



Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Building Healthy Teen Relationships



2008 Call for Proposals

Brief Proposal Deadline

April 16, 2008

Program Overview

(Please refer to specific sections for complete detail.)

Purpose

Preventing intimate partner violence (IPV) begins with ensuring that young people's first relationships are healthy ones. IPV is an important determinant of health and well-being and often begins in adolescence with conflict in relationships. The *Building Healthy Teen Relationships* program will support the creation and evaluation of comprehensive community-based models of prevention that aim to decrease relationship violence and increase positive, protective relationship skills.

Eligibility Criteria (page 9)

Applicant organizations must be either public entities, such as a unit or department of government or school board or nonprofit organizations that are tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Private foundations as defined under Section 509(a) are not eligible to apply.

Selection Criteria (page 11)

Complete selection criteria can be found on page 11.

Total Awards

- Up to eight grants will be awarded for a period of up to 48 months.
- Each grant award will be up to \$250,000 per year, with a maximum award of \$1 million for the full grant period.

Key Dates and Deadlines

- **March 3 (2:30 p.m. ET)** and **March 12, 2008 (11:30 a.m. ET)**—Optional Web conference calls for potential applicants.
- **March 17, 2008**—Deadline for online registration.
- **April 16, 2008 (3 p.m. ET)**—Deadline for receipt of brief proposals submitted online.
- **May 20, 2008**—Applicants notified if invited to submit full proposals.
- **July 8, 2008 (3 p.m. ET)**—Deadline for receipt of full proposals.
- **August 4–29, 2008**—Site visits to finalists.
- **November 15, 2008**—Notification of awards and start of grants.

How to Apply (page 14)

This program only accepts proposals submitted through the RWJF Grantmaking Online system. For information on how to prepare and submit your proposal, please visit the program's Web site:

www.buildinghealthyteenrelationships.org

Background

Intimate partner violence (IPV), often begins in adolescence with conflict in relationships.¹ While significant progress has been made in bringing attention to IPV among adults, efforts to address its precursors among youth have been limited. National surveys and individual studies have documented the high prevalence of dating violence and sexual assault among teens.

- According to the national Youth Risk Behavior Survey, relationship violence among youth is a serious public health problem. Nearly one-tenth (8.9 percent) of high-school students have been physically harmed by a dating partner in the past 12 months and the rates have not declined over the past decade. Independent studies report higher prevalence estimates, ranging from 26 percent to 46 percent for physical violence by a dating partner. Two-thirds to three-quarters of high-school students reported verbal and psychological aggression in dating relationships. People ages 12 to 24 years account for half of all reported sexual assault in the United States; adolescents between the ages of 12 and 17 account for one in five sexual assault reports nationally. Girls are more likely to be sexually victimized by their partners than boys.
- Factors that increase the risk of dating violence victimization include prior exposure to violence as a child, including inter-parental violence; feelings of low self-esteem; sadness or hopelessness; depression; alcohol consumption; and experiences of harassment by peers. Pregnant and parenting teens are at particularly high risk of violence by an intimate partner with one out of five teens disclosing victimization at three months postpartum. In addition, nearly one out of four adolescents with same-sex romantic or sexual partners has experienced some form of dating violence.

¹ The term "intimate partner violence" describes physical, sexual, psychological and verbal harm, including stalking, by a partner or spouse. IPV includes violence between two persons in a current or former intimate relationship who do not necessarily live in the same household. IPV can occur among heterosexual or same-sex couples.

- The physical, developmental and neurobiological changes occurring at adolescence make teens especially vulnerable to the well-documented effects of victimization including eating disorders, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, self-harm and suicidal behavior. Dating violence and forced sex are also highly correlated with adolescent risk behaviors that continue to take a tremendous toll on American youth. Teens who are victimized by a dating partner are more likely to smoke, binge drink, use drugs and have eating disorders.
- At the very time that teens are beginning to explore relationships and sexual identity, the risk of dating violence is also emerging. The age at which puberty begins has decreased significantly in the United States, and consequently girls are making decisions about sexual activity at an earlier age. Most youth consider having their first boyfriend or girlfriend between the ages of 9 and 12. These changes are likely to increase lifetime exposure to dating and the risk of violence in a dating relationship.

Promising Prevention Strategies Build Protective Factors and Resiliency

Recent prevention efforts provide direction for testing coordinated, comprehensive community approaches to prevent relationship violence among youth. Some communities have employed promising prevention strategies at the individual, relational, community and policy levels to reinforce positive norms and behaviors. *Building Healthy Teen Relationships* is based on this emergence of such promising approaches to help communities implement a comprehensive model of prevention. This program will build on core principles of positive youth development: resiliency, connectedness and engagement. Effective prevention efforts need to be developmentally, culturally and gender appropriate for teens while keeping pace with major shifts in how American youth spend their time. Therefore, a fundamental element of the initiative is the expectation that youth will be central leaders in designing and implementing the funded site's

activities. While the focus of this initiative is on 10- to 14-year-olds, funded sites will need to involve 15- to 18-year-olds as mentors using strategies that capitalize on their energy and leadership.

This program is an initiative of the Vulnerable Populations Portfolio, which focuses on supporting efforts at the intersection of health and social factors. Preventing violence is a high priority, as is addressing upstream factors that manifest themselves in harmful consequences later in life. By focusing on the development of healthy and safe relationships among adolescents, we believe that we can reduce the cycle of violence and the incidence of intimate partner violence later in life.

The Program

Building Healthy Teen Relationships will support the creation and evaluation of comprehensive community-based models of prevention that aim to decrease relationship violence and increase positive, protective relationship skills. Up to eight geographically and ethnically diverse sites will receive up to \$250,000 per year for up to 48 months.

Sites will be required to design and implement a prevention model that builds on demonstrated approaches to preventing relationship violence across four components discussed below. The first phase of this four-year initiative will be a six-month planning period. During this phase, planning grants of up to \$125,000 each will be awarded to help sites undertake deeper level assessments of the nature of the dating violence problem in their community. During the planning phase grantees will be required to complete an evaluation of organizational assets and levers for change as well as specific challenges. At the completion of this planning phase, each of the eight sites will be eligible for the second phase of three-and-a-half years of implementation funding provided that they meet established benchmarks.

Implementation grants will be for \$125,000 for the remaining six months of the first year of this initiative and up to \$250,000 per year for the following three years.

In collaboration with the national program office (NPO), sites will be expected to develop and implement a prevention model that brings together the following four components. The NPO, in collaboration with the national evaluation team for this initiative, will create a menu of best practices across each of these four areas and work with the selected sites to refine and tailor best practices to their local needs during the planning period. The NPO will facilitate a collaborative process during the planning phase in which ideas and models can be discussed and enriched by the experiences and diversity of the multiple sites. This will build a common platform for evaluation of the baseline indicators for behavioral and attitudinal change.

Sites will be required to design and implement a prevention model that builds on demonstrated approaches to preventing relationship violence across the following four components:

1. Educate and engage youth in schools and out of school settings.

Each site will be required to implement a healthy relationship program targeting middle-school-aged youth in school or out-of-school settings. A growing number of school and community-based programs promote healthy relationship development among adolescents, focusing on concepts such as conflict resolution, communication skills, healthy decision-making, equitable gender roles and self confidence. The most promising of these programs are based on social cognitive frameworks (and curriculum) that are skills-based and experiential. As an essential element of this project, sites will need to engage older teens (ages 15 to 18) as mentors and trainers for their younger peers.

2. Educate and engage teen influencers such as parents, teachers and other mentors.

Sites will be expected to implement activities to educate and engage teen influencers (peers and adults) to help them gain the skills to support the creation of safe and respectful youth relationships; increase public attention to this issue; and incorporate healthy relationship concepts into their own relationships. Examples of promising approaches include: working with teachers and coaches to incorporate healthy relationship skill building into class curricula and sports programs; integrating relationship violence prevention into parenting classes and in social settings where parents congregate (religious institutions, sports functions, online parenting communities); and engaging teens as mentors and mediators to support healthy relationships.

3. Change policy and environmental factors.

Sites will be required to implement changes in policy and practice within school, other settings that serve youth and within the larger community. Creating safe and supportive environments in which youth can have healthy relationships will require altering community-level environmental factors that affect teen dating and sexual violence. For example, organizational settings, such as schools and after-school programs, are critical levers for reinforcing positive messages while enforcing explicit expectations and codes of conduct that promote healthy relationships. Other sites such as teen counseling services, reproductive health settings and other youth-serving organizations can integrate messages about healthy relationships and IPV prevention into protocols and practices.

4. Implement communications strategies to promote positive social norms.

Site-led communications strategies will connect to and build upon a larger national communications strategy for the initiative. Selected sites will

participate with the NPO in the development of initiative-wide social marketing strategies. Because media and technology shape this generation's perceptions and understanding of social norms more than any other previous generation, a leading component of the initiative will be a public education campaign on youth dating violence prevention. A wide range of media and technology will be utilized to deliver messages about violence prevention and healthy relationships, including: phone and text messaging; social media sites such as *MySpace.com*,[®] *Facebook*, *YouTube*[™] and *Second Life*,[®] and local and national youth publications and magazines. Sites will be required to implement a shared communications strategy to reinforce positive messages about healthy relationships.

A note about teens in unhealthy or abusive relationships.

In every community, there is a subset of teens who are at higher risk for unhealthy and abusive relationships or who are already involved in dangerous situations. Sites will need to take this into account in the planning and implementation phases of the program. While Building Healthy Teen Relationships is not an intervention program, new attention on dating and sexual violence prevention may heighten anxiety for some youth and increase identification of youth who are exposed to IPV at home and/or are direct victims of child abuse, sexual abuse or dating violence. Sites will need to address these needs as they arise and work with relevant partners to identify risk and provide basic information, protection and referrals to youth who are in need of necessary services.

Eligibility Criteria

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation seeks to identify a diverse group of urban, rural and suburban communities to participate in this initiative.

Partnerships

Funded projects must consist of a partnership comprised of one lead agency along with one to three partnering organizations that have distinct roles in implementing the components of the initiative. The organizations making up the core partnership must have a combined expertise and demonstrated capacity in all four areas:

1. Ability to mobilize and develop leadership among young people.
2. Knowledge and capacity to address and prevent dating and sexual violence.
3. Knowledge and capacity to reinforce positive social norms and address policy in the community.
4. Demonstration of work in at least one of the four components and dedicated resources in place to expand that work.

Partnerships must include youth members who will help lead the design and implementation of the proposed project.

Depending on the local environment and focus of each component, partnerships should include schools, domestic violence or sexual assault agencies, youth-serving organizations, community-based groups serving specific ethnic populations, health clinics or public health departments.

Funded sites will be located within the geographic boundaries of the United States or its territories.

Partnerships must designate one entity to serve as the initiative's lead agency. The lead agency (i.e., applicant organization) will submit the grant proposal and be responsible for complying with

program and financial reporting obligations under the grant initiative. Written letters of support from partner organizations will confirm these arrangements. All applicants will be required to provide evidence of partnerships between the lead agency and other partners, such as information about past joint endeavors.

Population Parameters

Each applicant must have a base population of at least 2,000 youth between the ages of 10 to 14 in their community. Smaller communities are encouraged to partner with neighboring communities to reach this number. Large suburban or urban areas are encouraged to designate distinct mid-size portions of their community as the target of this initiative. Priority should be given to lower-income communities with high rates of violence.

Applicant Requirements

Applicants:

- must either be a tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code or a tribal group recognized by the U.S. federal government or; a public entity such as a unit of government or school board;
- cannot be a private foundation as defined under Section 509(a) of the Internal Revenue Code; and
- must show a commitment of resources and capacity to continue work beyond the grant period.

Selection Criteria

Preference will be given to sites that demonstrate specific examples of the following strengths within their proposed partnership:

1. Overall:

- Having experience leading successful collaborative ventures among community-based organizations, government, business and other decision-makers.
- Demonstrated results that rely on creativity and leadership to address a social issue.
- Proven track record of engaging youth as leaders.
- Clear evidence of youth involvement in developing proposal and plans for continued involvement in leading the project.
- Strong community presence of organizational structures that offer support and resources for youth in need of dating and sexual violence services.

2. Leadership:

- Strong leadership within the school district.
- Strong policy-maker presence within the community.
- Demonstrated history of leadership in advocating for the needs of youth and victims of domestic or sexual violence.
- Participation in previous successful collaborative ventures among diverse partners in which leadership is encouraged and shared across programs and systems.
- History of creating and implementing innovative initiatives.
- Demonstrated success in policy advocacy and grassroots organizing to promote social change.
- Experience in social marketing.

3. Program supports:

- History of efforts to improve environments that are developmentally appropriate, gender specific and culturally relevant for the populations being served.
- Capacity for project oversight, fiscal stewardship, data collection and management.
- Connection to services for youth exposed to (experiencing) violence.

4. Community ownership and engagement:
- Endorsement and commitment to the initiative by a diverse group of influential community leaders positioned to develop the support necessary for the success of the project.
 - A demonstrated community support for youth and commitment to creative solutions for youth concerns.
 - A potential for strong involvement by adult and youth community members in the development of a prevention initiative, policy solutions and creative programming possibilities.

Staff roles and responsibilities

Each site will establish a management team with vision and creativity that has the leadership to develop a teen dating and sexual violence prevention program. The project team should include a project director, a full-time project administrator and a part-to full-time administrative assistant.

Evaluation and Monitoring

RWJF will fund an independent research group to conduct a national evaluation of Building Healthy Teen Relationships that will run concurrently with the program. This national evaluation team will work closely with the NPO in creating the menu of promising practices from which community partnerships will choose. The evaluation team also will focus on key questions regarding the program's impact and effectiveness.

As a condition of accepting RWJF funds, grantees will be required to participate in the evaluation. The evaluation team will work closely with grantees, particularly during the initial planning phase of this program, to develop and identify data collection processes that are feasible for grantee sites to implement. During the planning phase, we also expect the evaluation team to meet with each site to best understand each grantee's capacity to gather and provide data for this evaluation.

Grantees are expected to meet RWJF and NPO requirements for the submission of narrative and financial reports, as well as periodic information needed for overall project performance monitoring and management. We may ask project directors to attend periodic meetings or participate in calls to give progress reports on their grants. At the close of each grant, the lead agency is expected to provide a written report on the project and its findings suitable for wide dissemination.

Use of Grant Funds

Grant funds may be used for project staff salaries, youth stipends, consultant fees, including communications consultants, data collection and analysis, meetings, supplies, project-related non-luxury 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, or as a substitute for funds currently being used to support similar activities.

How to Apply

There are three stages in the competitive proposal process: (1) online registration; (2) submission of a brief proposal that describes the project; and, *if invited*, (3) submission of a full proposal, line-item budget and budget narrative. Applicant Web conference calls will be held on March 3 and March 12, 2008 to answer questions about the call for proposals as well as the proposal and selection process. Participation in these calls is strongly encouraged. Please visit the program's Web site for additional details and to register for the Web conference calls (www.buildinghealthyteenrelationships.org). Ample time will be provided for questions and answers through the online chat feature of the Web call.

Proposals for this program must only be submitted only through the RWJF Grantmaking Online system at <http://grantmaking.rwjf.org/ipv>. All applicants should log into the system and familiarize themselves with online submission requirements well before the final submission deadline. Program staff may not be able to assist all applicants in the final 24 hours before the submission deadline(s). In fairness to all applicants the program will not accept late or incomplete proposals.

Stage 1: Online Registration

Those wishing to apply for funds under this program must register online at <http://grantmaking.rwjf.org/ipv> by March 17, 2008. Registration does not obligate registrants to apply.

Stage 2: Brief Proposals

By April 16, 2008 (3 p.m. ET) applicants must submit a brief proposal online that describes the project. The brief proposal should include:

- a description of the lead agency and partnership;
- the proposed project's principal objectives;
- the target population, including an estimate of the number of youth to be served;
- the base population of youth in your community ages 10 to 14;

- the applicant's experience and demonstrated commitment to the following:
 1. Leadership in advocating for the needs of youth.
 2. Successful collaborative ventures between the lead agency and partners and other relevant community organizations, policy-makers and schools.
 3. History of efforts to address a social problem, past creativity in taking the issue on and developing strategies that are developmentally appropriate, gender specific and culturally relevant.
 4. Successful implementation of social marketing or public education campaigns.
- the current services available for youth in your community that address dating and sexual violence;
- how prevention efforts might be sustained over time and willingness to commit funding for prevention efforts, make policy changes and carry out social marketing strategies; and
- a one-page preliminary budget.

Stage 3: Full Proposals

By May 20, 2008 select applicants will be invited by letter or e-mail to submit full proposals. At the full proposal stage, we will seek additional information regarding measurable objectives, plans for evaluation, anticipated impact, proposed budget and expectations for long-term financial and project sustainability. Instructions for submitting full proposals will be included with the invitation and will be part of the online process. Full proposals must be submitted only through the RWJF Grantmaking Online system at <http://grantmaking.rwjf.org/ipv>.

All inquiries regarding the program, selection criteria or application requirements should be directed to the NPO:

Debbie Lee, *deputy director*
Building Healthy Teen Relationships
Family Violence Prevention Fund
383 Rhode Island Street, Suite 304
San Francisco, CA 94103-5133
Phone: (415) 252-8900 ext. 11
E-mail: debbie@endabuse.org

This program has a national advisory committee that makes recommendations about grants to Foundation staff. RWJF will make all final grant decisions. RWJF does not provide individual critiques of proposals submitted.

Pre-application workshop

Workshops to inform potential applicants about the program will be held by Web conference calls on March 3 and March 12, 2008. Participation at either of these workshops is optional but highly encouraged. Please contact the NPO as soon as possible if you intend to participate in the Pre-application Workshop, as space is limited and a large turnout is anticipated. For information on registering for the workshop, contact Vedalyn DeGuzman at the national program office at (415) 252-8900 ext. 15 or visit the Web site at www.buildinghealthyteenrelationships.org.

All applicants are encouraged to visit the Web site or contact the NPO for answers to both general and specific questions on how to apply.

Program Direction

Direction and technical assistance for this program are provided by the Family Violence Prevention Fund, which serves as the national program office located at:

Family Violence Prevention Fund
383 Rhode Island Street, Suite 304
San Francisco, CA 94103
Phone: (415) 252-8900
Web site: www.endabuse.org

Responsible staff members at the NPO are:

- Esta Soler, *director*
- Debbie Lee, *deputy director*

Responsible staff members at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation are:

- Kristin Schubert, M.P.H., *program officer*
- James Marks, M.D., M.P.H., *senior vice president and director, Health Group*
- Jane Isaacs Lowe, Ph.D., *senior program officer*
- Marianna Sachse, M.P.H., M.S.W., *program associate*
- Ann Christiano, M.P.A.P., *senior communications officer*
- Elaine Cassidy, Ph.D., *program officer, Research and Evaluation*
- Mary Quinn, *grants administrator*

About the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation focuses on the pressing health and health care issues facing our country. As the nation's largest philanthropy devoted exclusively to improving the health and health care of all Americans, we work with a diverse group of organizations and individuals to identify solutions and achieve comprehensive, meaningful and timely change.

For more than 35 years we've brought experience, commitment and a rigorous, balanced approach to the problems that affect the health and health care of those we serve. When it comes to helping Americans lead healthier lives and get the care they need, we expect to make a difference in your lifetime.

For more information visit www.rwjf.org.

Sign up to receive e-mail alerts on upcoming calls for proposals at www.rwjf.org/services.



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Foundation

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