, 2024 (3 p.m. ET)  
Full Proposal Deadline: July 23, 2024 (3 p.m. ET)



Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Policies for Action

## Policy Research to Advance the Inclusion of Immigrant Families and Children

### BACKGROUND

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) is committed to building a Culture of Health rooted in equity that provides every individual and family across the nation with a fair and just opportunity to thrive, no matter who they are, where they live, or where they were born. While we all have dreams for ourselves and our families, we don't all have the same opportunities to make those dreams come true. Many policies, regulations, and legal structures unfairly advantage certain groups of people and places, while unfairly disadvantaging others; and these policy drivers in turn affect how well individuals, families, and communities can benefit from what they need to thrive in the United States today.

RWJF supports research that identifies the systemic root causes of U.S. health inequities, which have strong links to structural racism, xenophobia, other forms of oppression, and their attendant injustices. RWJF's approach to supporting evidence generation is to challenge and improve conventional methods and assumptions and source new ideas that can advance equity and justice for marginalized communities, including immigrant communities and communities of color. Along with RWJF's other signature research programs, the [Policies for Action \(P4A\)](#) program funds research that can move policy toward the goals of dismantling structural forms of oppression, marginalization, and injustice, and thereby advance racial justice and health equity. Efforts to do this include funding diverse researchers, research approaches, and organizations; funding policy research that centers the experiences of people/places that are most distant from power and privilege and that targets structural drivers of inequality; and disseminating policy research findings that are relevant and actionable at the local, tribal, regional, or national levels, and responsive to the needs of policymakers, organizers, activists, and other changemakers.

For this P4A call for proposals (CFP), we are focusing on research about policies that can contribute to the full social, economic, and civic inclusion of immigrant families in American society. We are also intentionally centering immigrant *children and families* and the essential support and caregiving that happens within families and their communities. We want to understand how immigrants and their families can be valued and included most fully in all dimensions of life in the United States and how policies can drive systemic change that

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broadens public acceptance and support of all families, especially immigrant children and families.

In general, we are using the term *immigrant* to include anyone who is born outside of the U.S. and its territories (irrespective of their citizenship or legal status) and *immigrant families* to include families with at least one member who was born outside the U.S. Families in this case should be understood in the broadest way possible—they span generations and include extended relatives and loved ones not related by blood or marriage. Applicants should feel free to define *immigrants* and *immigrant children and families* in any way they feel is best, understanding that we are accepting the most inclusive and expansive definitions, understandings, and frames.

## THE PROGRAM

The goal of this CFP is to fund research on policies that can advance the full social, economic, and civic inclusion of immigrant children and families. The intention is to spotlight policies that can transform systems/structures that ensure equal access to (and take-up of) goods and services, including public benefits, irrespective of immigration status. The proposed research can cover a wide range of service systems, and related policies, including but not limited to the following:

- Early childhood care and education (including informal and home-based care) and access to subsidies and unbiased quality standards;
- Publicly funded healthcare services, such as Medicaid, public health services, school- and community-based health services, maternal and child health services, sexual and reproductive health services, psychological counseling, and trauma-informed behavioral health (mental health and addiction) services;
- Publicly funded social services, such as food and nutrition programs, out-of-school programs for children and youth, community safety and interpersonal violence prevention programs, and disability- and aging-related services and supports;
- Other safety-net programs such as TANF, SSI/SSDI, unemployment insurance, utility assistance, emergency food and shelter, and public benefit navigator programs;
- Safe and affordable housing options and supports, including those relating to tenant rights, eviction prevention, first-time home-buyer credits, and homeowner assistance;
- Community development, communication, connectivity, transportation, and public health emergency-, climate change-, and disaster-related supports;

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- Civic engagement, driver's licenses (and alternate IDs), language access, access to job training, entrepreneurship, and business development opportunities, and other welcoming and inclusive policies;
- Legal and financial services, including those related to immigration, lending/borrowing, tax filing (e.g., ITIN) and tax credits (e.g., EITC and CTC), and other public or private benefits and protections.

The research funded under this CFP should also:

- Focus on one or more policies at the federal, state, or local level;
- Be intentional about applying an equity lens, especially a racial equity lens, to the policy research question, methods, and process, centering the experiences and priorities of immigrant communities most distant from power and justice; and
- Include immigrant community groups and/or members, especially those most marginalized, as leaders or partners in all stages of the research.

The policies being considered can be ones that have been implemented or proposed and whose impacts can be simulated or estimated through equity-oriented processes and methods. Methodological approaches that have been used in previous research have included case studies, focus groups, ethnographic studies, mixed methods, experimental and quasi-experimental designs, and simulation models. We also welcome policy research that simulates the impact of policies that are more conceptual in nature but have the potential to support policy reform, creation, or implementation in ways that can significantly boost improvements in immigrant justice and health equity.

We seek to support research that generates actionable evidence and information on transformative policy solutions that address systemic barriers affecting the full inclusion of immigrant children and families. We are also interested in understanding ways such policies (and their impacts) have been framed and communicated to policymakers, their influencers, and the community at large. We would like research findings to inform and guide legislators; public agencies; public policy advocates; racial, and other justice organizations; community organizers; and others who are developing, implementing, and advocating for policies to create equitable, inclusive communities for immigrant children and families.

A wide range of policy research questions and policy areas are in scope for purposes of this CFP. Below are some examples for illustration, but we welcome other ideas as well:

- The impact, especially at the state level, of removing public benefit restrictions under the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA), including the five-year bar on immigrants and restrictions for DACA recipients and TPS holders: estimating who would be affected and how, and accounting for longer-term benefits (in terms of health, wellbeing, inclusion, and even cost savings) in addition to shorter-term cost outlays;

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- Ways the current tax system might be redesigned to expand opportunities for current ITIN holders and also include *all* immigrants in terms of both filing taxes and benefiting from tax credits (e.g., EITC and CTC) and other tax policies that benefit lower-income Americans and lift many families out of poverty.
- The effects of unwinding Medicaid on mixed status and other immigrant families in both the short and long terms, and policies that can prevent or mitigate any harmful effects.
- Ways local municipalities, and their health and social care systems, can engage and serve immigrant communities with more intention and trustworthiness, ensure that program policies and structures are not inadvertently harming immigrant families, and counter scarcity frames/narratives that pit one group in need against another.
- Ways that (policy) research data, methods, estimation models, interactive tools, and findings relating to the full inclusion of immigrants in American society can be better contextualized, depoliticized, and made more transparent and accountable for their responsible use (e.g., state-level bans or restrictions simply transfer costs to counties and localities).
- Assess and characterize current state or local pro- or anti-immigration policy pathways and their contexts, including their readiness for adopting inclusive eligibility expansions for immigrant children and families (or overturning anti-immigrant policies).
- Ways that major administrative data systems and national surveys (e.g., including various enforcement agencies) capture information on immigrants and what characteristics or variables are captured that allow one to analyze the differential treatment of different groups of immigrants, including by race and ethnicity (in addition to nationality or country of origin), and what the implications are for groups that are not explicitly counted.
- Policies affecting community and civic engagement, participation of immigrant parents in their children's schools and activities (e.g., needing a government-issued ID to even enter a public school); participation in the electoral process; expectations that elected officials should be accountable to voters, including members of immigrant communities.
- Research evidence as to whether first- and second-generation immigrants of color fare better, the same or worse (over time and place) compared to their native-born counterparts, and how policy drivers may be shaping their respective trajectories.
- How immigrant communities' (both recent arrivals and those here much longer) understandings of and expectations around full and fair inclusion in American society are shaped, what policies are most important to these, and how their experiences with government (in the countries of origin or their initial experiences in the United States) shape their motivations, behaviors, and levels of trust.

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- Examples of local/state policies that have prevented or mitigated the longer-term negative effects, including chilling effects, of public charge and other anti-immigrant policies on program participation.
- Applying an inclusive “immigrant lens” to a wide array of social welfare policies and policy analyses, including alternate/dedicated programs designed to protect immigrant individuals and families who would otherwise be excluded and “safety net-for-all” efforts.

As is clear from this list, **we are not seeking policy research proposals that focus on:**

- the immigration system, or policies and practices at the southern border;
- immigrants and labor/employment, including immigrants’ experiences with work as a source of income and economic security or access to benefits that are tied to work, employment, and productivity;
- issues related to education (e.g., K-12, higher education) or immigrants as students.

**See FAQs for resources on Family and Economic Inclusion, and Community-Engaged Methods**

## FUNDING DETAILS

- **Type of Award:** Awards funded under this opportunity will be structured as grants.
- **Number of Awards:** Up to six awards will be funded.
- **Amount of Award:** This CFP will award a combined total of \$1.5 million for up to 6 grants. Previous awards have ranged from \$30,000 to \$450,000 per grant. We recommend that you request the amount of funding you will need to complete your proposed research project and to translate and disseminate the results. The size of the budget will be weighed in relation to the importance and likely contribution of the proposed research.
- **Award Duration:** Awards are typically funded for 12-36 months.
- **Use of Grant Funds:** Grant funds may be used for project staff salaries, consultant fees, data collection and analysis, interpretation and translation, meetings, supplies, project-related travel, other direct project expenses, including a limited amount of equipment essential to the project and dissemination. For nonprofit entities, funds may also be used toward 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 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.

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- **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 is contingent upon final funding confirmation from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation for such grants.**

## ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- 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. Applicant organizations must be based in the United States or its territories.
- Awards will be made to organizations, not to individuals.
- We strive to support a diverse group of researchers. The following groups are especially encouraged to apply:
  - Research projects led by researchers who are Black or African American; American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous; Hispanic, Latinx/e, or Latin American; Middle Eastern or North African; Asian or Asian American; and/or Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander;
  - Community-led research teams;
  - Investigators from organizations that are underrepresented among grantee institutions, including Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Hispanic-serving Institutions, Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), Alaska Native-Serving Institutions, Native Hawaiian-Serving Institutions, and Asian American Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions (AANAPISIs);
  - Interdisciplinary research teams; or
  - First-time applicants for an RWJF grant.
- Applicants who have been RWJF grantees OR who currently have other active RWJF grants, **are** eligible to apply (with the exception below)\*. Applicants may also submit proposals that are being considered by other RWJF programs.
- \*Applicants who are current principal investigators or co-principal investigators of P4A grants OR who have finished their P4A funding within the past two years **are not** eligible to apply. (If your P4A grant was extended, the end of the extension period is considered the end of the award.) This does not prevent other researchers at the home institution of a P4A grantee from applying.

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## SELECTION CRITERIA

Proposals will be reviewed by a committee composed of RWJF staff, leaders of the P4A national coordinating center (NCC), and other expert reviewers as needed. Final funding decisions are made by RWJF leadership.

**Letters of intent** will be evaluated on the following:

- Focus is on one or more policies that advance the full social, economic, and civic inclusion of immigrant children and families or dismantling of policies that impede such inclusion;
- Alignment with policy priorities of immigrant community-centered justice organizers and advocates;
- Immigrant community groups and/or members, especially those most marginalized, are included as leaders or partners in all stages of the research;
- A racial equity and fairness lens is applied to the policy research processes and outcomes;
- The research design is sound and feasible; and
- Clear use cases for how the research findings can inform and support policy action.

In addition to the above, **full proposals** will be evaluated based on:

- The study's research aims, hypothesis, and rationale;
- The proposed methodology and data sources;
- Alignment with principles of equitable evaluation. Applicants should demonstrate that they intend to implement approaches that reflect the principles of equitable evaluation whenever possible, including approaches to defining research questions and conducting research;
- The expected results or outcomes (clearly stated, measurable, and achievable within an appropriate timeframe);
- The approach to dissemination, communication, engagement, and translation of research findings for community members, policymakers, practitioners, or other key audiences that may benefit from your research; and
- The proposed budget and project timeline.

## 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

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resulting publications open access (typically \$2,000-\$5,000 per manuscript). See our [Open Access policy](#) for more information.

## HOW TO APPLY

All proposals for this solicitation must be submitted via the RWJF online system. Visit [www.rwjf.org/cfp/p4a7](http://www.rwjf.org/cfp/p4a7) and use the “Apply Online” link. If you have not already done so, you will be required to register at [MyRWJF.org](http://MyRWJF.org) before you begin the proposal process.

There are two phases in the competitive proposal process:

### ***Phase 1: Letters of Intent***

Applicants must submit a letter of intent of no more than two pages that describes the project and includes the amount of funds requested. Letters of intent will be reviewed by staff at RWJF, the NCC, and external experts. The letter of intent should include a brief plan for the proposed project, outlining a clear research question, and proposed data/methods.

### ***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. The program’s NCC makes recommendations about grants to Foundation staff, and RWJF will make all final grant decisions.

Please direct inquiries to:

Policies for Action National Coordinating  
Center at the Urban Institute

Email: [policies4action@urban.org](mailto:policies4action@urban.org)

Website: [www.policiesforaction.org](http://www.policiesforaction.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. Contact the NCC at the above



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email address if you need any technical assistance with the application or any other questions on the application process.

RWJF does not provide individual critiques of proposals submitted.

## PROGRAM DIRECTION

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

### Policies for Action

Urban Institute

500 L'Enfant Plaza S.W.

Washington, D.C. 20024

Email: [policies4action@urban.org](mailto:policies4action@urban.org)

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

Responsible staff members at the national coordinating center are:

- Lisa Dubay, PhD, co-director
- Laudan Aron, MA, co-director
- Katie Chapline, MS, deputy director
- Nona Richardson, communications consultant
- Joshua Smith, BA, program manager

Responsible staff members at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation are:

- Gina Hijjawi, PhD, senior program officer
- Alexandra Zisser, MSc, research associate
- Mona Shah, PhD, MPH, director, research
- Isabelle Gerard, MPHP, communications officer
- Mateusz Szalda, CPA, MAcc, program financial analyst

## KEY DATES AND DEADLINES

- **December 15, 2023 (12 p.m. ET)**  
Optional applicant webinar. Registration is required through this [link](#).
- **February 16, 2024 (3 p.m. ET)**  
Deadline for receipt of letters of intent.

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- **July 23, 2024 (3 p.m. ET)**  
Deadline for receipt of full proposals.

## Applicant Deadline Policy

All proposals for this solicitation must be submitted via the RWJF online system. Visit [www.rwjf.org/cfp/p4a7](http://www.rwjf.org/cfp/p4a7) 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 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 [www.rwjf.org](http://www.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 grantee is expected to provide a written report on the project and its findings suitable for wide dissemination.

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## **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.

## **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.

## **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/manage-your-subscriptions.html](http://www.rwjf.org/manage-your-subscriptions.html).

50 College Road East  
Princeton, NJ 08540-6614