



Policies for Action

Policy and Law Research to Build a Culture of Health

2017 Call for Proposals: FAQ

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This is the second version of the 2017 FAQ. The only new content is on page 8.

About the Policies for Action Program

What is the Policies for Action Program?

[Policies for Action: Policy and Law Research to Build a Culture of Health](#) (P4A) was created in 2015 as one of three signature research programs of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF). P4A solicits, funds, supports and disseminates transdisciplinary research to help develop the evidence base on policies, laws, system interventions, and community dynamics that can promote the goals of RWJF’s [Culture of Health Action Framework](#).

P4A is eager to work with researchers and other experts from multiple fields, including but not limited to health care, mental and behavioral health, and public health; early childhood through post-secondary education and vocational training; labor market, employment, and job quality; housing and community development; community safety and criminal justice; planning and transportation, energy and the environment, and technology and communication.

We want to better understand how policies generated by these sectors impact population health, well-being, and equity. By *policies*, we mean not just laws and regulations at the local, state, and federal level, but also private sector practices, such as those affecting community development and employment policies that promote well-being. We are interested in evaluating the impacts of *established* laws, regulations, or policies; *new* policies and approaches; and *funding or other mechanisms* for implementing, enforcing, or sustaining them.

Our goal is to support innovative research that generates actionable evidence about how, and how well, laws and policies work—the data and information that can guide legislators and other policymakers, public agencies and private firms, educators, advocates, community groups, and individuals concerned with developing and implementing policies for community and population health.

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What are the Policies for Action national coordinating center, research hubs, and grantees?

RWJF's P4A program is administered by a [national coordinating center \(NCC\)](#) at the Urban Institute. The NCC currently works in collaboration with [five research hubs](#) and [six grantee teams](#). The collaboration among these institutions brings expertise and experience in conducting research that matters at the local, state, and national policy levels, and exemplifies our aim of supporting cross-sector and transdisciplinary research.

The **five research hubs**, at New York University, the University of Illinois at Chicago together with Washington University in St. Louis, the University of Michigan, Temple University, and the Urban Institute, conduct research within specific issue areas, such as housing, transportation, and financing. They also provide strategic support for the program and its grantees.

P4A also funds investigator-initiated research, and after its first call for proposals in 2016, currently supports **six grantees**, each focusing on a single research project. This work is being done through Brown University, Columbia University, Northwestern University, Providence Portland Medical Center, the University of Florida together with the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and the University of Southern California together with the University of Chicago.

Note that the 2017 call for proposals is to bring new grantees, not new research hubs, into the P4A program.

What is the Culture of Health Action Framework?

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) envisions an America where we all strive together to build a Culture of Health—a culture that enables all in our diverse society to lead healthier lives now and for generations to come. RWJF has developed an Action Framework to encompass the principles underlying the vision for a [Culture of Health](#). This Action Framework guides the Foundation's grant making and strategic collaborations as it calls for new norms and expectations, knowledge and capacities, and practices and behaviors. The Action Framework requires a commitment to equity and multi-cultural perspectives and forces hard choices about how to allocate limited resources in new ways. With the Action Framework as a compass, RWJF works alongside others to develop, implement and advance efforts to raise the health of everyone to the level that our great nation deserves.

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Areas of Interest

Are there specific questions or areas we should address in our proposal?

Submissions in any area of research that aligns with the program's broad objectives are welcome. P4A is eager to work with scholars and experts from many fields, including but not limited to health care, mental and behavioral health, and public health; early childhood through post-secondary education and vocational training; labor market, employment, and job quality; housing and community development; community safety and criminal justice; planning and transportation, energy and the environment, and technology and communication. See page 8 of this FAQ for information about funding set aside this year for research on the implementation and/or impact of policies relevant for early childhood or school environments that aim to support children's healthy weight and/or reduce childhood obesity.

We want to better understand how policies generated by these sectors impact population health, well-being, and equity. The goal of this call for proposals is to develop research that generates actionable evidence about how, and how well, laws and policies work—the data and information that can guide legislators and other policymakers, public agencies, private firms, educators, advocates, community groups, and individuals concerned with developing and implementing policies for community and population health.

For more information, we encourage all applicants to review the slides and recording from our **2/15/17 webinar**, the **Call for Proposals document**, the **Research Priorities document**, and the **RWJF Action Framework** (all available on [P4A's CFP webpage](#) and on the [RWJF website](#)), as well as the [projects](#) we've funded through our research hubs and grants.

What types of “policies” are of interest?

By policies, we mean not just laws and regulations at the local, state, and federal levels, but also private sector practices, such as those affecting community development and family and child well-being. Research may examine established policies; new policies or approaches; and/or funding or other mechanisms for implementing, enforcing, or sustaining them.

Are we expected to use the Culture of Health Action Framework as metrics in our research?

No, but we encourage applicants to consider the Action Framework as a guide for understanding how their work may fit into the Foundation's initiative to build a Culture of Health. The Culture of Health Action Framework is drawn from rigorous research and analysis of the systematic problems holding our country from a level of health it could achieve. It is intended to focus efforts and mobilize an integrated course of action.

Is RWJF receptive to research on policies/outcomes in other countries?

This CFP focuses on domestic policies. However, if there are international outcomes and policies that could be relevant to building a Culture of Health in the U.S., we will consider these on a case-by-case basis.

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Eligibility

What types of projects are eligible?

This CFP encourages collaborations, as well as innovative research designs that will inform policy action, innovation, or change. We strongly encourage applicants to propose cross-sector and interdisciplinary research teams.

The program seeks to fund studies that can be conducted expeditiously using valid and appropriate research designs and analytic strategies. The research approach and methods employed may be drawn from outside those commonly used in health or policy research. Methods and designs that have been successful are broad and include, but are not limited to, natural experiments, micro-simulation studies, randomized controlled trials, linkages and analyses of existing data sources, mixed methods analyses, and qualitative research approaches. New sources of data can also be proposed and mined; for example, health and social service records, other public records, restricted-access survey or administrative data, social media data, or marketing data.

Investigators may also consider proposing research that would serve as a continuation or supplement to other existing programs or research studies.

What types of organizations are eligible to apply?

As stated in the call for proposals, awards will be made to organizations, not to individuals. Applicant organizations must be 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 non-functionally integrated Type III supporting organizations. The Foundation may require additional documentation. Applicant organizations must be based in the United States or its territories.

To further clarify, in response to some questions received during our applicant webinar, the requirement is that applicant organizations be either 501(c)3 entities or public entities, which would not be 501(c)3s.

What kinds of investigators should apply?

We welcome applications from all investigators, and the following are especially encouraged to apply:

- Interdisciplinary or cross-sector research teams;
- Investigators from a variety of areas and disciplines, including but not limited to architecture, business, communications, community planning, economics, education, epidemiology, health policy, law, medicine, political science, public administration, public health, social work, sociology, urban planning and system engineering; and
- First-time applicants to RWJF.

Consistent with RWJF values, this program embraces diversity and inclusion across multiple dimensions, such as race, ethnicity, gender, disability, age, and socioeconomic status. We strongly encourage proposals in support of organizations that will help us expand the

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perspectives and experiences we bring to our work. We believe that the more we include diverse perspectives and experiences in our work, the more successful we will be as we strive together to build a Culture of Health, enabling all in our diverse society to lead healthier lives, now, and for generations to come.

May a proposal list multiple principal investigators?

Yes, there may be up to two Principal Investigators for a proposed research project. Both must be eligible to serve as Principal Investigators, according to the rules presented in the Call for Proposals. One must be called the “Principal Investigator” and must be from the lead organization, and the other must be called the “co-Principal Investigator” and must either be from the lead organization or from another eligible organization.

Only two CVs/biosketches may be submitted with the brief proposal, but if invited to the full proposal stage, applicants may provide CVs/biosketches for additional key team members.

Do the eligibility requirements for applicant organizations also apply to partners?

No, but if a subcontract or partner relationship is crucial to a project’s success, it can sometimes raise issues that require additional financial and/or legal due diligence, such as when a for-profit entity is a key partner on a project.

Can an organization be listed as a partner on more than one proposal?

Yes, partners can be listed on more than one brief proposal, as long as each brief proposal submitted is for a distinct project.

May a US-based organization subcontract with an international organization?

The primary applicant must be from an eligible organization (see above) based in the United States or its territories, and the results of the proposed study must further the Foundation's mission of improving the health and health care of all Americans. It is acceptable for investigators to be non-U.S. citizens, as long as the organization receiving the grant award is based in the United States. While applicants may submit proposals that include a proposed subcontract relationship with an organization that is based outside of the United States or its territories, such proposals will be subject to heightened scrutiny and a preference will be given to proposals that do not involve the payment of grant funds to organizations based outside of the United States or its territories.

Can an organization submit more than one brief proposal to this call for proposals?

Yes. Each brief proposal (also known as a letter of intent, or LOI) submitted must be for a distinct project.

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May I apply for this opportunity even if I am already funded by RWJF, have been an RWJF grantee in the past, or am also currently applying for other RWJF funding?

Yes, applicants who have been RWJF grantees, or who currently have other active RWJF grants, may apply, except that applicants who are current P4A research hubs and grantees are **not** eligible to apply for further funding.

Applicants may submit proposals that are also being considered by other RWJF programs. See the next question for relevant considerations regarding acceptance by other programs.

May I submit a proposal that is also being considered for funding by other organizations (government funding agency, foundation, etc.)?

Yes, applicants may submit a proposal that is being considered by other organizations. If your proposal is selected by RWJF and other funding organizations you will be required to report this to RWJF and adjust or expand the activities and budget as appropriate so there is no duplication of funding. You are allowed to expand your project's scope of work with funding from other sources, as long as you complete the project that RWJF funded you to conduct.

If I am not chosen for this funding opportunity, will I still be eligible for other RWJF grant opportunities?

Yes, interested applicants may apply for other RWJF grants in the future. You must submit to other opportunities in which you are interested; proposals declined by P4A will not be automatically considered by other programs.

How should I know whether to apply for this CFP or another opportunity?

To learn more about current and upcoming RWJF funding opportunities, and whether they might be of interest to you or your organization, visit the Foundation's [Funding Opportunities](#) page. You can also use RWJF's new [Program Finder](#) tool to identify programs that may align with your interests and goals.

Through its [Research, Evaluation, and Learning initiative](#), RWJF funds a range of types of research to expand our understanding of what will allow everyone in our nation to have an equitable opportunity to live the healthiest life possible, and which types of interventions may have greatest potential for impact. Its three signature research programs, including Policies for Action, work to identify root causes of inequitable health outcomes in America, and potential solutions which engage multiple sectors and disciplines.

The **Policies for Action (P4A)** program, based at the Urban Institute, investigates how policies, laws, regulatory changes, systems interventions, and community dynamics can be leveraged to support population health, well-being, and equity. P4A is building a robust, actionable evidence base on how these critical levers can advance a Culture of Health, with a goal of delivering these data and insights to key policymakers, community leaders, and other change agents.

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The **Evidence for Action (E4A)** program, based at the University of California, San Francisco, awards grants to encourage and support innovative, rigorous research on the impact of programs, policies, and partnerships on health and well-being, with a particular focus on research that will help advance health equity. It is the broadest of the three programs – it does not have a formal research agenda, and it funds across all areas of the Culture of Health Action Framework. Learn more about [E4A's rolling application process](#).

The **Systems for Action (S4A)** program, based at the University of Kentucky within the College of Public Health and the Gatton School of Business and Economics, conducts rigorous research on ways to align, coordinate, and integrate the many delivery and financing systems that promote health and well-being on a population-wide basis, including medical, public health, and social services and supports sectors. S4A's Call for Proposals will be released in Spring 2017. Learn about [future S4A funding opportunities](#).

For other upcoming funding opportunities that may be of interest to your organization please visit RWJF's [Funding Opportunities](#) page.

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Funding

How much funding is available per grant? What is the “set-aside” funding for? *(This is the only place where edits have been made over the initial FAQ posted 2/23/17.)*

Approximately \$2 million will be awarded through this CFP. Each grant will award up to \$250,000 (in total direct and indirect costs) for a maximum funding period of 24 months.

New in 2017, approximately \$500,000 of the \$2 million will be awarded for research on the implementation and/or impact of policies that target children **from birth through high school** – including early childhood (**ages 0 to 5 years**) or school environments (**pre-K through high school**) – aiming to support children’s healthy weight and/or reduce childhood obesity. Such policies could focus on children’s nutrition, physical activity, or other determinants of health that have important implications for children’s healthy weight. We are particularly interested in studies of new or novel policy approaches that have not been widely disseminated or studied to date.

Research on policies that impact pregnant women will also be considered if there is clear rationale in the proposal for how those policies could later affect children’s healthy weight.

Projects funded by this set-aside do not need to examine BMI or weight status as outcome variables. However, these proposals must provide clear rationale for why the selected outcome variables are important for impacting healthy weight and/or obesity among children.

The brief proposal template allows applicants to indicate interest in having their proposals considered for the children’s healthy weight set-aside funds. Indicating interest in the set-aside funds will not preclude applicants from being considered for the full call for proposals.

What are allowable uses of grant funding?

Grant funds may be used for project staff salaries, consultant fees, data collection and analysis, meetings, supplies, project-related travel, and other direct project expenses, including a limited amount of equipment essential to the project. In keeping with RWJF policy, grant funds may *not* be used to subsidize individuals for the costs of their health care, 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. RWJF budget preparation guidelines are available [here](#).

How should I estimate my budget?

A detailed budget is not necessary at the brief proposal stage (with the March 10 deadline) of the application process, but will be required of applicants invited to the full proposal stage.

You should request the amount of funding you will need to complete your proposed research project. In the case of multi-year proposals, budget requests should reflect the entire grant period (up to 24 months), as opposed to an annual amount. When entering the budget request at the brief proposal stage, round up to the nearest hundred as opposed to estimating to the

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exact dollar amount. Grantees should plan for travel to RWJF's annual Sharing Knowledge conference (continental U.S. location TBD) during each year the grant is active.

Does the \$250,000 maximum award include indirect costs?

Yes, a budget request should not exceed \$250,000, and should include all direct and indirect costs.

What are the direct and indirect rates?

Budget requests should be inclusive of both direct and indirect costs. The Foundation's approved rate for indirect costs is 12% of all project costs (Personnel, Other Direct Costs, and Purchased Services). However, if the Purchased Services category equals more than 33% of the total of Personnel, Other Direct Costs and Purchased Services, RWJF allows 12% indirect on Personnel and Other Direct Costs, and 4% on Purchased Services. Keep in mind that personnel funding that leaves the Lead Applicant Organization is considered "Purchased Services."

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Crafting and Submitting the Brief Proposal and Full Proposal

What elements should a successful brief proposal include?

All applicants must submit a **brief proposal**, also known as a letter of intent (LOI) that includes a project narrative describing the study (two pages maximum), a preliminary budget (see page 8 of this FAQ for more information), and CVs/biosketches for key personnel. Applicants must follow the instructions and use the templates provided in the RWJF online system. Visit www.rwjf.org/cfp/p4a2 and use the Apply Online link.

What is the application process?

There are two stages in the application process:

1. Brief proposal (due March 10, 2017, by 3 p.m. ET)
2. Full proposal (if invited, due June 16, 2017 by 3 p.m. ET)

How do I submit my brief proposal?

Applicants must submit a brief proposal through the RWJF Online System. Visit www.rwjf.org/cfp/p4a2 and use the Apply Online link.

If you have not already done so, you will be required to register at MyRWJF at <http://my.rwjf.org> before you begin the application process.

Are there formatting requirements for the brief proposal?

Yes. Please refer to the templates in the online application system. All brief proposal narratives should be no more than two pages, single-spaced, with Arial 11 point font.

Does the two page limit for the brief proposal project narrative need to include any references?

References are not required in the brief proposal narrative, but if provided, they must fit in the two page limit. In the full proposal stage, references can be submitted as an appendix, not counting against the full proposal narrative limit.

Should the brief proposal address dissemination and translation of the final research?

Policies for Action is interested in “actionable” research that can be used to impact a Culture of Health. To that end, we’re interested in understanding how your team will work to actively disseminate and translate your research for audiences who may use it. However, that does not need to be a focus in the brief proposal narrative. Full proposal applicants will be asked to address this.

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Who should I contact with questions regarding my brief proposal?

We encourage all applicants to review the slides and recording from our **2/15/17 webinar**, the **Call for Proposals document**, the **Research Priorities document**, and the **RWJF Action Framework** (all available on [P4A's CFP webpage](#) and on the [RWJF website](#)), as well as the [projects](#) we've funded through our research hubs and grants.

If you still have questions, you may contact the National Coordinating Center via email at policies4action@urban.org. Please note that in fairness to all applicants, we cannot give feedback on specific research ideas or proposals.

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Selection Process

Who will review my brief proposal?

Proposals will be reviewed by a committee composed of RWJF staff, leaders of the P4A national coordinating center (NCC) at the Urban Institute, the program's national advisory committee (NAC), and other expert reviewers as needed. Please see www.policiesforaction.org for more information about the NCC and NAC.

Final funding decisions are made by RWJF staff and leadership.

How will my brief proposal be evaluated?

Brief proposals will be evaluated on the basis of:

- Importance and policy relevance of the question(s) to be addressed;
- Alignment with the topics described in this solicitation and the Culture of Health Action Framework;
- Importance of the potential contribution to our understanding of a Culture of Health and how to achieve the intended outcome of improved population health, well-being, and equity; and
- Feasibility.

How will I know if I have been selected to move on to the full proposal phase?

Applicants will be notified in early May, 2017 regarding whether they have been invited to submit a full proposal. Full proposals will be due June 16, 2017.

What is the anticipated start date for the award?

Grants, including the children's healthy weight set-aside grants, will begin on October 1, 2017.

Will we receive specific comments on our proposal after a decision is made?

RWJF policy prevents us from providing detailed proactive feedback; however, applicants are welcome to contact the NCC with specific questions about the status of their proposal.

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