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RWJF Guidelines for Funding and Releasing Polls and Surveys[i]

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Requirements for RWJF Release of Poll and Survey Data:

- Compliance with standards for polls and surveys and appropriate disclosure requirements described below.
- Completion of two forms describing (1) survey design and (2) survey results.
    - **Note: Links to both forms and additional instructions will be emailed to the project director 30 days after the grant award date.**
- Grantees should complete the form describing their survey design at least 30 days before their survey enters the field: http://www.rwjf.org/content/rwjf/en/surveyguidelines

Use of the terms "poll" or "survey" should be used only to describe work that has met the standards below. Those studies that do not meet these standards cannot be described as RWJF-funded polls or surveys. Focus groups and qualitative research are NOT considered polls or surveys, and should not be presented as such. Please see language below for additional information.

Standards for Polls and Surveys:

To provide reliable and objective information that meets the highest standards for scientific integrity and adheres to our principles, RWJF-funded polls and surveys must conform to the Code of Professional Ethics and Practices of the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR). Consistent with the AAPOR Code, RWJF-funded polls and surveys should:

- Identify the name(s) of the lead researcher(s), their organizational affiliation(s), and all sponsors/funders of the research.
- Employ research tools and methods suitable for the topics and questions being investigated.
- Fully describe the survey methodology used to conduct the research in sufficient detail to allow others to understand and critique the research (see disclosure requirements below).

Disclosure Requirements for Polls and Surveys:

When releasing results of RWJF-funded polls or surveys, researchers are required to disclose information regarding the research methodology. Specifically, disclosure information must include (either in the release or through easy access to an appendix or full methodology report):

- Name of the sponsor/funder of the survey and the organization that conducted the data collection.
- Questionnaire or survey tool (at minimum, question wording for the results being released).
- Identification of the population under study.
- Description of the sample used including: type of sample (probability or non-probability), sample frame used, sample selection criteria, eligibility or screening requirements, total sample size and subgroup sample sizes (if appropriate).

- Method, dates, and location of data collection.
- Response rate and indication of which AAPOR response rate calculation is used for probability samples or participation rate for non-probability samples.
- Estimated sampling error (for probability samples).
- Description of any post-data collection weighting that was done including source of weighting parameters and variables used for weighting.
- Contact information for readers, in case there are additional methodological questions.

Disclosure requirements for opt-in surveys and polls (non-probability based, online and other modes):

AAPOR recommends that researchers fully disclose the methods through which respondents were selected and clearly indicate that respondents self-selected into the sample and were not randomly selected from the full population of interest. AAPOR recommends the following wording for use in online and other surveys conducted among self-selected individuals:

"Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have [volunteered to participate/registered to participate in (company name) online surveys and polls]. The data [have been/have not been] weighted to reflect the demographic composition of [target population]. Because the sample is based on those who initially self-selected for participation [in the panel] rather than a probability sample, no estimates of sampling error can be calculated. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to multiple sources of error, including but not limited to sampling error, coverage error, and measurement error."

Disclosure requirements for focus groups/qualitative research:

RWJF does not require specific standards of adherence for qualitative research; however the following suggestions are meant to guide current practice.

Qualitative research can be conducted in a wide variety of ways. When reporting results of qualitative research, the researcher should disclose the following information:

- Clearly indicate that the research is qualitative in nature and therefore results are not representative of any larger population of interest.
- Specify what type of research was done (e.g., focus groups, in-depth interviews via phone or in-person, cognitive interviews).
- Indicate when and where the research was conducted.
- Indicate who sponsored/funded/conducted the research.
- Indicate the number of interviews completed or number of participants.
- Describe how participants were selected to participate.

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[i]These standards are consistent with our Guiding Principles and are based on the AAPOR standards, the Polling Standards of the *New York Times* and *ABC News*' Polling Methodology and Standards updated in 2010, *http://www.aapor.org/Standards_and_Ethics.htm*.