

Executive Summary

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Local Funding Partnerships

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Local Funding Partnerships is a national program that provides matching grants for innovative community-based projects aimed at improving the health and health care of underserved and vulnerable populations.

Since 1988, the program has awarded 369 grants in collaboration with 1,488 local funding partners for projects that implemented a range of health services and interventions. In 2009, the program added a special solicitation, *Peaceful Pathways: Reducing Exposure to Violence*, to attract smaller, under-resourced, diversity-focused funders and local programs

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) Board of Trustees has authorized \$146.2 million for *Local Funding Partnerships* from its inception through 2014, when it will end.

Read the full report. Learn more about the program here.

CONTEXT

Since its launch as a national philanthropy in 1972, RWJF has promoted collaborations with local funders. Staff realized that these collaborations could yield a larger return on investment and identify local initiatives that could advance the Foundation's mission to improve health and health care for all Americans.

Starting with programs to stimulate support for new community health centers, over time the Foundation refined and expanded its efforts with local grantmakers to include issues such as assuring access to health care, improving care for people with chronic conditions, and reducing the harm caused by substance abuse.

In 2003, under the leadership of its new president, Risa Lavizzo-Mourey, MD, MBA, the Foundation restructured its *Local Funding Partnership* investments to target a set of priorities, including attention to issues relevant to vulnerable populations, such as child trauma, violence, and mental health.

THE PROGRAM

Local Funding Partnerships has taken a bottom-up approach—considering only innovative community projects that were nominated by a local grantmaker acting in concert with other local funders. Community funders were required to provide at least one dollar of support for every dollar of RWJF grant money.

The core component of *Local Funding Partnerships* is an annual awards program. From 1988 through 2011, RWJF awarded about 10 to 12 grants annually. The grants ranged from \$200,000 to \$500,000 and ran for three or four years.

In addition, in 2009, *Local Funding Partnerships* launched a special solicitation— *Peaceful Pathways: Reducing Exposure to Violence*—targeting communities of color and people isolated because of their gender, sexual orientation, race, tribe, ethnic group, or remote location.

National program staff provides assistance to grant recipients via annual meetings, special issue meetings, webinars, and by connecting them with other RWJF programs.

OVERALL PROGRAM RESULTS

From 1988 through September 2011, when grantmaking ended, RWJF awarded 369 program grants in collaboration with 1,488 community foundations, corporate grantmakers, and other local funding partners.

- More than \$129 million supported projects in 49 states; Washington, D.C.; and Puerto Rico—\$127 million through the annual awards program and \$2.76 million through Peaceful Pathways.
- Most projects sustained themselves over time. Two evaluations found that four out of five funded projects lasted at least one year after their RWJF grant ended.
- Several projects received further grant support from RWJF or became prototypes for national programs. Several others have been replicated nationally or statewide through other funding sources.

AFTERWARD

The final grants made under *Local Funding Partnerships* were in 2011. National program staff is continuing to support projects that are still active. Staff is also working to develop and disseminate case studies and lessons learned over the 25 years of the program.

Program Management

National Program Office: Health Research and Educational Trust of New Jersey

Program Director: Pauline M. Seitz