

Fresh Ideas: Improving the Health of Immigrant and Refugee Communities

Targeted Solicitation

SUMMARY

Fresh Ideas: Improving the Health of Immigrant and Refugee Communities was a targeted solicitation for proposals that aimed to give immigrants and refugees the tools and support they need to improve and maintain their own health. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) started Fresh Ideas in December 2006.

The Problem

More than 30 million immigrants and refugees live in the United States. They often have high rates of chronic health problems due, at least in part, to difficulties they have getting appropriate social and health services.

Language barriers, lack of education and cultural differences sometimes make it harder for immigrants and refugees to obtain culturally appropriate services, outreach or other information that could help them live healthier lives.

The Solicitation

Funded through RWJF's Vulnerable Populations Portfolio, *Fresh Ideas* sought proposals for new community-based approaches to health and health care problems faced by immigrants and refugees. Funded projects addressed:

- How health and social systems can accommodate the unique needs of different and changing immigrant and refugee populations
- How communities can engage in helping immigrants and refugees maintain and improve their health
- What strategies can overcome barriers that immigrants and refugees face when trying to access health and social services
- Ways for improving the health of new residents by linking how social factors language skills, significant cultural differences, poor education and poverty—affect health outcomes

Helping new populations integrate into their communities

Through *Fresh Ideas*, RWJF sought to support organizations outside the formal network of health care providers, such as grassroots organizations, faith-based organizations and advocacy organizations (rather than traditional providers, such as hospitals and medical clinics).

Starting in 2007, RWJF funded nine projects with grants up to \$300,000 for up to three years. Grants could not exceed 50 percent of the organization's budgets.

Program Results reports are being written on a selection of the nine projects and are linked to this report through the Project List below.

PROJECT LIST

- Improving health for low English proficiency patients through health literacy training
 Lincoln Literacy Council (Lincoln, Neb.) (ID# 057366)
- Community solutions to improving the health of employed immigrants in Columbus,
 Ohio

Access HealthColumbus (Columbus, Ohio) (ID# 062420)

 Community and faith-based approach to improving social services in immigrantdense rural communities in the Midwest

Center for New Community (Chicago, Ill.) (ID# 058263)