



Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Communities Creating Healthy Environments

Improving Access to Healthy Foods and
Safe Places to Play in Communities of Color



2009 Call for Proposals

Brief Proposal Deadline

February 26, 2009

Program Overview

(Please refer to specific sections for complete detail.)

Purpose

Communities Creating Healthy Environments is a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) that aims to prevent childhood obesity by increasing access to healthy foods and safe places to play in communities of color. The program will advance RWJF's efforts to reverse the childhood obesity epidemic by 2015 by supporting diverse, community-based organizations and federally chartered tribal nations in the development and implementation of effective, culturally competent policy initiatives to address childhood obesity at the local level. Through this call for proposals, RWJF will award grants for policy advocacy to improve food and recreation environments in up to 10 communities at high risk for obesity.

Eligibility Criteria (page 6)

Complete eligibility criteria can be found on page 6.

Eligible applicants must have a track record of at least two years of successful community organizing and policy advocacy to address health-related problems in communities of color. Both the leadership and membership of any applicant organization should reflect the communities they seek to serve. Given the program's focus on young people, youth-led organizing groups and community-based groups with youth-organizing components are encouraged to apply. Applicants must secure a cash match of at least 10 percent of RWJF funding. Organizations that currently receive funding from an industry, corporation, business or other entity or subsidiary of such an entity that markets low-nutrition food and/or beverage products to youth are not eligible to apply.

Selection Criteria (page 8)

Proposals will be evaluated based on the selection criteria listed on page 8.

Total Awards

- A total of up to \$2.5 million will be awarded in this round of funding for policy advocacy grants in up to 10 communities nationwide.
- Awards are for a total of up to \$250,000 per site over a three-year period.

Key Dates and Deadlines

- **January 20 through February 6, 2009**—Optional regional information sessions.
- **February 5, 2009 (11 a.m. ET)**—Optional Web conference for potential applicants.
- **February 26, 2009 (3 p.m. ET)**—Deadline for receipt of brief proposals.
- **April 8, 2009**—Applicants notified if invited to submit full proposals.
- **May 12, 2009 (3 p.m. ET)**—Deadline for receipt of full proposals.
- **October 1, 2009**—Funding initiated.

How to Apply (page 10)

Proposals must be submitted through the RWJF Grantmaking Online system.

For more information, please contact:

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www.ccheonline.org

Cover Photo: Tyrone Turner

Background

Today, nearly one-third of all U.S. children and adolescents are either overweight or obese,¹ putting them at higher risk for heart disease, type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, stroke, asthma and certain types of cancer.² The childhood obesity epidemic cuts across all categories of race, ethnicity, family income and locale, but some populations are at higher risk than others—particularly African-American, Latino, Native American/Alaska Native and a significant proportion of Asian and Pacific Islander communities.

For example, Mexican-American children are more likely to be obese or overweight than white and African-American children. Thirty-eight percent of Mexican-American children are obese or overweight, while 34.9 percent of African-American and 30.7 percent of white children are obese or overweight.³ Examining the prevalence data by gender and race further highlights the disproportionate impact the epidemic has on certain populations. Among Mexican-American boys, 40.8 percent are obese or overweight, while 30.8 percent of African-American and 31.9 percent of white boys are obese or overweight. Among African-American girls, 39.2 percent are obese or overweight, compared with 35 percent of Mexican-American girls and 29.5 percent of white girls.⁴

The Institute of Medicine concludes that the epidemic of childhood obesity facing our nation is the result of cumulative changes in our communities that have undermined our children's ability to eat well and be physically active. The challenges are often greater in communities of color, which typically have less access to healthy, affordable foods and safe places for children and families to play and exercise.

1 Ogden C, Carroll M and Flegal K. "High Body Mass Index for Age among U.S. Children and Adolescents, 2003–2006." *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 299(20):2401–2405, May 2008.

2 Institute of Medicine, Committee on Prevention of Obesity in Children and Youth, Food and Nutrition Board, et al. *Preventing Childhood Obesity: Health in the Balance*. Washington, DC: National Academies Press, 2005.

3 Ogden et al.

4 Ogden et al.

As a result, childhood obesity in these communities far outpaces national rates, making it all the more vital that we engage them in finding solutions to the challenges they face. Studies of other prevention initiatives have shown that increased capacity at the local level has resulted in reduced risks, increased public awareness, and strengthened social and political infrastructures for these initiatives. The purpose of this program is to engage communities of color in changing policies at the community level by building on existing capacity and social networks.

The Program

Communities Creating Healthy Environments (CCHE) is a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) that aims to prevent childhood obesity by increasing access to healthy foods and safe places to play in communities of color. The program will advance RWJF's efforts to reverse the childhood obesity epidemic by 2015 by supporting diverse, community-based organizations and federally chartered tribal nations in the development and implementation of effective, culturally competent policy initiatives to address childhood obesity at the local level.

CCHE focuses on reaching children at greatest risk for obesity: African-American, Latino, Native American, Asian American and Pacific Islander children who have limited access to healthy foods and safe recreation where they live and/or attend school or care institutions. Through this program, RWJF will:

- provide funding, tools and culturally competent technical support to help up to 20 communities improve food and recreation environments; and
- document this work in order to facilitate widespread replication.

Up to 20 grants will be awarded over two rounds of funding (or up to 10 grants per cycle). The grants will be for up to \$250,000 each over a three-year period. Under this first round of funding, up to

10 grants will be awarded to support local policy advocacy initiatives.

Policy projects may address a wide range of issues related to food and recreation equity, including:

- land-use regulation, such as zoning that influences the siting of retail food outlets in ways that increase availability and access to healthy foods and/or limit access to unhealthy foods;
- marketing and other promotion of unhealthy foods targeted to racial and ethnic communities;
- school policies that increase access to healthy foods and/or limit access to unhealthy foods;
- school policies that increase physical activity during school hours;
- before- and after-school programs that improve access to recreation and increase physical activity levels;
- access to culturally competent, linguistically accessible recreation opportunities and/or equitable access to parks and places to play; and
- pricing strategies for healthy and unhealthy foods (e.g., incentives and taxes).

Applicants are not required to specify a policy initiative in their proposal if policy options related to childhood obesity are unfamiliar to them. CCHE staff will work with successful applicants to identify a policy initiative that fits their local context. However, applicants will need to describe their local environment as it relates to childhood obesity, articulate an issue or set of issues they plan to address, and convey a sense of available community resources (e.g., constituents, local funding and skills) that will be leveraged in their policy initiative.

CCHE is designed to support a diverse learning community that uses culturally competent, community-centered approaches to advancing policies to prevent childhood obesity in communities most

affected by the epidemic. All grantees will receive training and technical assistance in shaping their plans, including training in the federal rules governing foundation-funded advocacy, as part of their participation in the program.

RWJF will fund a geographically and ethnically diverse cohort of groups that, taken together, represent the breadth of childhood obesity in communities most affected. The first round of CCHE grantees will serve as models for others working in communities, in indigenous nations and/or organizing youth to test and advance culturally and community-competent approaches to preventing childhood obesity.

Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for a grant under this call for proposals, applicants must:

- be a local organization working in communities of color whose leadership and membership and/or constituencies reflect the populations they seek to serve; and
- demonstrate a successful track record of at least two years in community organizing and policy advocacy to address health-related problems in communities of color. For purposes of this CFP, “policy advocacy” refers to work done as a group to advocate publicly for changes in policy (e.g., laws, ordinances, institutional procedures, administrative rulings) by a decision-making body that resulted in new policy actions, agreements or stronger enforcement of existing policies that improved some aspect of community health status.

Examples of health-related policy advocacy include:

- increasing regulation of/limiting alcohol outlets;
- changing laws to extend Medicaid eligibility;
- restricting land uses that pollute or otherwise compromise environmental health;

- increasing access to translation in health care and social services;
- creating policies that increase public resources for recreation in underserved communities;
- increasing alcohol and/or tobacco excise taxes; and
- creating policies to increase food access, including changes in food stamp eligibility and grocery store regulation.

Other eligibility criteria include:

- *Organization classification.* Applicants must be tax-exempt organizations under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code or federally chartered tribal nations. Local affiliates of national organizations are eligible to apply. Organizations classified as private foundations under Section 509(a) are not eligible.
- *Matching funds requirement.* To be eligible, applicants must secure commitments for at least 10 percent of their proposed budget (up to \$25,000 over three years, or approximately \$8,333 per year) in a cash match, with an additional minimum of 10 percent in in-kind services directly related to the effective implementation of the grant. Capital costs and existing grants may not be used to match RWJF funds. Matching funds must be new revenues (existing grants will not be accepted) and come from sources (e.g., individual donors, membership dues, canvassing, sales) that allow for lobbying, if lobbying is required to achieve the project’s policy goals. RWJF funds cannot be used for lobbying under any circumstances.
- *Prohibitions concerning industry funding.* Although no applicant will be disqualified for having received funding from the food or beverage industry in the past, organizations that currently receive funding from an industry, corporation, business or other entity or subsidiary of such an entity that markets low-nutrition food and/or beverage products to youth are not eligible to apply for a grant under this CFP. Given CCHE’s focus on policy advocacy,

acceptance of industry funding and CCHE funding simultaneously will be considered a conflict. If you are unsure about a funding source and/or need more information concerning this requirement, please contact the CCHE national program office (NPO).

Selection Criteria

Proposals will be reviewed and scored based on the following criteria:

- The applicant is able clearly to convey environmental problems that may contribute to childhood obesity facing the community/ies in which the applicant plans to work, as well as the relationship between childhood obesity and other community issues.
- The applicant is based in a community/ies where childhood obesity and related health problems are significant.
- The community has available resources that can be leveraged to address these problems (e.g., collaborations, support, existing policies and funding).
- The proposed outcomes and methodology for achieving these outcomes are sound, and they are outlined within a coherent, community-based strategy.
- The applicant is able to convey a clear assessment of the food and recreation equity context.
- The applicant organization has a strong infrastructure, including fiscal management capacity.
- The proposed project has the potential to generate new information/innovation/breakthroughs to increase children's access to healthy foods and safe places to play.
- The applicant or community has the capacity to sustain the work beyond the grant period.

Because CCHE seeks to build capacity in racial and ethnic communities, we strongly encourage proposals from community-based organizations or federally

chartered tribal nations that serve and are led by people of color (meaning that people of Asian/Pacific Islander, African, Latino/Hispanic, and/or Native-American/Indigenous descent are operating at the highest levels of leadership). Given this initiative's focus on young people, we also encourage youth-led organizing groups and community-based groups with youth-organizing components to apply. Previous advocacy on childhood obesity issues is not required.

In addition, RWJF will make an effort to ensure that the pool of selected applicants represents a geographically and ethnically diverse cohort of advocates.

CCHE has a national advisory committee (NAC) that makes recommendations about funding decisions to RWJF staff. RWJF is responsible for all final funding decisions. RWJF does not provide individual critiques of proposals submitted.

Monitoring and Other Expectations

Grantees are expected to meet RWJF requirements for the submission of narrative and financial reports, as well as periodic information needed for overall project performance monitoring and management. Project participants will be required to participate in periodic meetings, give progress reports on their grants, and make staff available for periodic interviews with the NPO staff and evaluation team. At the close of each grant, the grantee is expected to provide a written report on the project and its findings suitable for wide dissemination.

An independent research group selected and funded by RWJF will conduct an evaluation of the program. As a condition of accepting RWJF funds, grantees will be required to participate in the evaluation.

In addition, all grantees will be expected to:

- develop and implement a policy initiative at the local level;

- provide documentation of group activities as outlined in the evaluation plan;
- as appropriate, interact with media and the public to advance local initiative and CCHE goals; and
- share expertise and learning with other CCHE participants through training, support and other forms of peer-to-peer exchange that will be facilitated by the NPO.

Use of Grant Funds

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, or as a substitute for funds currently being used to support similar activities.

How to Apply

All proposals for this program must be submitted only through the RWJF Grantmaking Online system at <http://grantmaking.rwjf.org/cche>.

In addition to providing information online, CCHE will host regional information sessions and a Web conference to answer additional questions about the program and application process. Visit www.ccheonline.org to view dates and locations and to register for a session.

There are three stages in the competitive proposal process: (1) all applicants submit a brief proposal that describes the project; (2) invited applicants are then asked to submit a full proposal and line-item budget for a grant; and (3) up to 15 prospective finalists are selected to participate in site visits to inform the final selection process.

Stage 1: Brief Proposals

Applicants must submit a brief proposal of no more than four pages in length, plus a preliminary budget of no more than one page in length. The proposal should clearly describe:

- the community's food and recreation environment and the needs/problems the project will address;
- the target community (i.e., demographics, socio-economic and political context) and how the project will engage and affect racial and ethnic communities;
- project staff and leadership and their experience, skills and relationships in racial and ethnic communities;
- the applicant organization's history of policy advocacy work;
- assets and community relationships the group will bring to the initiative (e.g., matching funds and other support, strength of community and institutional relationships, community awareness and activism on the issue); and
- disclosure of any industry funding, if applicable.

The one-page budget should be for the entire three-year period and must include RWJF funds, matching grants and any other revenues. The budget for RWJF funds must not exceed \$250,000 for the three-year period.

Please go to <http://grantmaking.rwjf.org/cche> to submit your brief proposal.

Stage 2: Full Proposals

Up to 40 applicants will be invited to submit a full proposal of no more than 10 pages in length, accompanied by a budget and a budget narrative not to exceed three additional pages. The budget should cover the three-year grant period, be in column format, and include matching grants and other revenues. The proposal should describe:

- problems related to childhood obesity facing the community/ies in which the applicant plans to work;

- the relationships/intersections between childhood obesity and other social problems in the target community/ies;
- community resources that are available to address these problems (e.g., collaborations, support, existing policies and funding);
- proposed outcomes for the project (i.e., what the group hopes to accomplish);
- project methodology or approaches the group will employ to achieve outcomes;
- applicant's track record on policy advocacy and community organizing around health-related issues;
- the applicant's plans to comply with the requirement that RWJF funds not be used to support lobbying activities; and
- strategies for project funding and sustainability beyond the grant period.

Additional documents. Applicants will be required to submit the following along with the proposal:

- One-page cover letter summarizing the proposal and making a specific request for support to the Foundation (sample provided at www.ccheonline.org).
- One-page letter of commitment indicating agreement to participate in all CCHE activities as required in the grant agreement (sample provided at www.ccheonline.org).
- Statement assuring that RWJF funds will not be used for lobbying purposes (sample provided at www.ccheonline.org).
- Statement assuring that the applicant does not currently receive funding from the food and/or beverage industry and will not accept such funding during the grant period (sample provided at www.ccheonline.org).

- At least three letters of support and commitment from other community partners that will collaborate and/or provide matching funds (one-page maximum per letter, no more than five letters total).

All documents should be prepared for online submission. Please contact the NPO for additional information on formatting documents for submission.

Stage 3: Site Visits for Prospective Finalists

Up to 15 of the applicants in Stage 2 will be selected for a site visit by NPO staff, NAC members and/or RWJF staff. Site visits will be conducted to meet key partners and to assess the applicant's organizing capacity, ability to implement the project, community relationships and reach, and capacity to manage grant funds. Matching funds for the first year must be clearly identified by the time of the site visit. Candidates for site visits will be informed of preparation and process requirements when notified of their selection.

All applicants will be sent written notification via e-mail of their status through each stage of the process.

For more information on the program and proposal requirements, please contact:

Ditra Edwards, *deputy director*
 Communities Creating Healthy Environments
 Phone: (202) 234-5921
 E-mail: cche@thepraxisproject.org

Program Direction

Communities Creating Healthy Environments is a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The national program office (NPO) is housed at The Praxis Project, a nonprofit organization that builds partnerships with local groups to influence policy-making to address the underlying, systemic causes of community problems. The Praxis Project is committed to closing the health gap facing communities of color and forging alliances to build healthy communities.

The Communities Creating Healthy Environments NPO provides direction and technical assistance for this initiative at:

The Praxis Project
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Responsible staff members at the NPO are:

- Makani N. Themba-Nixon, *director*
- Ditra Edwards, *deputy director*
- Marta Urquilla, *policy director*
- Josué Guillén, *technology manager*
- Sarah M. Broom, *communications director*

Responsible staff members at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation are:

- John Govea, *senior program officer*
- James S. Marks, M.D., M.P.H., *senior vice president and director, Health Group*
- Angela K. McGowan, *senior program officer*
- Kathryn A. Thomas, *senior communications officer*
- Janiel Mihalow, *grants administrator*

Timetable

■ January 20 through February 6, 2009

Optional regional informational sessions for potential applicants to learn more about the initiative. Please visit www.chheonline.org to view dates and locations and to register.

■ February 5, 2009 (11 a.m. ET)

Optional Web conference for potential applicants. Please register at www.ccheonline.org.

■ February 26, 2009 (3 p.m. ET)

Deadline for receipt of brief proposals.

■ April 8, 2009

All applicants notified invited to submit full proposals.

■ May 12, 2009 (3 p.m. ET)

Deadline for receipt of full proposals.

■ June 22–30, 2009

Site visits to prospective finalists.

■ July 21, 2009

Notification of finalists.

■ October 1, 2009

Funding initiated.

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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