

2026 Call for Proposals

Proposal Deadline: March 3, 2026 (3 p.m. ET)



Local Data for Equitable Communities

OVERVIEW

This call for proposals (CFP) invites eligible nonprofit organizations in the U.S. to apply for a grant to **collect, analyze, and use data** to address inequities in **the physical, economic, and social conditions of a place**. Improving these conditions is key to achieving **health equity** where health is no longer a privilege, but a right.

The [Robert Wood Johnson Foundation](#) (RWJF) expects to award up to 30 grants of \$50,000 each, with a period of performance of nine months. The Urban Institute, [as the national coordinating center](#) for this program, collaborates with RWJF on program design, grantee support, and communications. Additional information about this CFP follows, including program goals, eligibility, selection criteria, and how to apply.

BACKGROUND

RWJF is committed to building a future where everyone in America has a fair and just opportunity to reach their best health and wellbeing. Policies and decisions made today—and going back generations—have favored communities that are home to wealthier, White families. RWJF is working to make sure that all residents have a say in their communities, and everyone has access to what they need for a healthy life, like clean water, parks and green spaces, high-quality and affordable housing, and laws that are applied fairly to everyone. RWJF is working toward a vision for the future where health is no longer a privilege, but a right. We aim to get there through our long-term focus on [dismantling the structural racism](#) that permeates society. We're pursuing the ambitious goal of building the future we all want for our children, grandchildren, and loved ones. To [advance health equity](#), we invest in creating communities with the physical, economic, and social conditions for all residents to live their healthiest lives.

Our Local Data for Equitable Communities grant program supports collecting, analyzing, and using data to catalyze action on timely issues within communities. The program aims for a future where we can achieve racial equity and wellbeing for everyone. Annually, this program will fund nine-month projects that build on applicants' knowledge, relationships, and experience with existing change efforts with new opportunities or momentum for local action. The expectation is that after nine months, grantees will complete the scope of work supported by the grants.

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PURPOSE

Local data can be valuable tools to make progress on building places that offer everyone the chance to be as healthy as possible. Community organizations and residents can use data to understand challenges, set priorities, advocate for what is important to them, and hold others accountable for promised changes.

- **What counts as data?** Data are any collected statistics or information. Data may be quantitative, like counts or percentages based on information from surveys or the operations of governments, foundations, or nonprofits. They may also be qualitative, such as stories from lived experience or information collected through focus groups or interviews. All data are inherently shaped by the purposes, assumptions, and biases of the people who created them.

We believe the collective work of all the grantees will advance the following goals of the Local Data for Equitable Communities grant program. Applicant proposals, however, will be evaluated only on the elements listed in the Selection Criteria section of this CFP.

- **Inform public policy and improve the physical, economic, and social conditions of places:** Data can be a transformational tool for community-based nonprofits to answer questions directly relevant to on-the-ground efforts to improve the physical, economic, or social conditions of a place. With key data in hand, nonprofits can inform public discourse, resulting in program and policy solutions that reduce health inequities.
- **Build local capacity to use data for action:** A [community with data capacity](#) is one where people can access and use data to better understand and improve outcomes where they live. This grant program supports community organizations to collect, analyze, and use data about a locally relevant issue with new opportunities or momentum for action. As they do so, their capacity to use and apply data is strengthened, which leads to an increased influence in their communities for achieving important community-driven goals.
- **Strengthen the use of [equitable data practices](#):** Equity should be a leading consideration in what data are collected and how, 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 wellbeing need to be able to [access, contribute, and interpret data to assess structural inequities in their communities](#). They should have the opportunity to participate in decisionmaking about how to address barriers and design solutions to improve health equity based on that data.
- **Document successful practices for more communities to learn from and adapt:** This grant program funds organizations to address immediate local needs and conditions, informed by data relevant to project questions that are locally determined. Resulting projects will offer a diverse and innovative set of practices that will be relevant and useful to other places.

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Eligible Project Topics and Activities

RWJF welcomes creative and innovative ideas and recognizes that the changes needed to address inequities in the physical, economic, and social conditions in a community 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.

Eligible Geography: Applicants must focus their projects on local geographies in the U.S. or U.S territories:

- Neighborhood(s) within a city or county (do not need to be contiguous);
- City, county, or other municipality (must be contiguous if multiple are the focus of the project);
- A single metropolitan area; or
- A tribal area

Eligible Topics: The conditions in the places we live, learn, work, and play have a critical influence on our health. To transform health in our lifetime, we must address systems that create barriers or prevent opportunities for health. While there is a long list of conditions that may impact any given geographic community, only the following community conditions are eligible under this CFP. Applicants must select only one of the following conditions of their selected geography as the primary focus of their project:

- Built environment
- Climate and environment
- Community safety
- Healthy food access
- Housing or
- Transportation

Eligible Activities: This grant program provides flexibility for applicants to determine what data are needed to answer their proposed project questions and how those data are collected, analyzed, disseminated, and ultimately put to use by community members to bring about changes in local policies and practices. There is no preference for qualitative or quantitative data and applicants should choose the methods that are best suited to produce the information that is needed. Please note, if a project requires review by an institutional review board (IRB), applicants should account for time and resources for IRB preparation and review.

The following list provides examples of project ideas aligned with this funding opportunity, but it is far from exhaustive.

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- Examine the experience of renters of housing units that are corporate owned through a community survey to develop policy recommendations for improving housing quality and reducing the risk of displacement.
- Conduct a windshield survey of residential properties to document occupancy and exterior conditions and survey residents about their views on their neighborhood to inform government actions and support homeowner improvement efforts.
- Conduct walk audits, along with resident surveys, to document challenges to healthy food access and use findings to inform community-driven solutions and local policy changes, such as improvements in transportation access.
- Train residents to collect and analyze air quality data while building capacity to advocate for environmental justice.
- Conduct bus stop audits and participatory mapping workshops with residents to determine the accessibility of transit infrastructure and to advocate for improvements.
- Advance equitable access to quality recreation spaces by collaborating with community groups to assess the distribution and quality of recreation spaces and identify priority locations for future investments.
- Analyze data on traffic and pedestrian stops by race and ethnicity to understand patterns of policing in an area and advocate for equitable practices.

Ineligible Project Activities and Topics

This funding opportunity will not support any of the following activities or topics. Applications with these activities or topics will be screened out and will not be considered for funding.

Ineligible activities:

- Research disconnected from near-term decisionmaking and action
- Building data capacity disconnected from near-term decisionmaking and action
- Developing data tools or dashboards without designing for specific audiences and defined uses
- Multitopic or comprehensive community needs assessments
- Health impact assessments
- Community health needs assessments
- Programmatic evaluation
- Data collection to support grant writing

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- National- or state-level projects, or projects focused on noncontiguous cities or counties, or multiple metropolitan areas
- Lobbying or political activities (for more information, [see RWJF's policies on lobbying](#))

Ineligible topics:

- Childcare access or small business and economic development (NOTE: This is a change from the 2025 Local Data for Equitable Communities CFP.)
- Health outcomes, including projects that aim to identify the relationship between physical, economic, or social conditions and health outcomes
- Individual medical or social needs: individual social needs refer to the social or economic circumstances of a person or family that may affect their health
- Access to healthcare (including mental, behavioral, or maternal health services) or other human services
- Public benefits received by individuals or households—such as Medicaid, SNAP, TANF, childcare subsidies, or rental assistance
- Homelessness, civic engagement and voting, immigration, job training, or workforce development
- Education, including any project focused on schools as a geography

FUNDING DETAILS

- **Type of Award:** Awards funded under this opportunity will be structured as grants.
- **Number of Awards:** Up to 30 awards will be funded.
- **Amount of Award:** Each award will be \$50,000.
- **Award Duration:** Awards will be for nine months.
- **Use of Funds:** Award funds should cover actual costs of the project including personnel and other direct costs. If the grantee is a 501(c)(3) 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. Additionally, funds should not be used as general operating support, to subsidize individuals for the cost of their healthcare, or to substitute for funds currently being used to support similar activities to the proposed project. Additional budget guidelines are provided in the online application materials.

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- **Payment of Awards:** The full award amount will be made as one payment at the time of the award start date.

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

ORGANIZATIONAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- Awards will be made to organizations, not to individuals.
- Applicants must be nonprofit organizations that are tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) or Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (the Code). The following eligibility exceptions apply:
 - **Not eligible to apply:** All universities, whether nonprofit, public, or private, whether tax exempt under the Code or not.
 - **Not eligible to apply:** All state and local government agencies, whether tax exempt under the Code or not, including but not limited to agencies representing states, cities, towns, and villages; public health departments; school districts; and public schools.
 - **Not eligible to apply:** Private foundations or nonfunctionally integrated Type III supporting organizations, whether tax exempt under the Code or not.
- Also eligible are organizations that are fiscally sponsored by an eligible tax-exempt 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(4) organization. The fiscal sponsor is required to provide the total amount of the award to the organization that will perform the program activities as described in the application, less the fiscal sponsorship fee. The fiscal sponsorship fee is an allowable expense under the award. The Foundation may require additional documentation in those cases.
- Applicant organizations must be based in the U.S. or its territories.
- Applicants cannot be a current grantee of the Local Data for Equitable Communities program.
- Organizations may submit only one proposal.
- Applicant organizations may contract with and collaborate with any type of organization for their projects, including universities and government agencies. Only one eligible nonprofit organization may represent the collaboration as the applicant and be the Foundation's contact in the application process.
- The applicant organization must play a substantive role in the project.

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SELECTION CRITERIA

A team of reviewers from RWJF and the Urban Institute, and possibly individuals external to the team, will evaluate all proposals. Proposals will be first assessed for eligibility. Applicant proposals that are determined to be ineligible will not be reviewed or considered for funding. Reviewers will evaluate proposals that are determined to be eligible on the following selection criteria:

- **Locally Relevant Project Question:** Poses a clear question that addresses inequitable institutions, policies, and practices tied to the primary condition in the applicant's geographic focus area.
- **Connection to Opportunities for Action:** Communicates clearly that answering the project's primary question corresponds to new opportunities or momentum for local action related to the primary condition.
- **Activities, Methods, and Data Sources:** Describes project activities that will produce information to effectively answer the project's primary question and the reasoning for selecting the data sources and methods.
- **Community Participation:** Demonstrates that the people who are affected by the condition the project addresses have meaningful roles in activities, such as shaping data collection tools, collecting data, interpreting data, and communicating and using findings.
- **Feasible Timeline and Scope:** Provides a timeline and scope of work that is feasible for completion in nine months.
- **Relationships with Key Audiences:** Details clearly the project team's existing relationships with specific audiences, and how these audiences will use or act on the project's data analyses.
- **Impact and Change:** Identifies a significant local impact and/or change that will result from the project.
- **Project Team Capacity:** Demonstrates that the project team (the applicant organization and any partners) has the experience, expertise, and relationships to perform the activities proposed, including experience related to the primary condition and experience in collecting and analyzing data and engaging communities. Demonstrates that the applicant organization has a substantial role in leading the proposed activities.

In addition to assessing the eligible proposals against the Selection Criteria above, the characteristics of the overall portfolio, such as topic, method, and geography, will be considered when selecting the final grants. Every effort will be made to include applicants representing places large and small, urban and rural, and in different regions of the U.S. and its territories. RWJF will make the final decisions about the grantees selected.

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OPEN ACCESS

In order to ensure RWJF-supported research is made accessible to a wide and diverse audience, grantees that 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). See our [Open Access policy](#) for more information.

Publishing findings in peer-reviewed journals is not required. Applicants should only plan to produce a journal article if doing so helps them accomplish their local project goals.

HOW TO APPLY

Proposals for this solicitation must be submitted via the RWJF online system. Visit www.rwjf.org/cfp/DHC4 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. Applicants should not begin drafting their full proposals until they have familiarized themselves with the detailed instructions displayed in the online application system.

Proposals must include brief responses (within the designated character counts) to the following questions:

1. Select the primary condition of your community that best describes the motivation for and focus of your project. Response options are:
 - a. Built environment
 - b. Climate and environment
 - c. Community safety
 - d. Healthy food access
 - e. Housing
 - f. Transportation
2. Select a secondary condition of your community that describes the focus of your project, if relevant. *No preference is given for projects that have selected a secondary condition.* Response options are:
 - a. Built environment
 - b. Climate and environment
 - c. Community safety
 - d. Healthy food access
 - e. Housing
 - f. Transportation
 - g. Not Applicable
3. What is the geographic focus of the project activities and data analyses? Response options are:
 - a. Neighborhood(s) within a city or county (do not need to be contiguous)

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- b. City, county, or other municipality (must be contiguous if multiple are the focus of the project)
 - c. A single metropolitan area
 - d. A tribal area
4. What is the specific name(s) of the place(s) this application focuses on? For example, list the neighborhood name(s) or city name **(15–20 words = 200 characters)**.
 5. What is the primary question related to the condition in question 1 your project seeks to answer? How is this question related to transforming inequitable institutions, policies, and practices? **(250 words = 2,250 characters)**
 6. How is answering the project's primary question connected to a specific opportunity for local action? **(250 words = 2,250 characters)**
 7. Describe the project activities, including the methods and data sources most appropriate to answer the project's primary question. Describe what the project activities will produce—including products, services, events, or other forms of project documentation **(400 words = 3,600 characters)**.
 8. Describe how people who are affected by the primary condition referenced in question 1 will participate in shaping and carrying out project activities **(250 words = 2,250 characters)**.
 9. List key project milestones, activities, events, products and their timing, reflecting the nine-month grant period **(150 words = 1,350 characters)**.
 10. Describe your existing relationships with the key audiences of the data analyses and project outputs, and what actions you expect them to take. Your response should name specific organizations, agencies, and/or groups of people **(250 words = 2,250 characters)**.
 11. Describe the expected local impact or change that will result from this project **(100 words = 900 characters)**.
 12. Describe the experience, expertise, and relationships your organization has related to the primary condition and to performing the project activities. If your project team includes a partner(s) with needed capacities to implement the key activities, describe those for your partner(s) as well **(400 words = 3,600 characters)**.
 13. Name the key individuals on the project team (no more than 5) and describe their roles on the project and experience with the activities proposed. Include individuals from partners if they are relevant to demonstrating your project team's capacity **(400 words = 3,600 characters)**.

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Required Project Summary:

In the MyRWJF application system, applicants are required to submit a project summary (2,700 characters or approximately 300 words). The project summary should include the project's primary question, the condition the project is focused on, the name of the geographic focus area of the project, and a summary of the project's activities and expected impact.

Please direct inquiries to:

Leah Hendey and Kathryn Pettit

Email: localdata@urban.org

All applicants should log in to the MyRWJF 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.

PROGRAM DIRECTION

Direction and technical assistance for this program are provided by the Urban Institute, which serves as the national coordinating center. The Urban Institute is a nonprofit research organization that equips changemakers with evidence and solutions that turn research into action— so that we can build a world where every person and every community can thrive.

The Urban team also serves as the national partner in the National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership (NNIP), which helps local communities use data to shape strategies and investments so that all neighborhoods are places where people can thrive. Urban's experience with NNIP has inspired and informed the development of this grant program.

Contact information:

Local Data for Equitable Communities

Urban Institute

500 L'Enfant Plaza S.W.

Washington, D.C. 20024

Email: localdata@urban.org

Website: LocalDataforEquitableCommunities.org

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Responsible staff members at the national coordinating center are:

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

Responsible staff members at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation are:

- George Hobor, PhD, senior program officer
- Katie Corbit, MPH, program officer
- Christine Lee, program financial analyst

KEY DATES AND DEADLINES

- **January 27, 2026**
CFP launches.
- **February 5, 2026 (1 p.m. ET)**
Optional applicant webinar. Registration is required through [this link](#).
- **March 3, 2026 (3 p.m. ET)**
Deadline for receipt of full proposals.
- **May 11, 2026**
Awarded applicants are notified.
- **July 1, 2026**
Grant start date.

Applicant Deadline Policy

All proposals for this solicitation must be submitted via the RWJF online system. Visit www.rwjf.org/cfp/DHC4 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.

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.**

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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.”

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. If the deadline is extended for any reason, the extension will be posted on the funding opportunity page at www.rwjf.org. In addition, an email will be sent to all individuals that have started a proposal in the RWJF online system.

EVALUATION

An independent (third party) research group selected and funded by RWJF will conduct an evaluation of the program. As a condition of accepting RWJF funds, we may require grantees to participate in the evaluation. The focus of the evaluation will be on the overall Local Data for Equitable Communities grant program, not on any individual grantee.

MONITORING

RWJF monitors the grantees’ efforts and careful stewardship of grant funds to assure accountability. Grantees that are nonprofit organizations and recognized as tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code will be required to submit a final financial report at the end of their grant period. Grantees that are nonprofit organizations and recognized as tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code will be subject to additional reporting requirements, as the grants will be structured as [expenditure responsibility grants](#).

In collaboration with the Urban Institute team, grantees will be required to complete one deliverable—a one-to-two-page project profile that summarizes the grantee’s work, the data used, accomplishments and impact, any lessons learned, and next steps. Grantees will also be expected to participate in up to four phone calls with the Urban Institute to share insights and challenges during the grant period. Grantees may have additional optional Urban Institute calls or attend optional grantee webinars during the grant period.

RWJF EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION COMMITMENT

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation is taking bold leaps to transform health in our lifetime and pave the way, together, to a future where health is no longer a privilege, but a right. 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

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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

RWJF is a leading national philanthropy dedicated to taking bold leaps to transform health in our lifetime. To get there, we must work to dismantle structural racism and other barriers to health. Through funding, convening, advocacy, and evidence-building, we work side-by-side with communities, practitioners, and institutions to achieve health equity faster and pave the way, together, to a future where health is no longer a privilege, but a right. For more information, visit www.rwjf.org.

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

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