



Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Evaluating Innovations in Nursing Education



2009 Call for Proposals—Round 2

Brief Proposal Deadline

November 24, 2009

Program Overview

(Please refer to specific sections for complete detail.)

Purpose

Evaluating Innovations in Nursing Education (EIN) will support evaluations of interventions that expand teaching capacity or promote faculty recruitment and retention in nursing schools. The program aims to increase the number of nursing school graduates by evaluating strategies that address the nurse faculty shortage. An important activity of the program will be disseminating successful strategies so they can be replicated in other nursing education settings.

Eligibility Criteria (page 8)

- Nursing schools or health care organizations who will act as the applicant institution and subcontract to the evaluation team are eligible. We will give preference to applicant organizations that are tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and are not private foundations as defined under Section 509(a). *Please note: The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation makes grants to organizations in the United States and its territories only.*
- Each applicant organization must arrange to subcontract with an experienced evaluator who is not affiliated with the primary applicant department/school to assess the intervention. The evaluator can be from a different department at the same institution.
- Proposed interventions must be ongoing and have the potential to significantly increase teaching capacity, improve faculty work-life and/or promote faculty recruitment and retention. Interventions must include a large enough population (i.e., faculty, students and courses) to permit precise determination of their impact on important outcomes.
- We will award a maximum of one grant per applicant institution.

Selection Criteria (page 9)

Complete selection criteria can be found on page 9.

Total Awards

- A total of \$4.2 million will be available over the next three years.
- Up to 10 awards of up to \$300,000 each will be available in this round of funding.

Key Dates and Deadlines

- **October 5 and October 26, 2009**—Optional applicant Web conferences. Registration is required. Information can be found on the program's Web site.
- **November 24, 2009**—Deadline for receipt of brief proposals.
- **January 20–March 19, 2010**—Technical assistance (to refine the evaluation design) for those applicants selected on the basis of their brief proposal review.
- **March 19, 2010**—Applicants notified if invited to submit a full proposal.
- **April 23, 2010**—Deadline for receipt of full proposals.
- **July 2010**—Notification of awards.
- **September 27, 2010**—Start of grants.

How to Apply (page 13)

This program only accepts proposals submitted online through the RWJF Grantmaking Online system. For more information, please contact the national program office by e-mail at info@EvaluatingInnovationsInNursing.org or by calling (732) 932-4670.

www.EvaluatingInnovationsInNursing.org

Background

The U.S. nursing shortage is intensifying, even as nursing schools turn away thousands of qualified applicants because there are not enough faculty members available to teach them (AACN 2007). Widespread concern over the nurse faculty shortage is evident in the reports of prominent nursing organizations as well as in the activities of numerous state workforce centers. Awareness of the shortage's consequences has fostered support by nurse educators, health care organizations and state agencies for diverse strategies to increase educational capacity throughout the country.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) is committed to addressing the nursing shortage by: 1) building nurse leadership capacity; 2) improving the work environment for nurses and faculty; 3) finding innovative ways to educate more nurses; and 4) promoting awareness of their central role in the health care delivery system among policy-makers and the general public. In support of this commitment, *Evaluating Innovations in Nursing Education* (EIN) will fund evaluations of interventions that have demonstrated potential to achieve one or more of the following outcomes:

- Increased enrollment and teaching capacity.
- Improved faculty work-life and satisfaction.
- Enhanced faculty recruitment and retention.

The Program

EIN will evaluate interventions that expand teaching capacity or promote faculty recruitment and retention in nursing schools. By fostering replication of successful strategies to address the nurse faculty shortage, the program's ultimate goal is to increase the numbers of nursing school graduates.

The objectives are to:

- develop and disseminate evidence of the intervention's effectiveness in achieving these ends;
- foster replication of successful strategies in varied settings across the country; and
- assemble benchmark measures of key variables associated with the faculty shortage so that individual nursing schools can compare their status to national norms (e.g., number of graduated nurses per faculty full-time equivalent, faculty satisfaction, intent to leave the teaching profession).

Examples of models, programs and innovations that warrant evaluation include, but are not limited to:

- strategies that reduce the time between the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) and completion of the doctorate for students aspiring to faculty positions in nursing schools;
- initiation of new advanced degree programs designed to prepare nurses for academic faculty positions [e.g., Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP), Master's (MS) in nursing education];
- state policies that create financial incentives for recruiting or retaining nurse faculty (e.g., forgiving education loans in return for a commitment to teaching, significantly increasing salaries for all nurse faculty at state schools);
- other policy changes that create incentives for expanding teaching productivity or enhancing faculty recruitment and retention;

- use of regional simulation centers or alliances among simulation laboratories to make more efficient use of faculty time in delivering significant segments of clinical education;
- collaborations with hospitals and other delivery organizations that foster new approaches to integrating clinical and didactic education; and
- faculty development programs intended to improve faculty retention and recruitment.

We encourage proposals to evaluate interventions in multiple sites, including collaborations across institutions, particularly in those instances in which single-site implementation will not involve sufficient numbers of participants to support a controlled evaluation.

The evaluation proposal should address each of the following outcomes in relation to these interventions: (1) the impact on teaching productivity; (2) the effects on faculty work-life; (3) consequences for the quality of education; and (4) the additional (marginal) costs of implementing the intervention. Regardless of the main intent of the innovation, it is essential to confirm that it does not have an adverse effect on any of the first three outcomes; and it is important for replication that the costs of achieving the outcomes are known. The national program office (NPO) will provide a set of uniform cost measures to incorporate into the evaluation.

Examples of measures that may be employed to assess the first three outcomes include:

- *Teaching productivity*—Number of graduated nurses per faculty full-time equivalent (FTE); number of students accepted and matriculated; number of students progressing through the program on time; number of available clinical spaces.

- *Faculty work-life*—Faculty retention; number of faculty vacancies; intent to leave the faculty; intent to leave the teaching profession; faculty satisfaction; faculty stress; faculty promotion rates; differentials between average faculty salaries and average salaries of comparably prepared nurses in other settings.
- *Quality of education*—Rate of first-time passage of the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX); rate of passage of certification exam for Masters program graduates; indicators of breadth of education (including measures supplied by the NPO).

Evaluations of these interventions might address the following questions:

- *Impact of New Doctoral Programs to Prepare Nurses for Faculty Positions.*
Examining similar programs in multiple sites, do they typically recruit candidates who would otherwise apply to traditional doctoral programs? How do characteristics of matriculating students compare to traditional doctoral students? What is the net effect of introducing such programs on the faculty supply? How do attrition, time-to-graduation and rates of first-time appointments in academic positions compare with traditional programs?
- *Impact of Regionalized Use of Simulation Technology.*
How is heavy reliance upon simulation technology integrated into the nursing curriculum? How does it affect teaching capacity? How are the teaching functions associated with simulation best allocated among existing faculty and dedicated simulation staff? What is the net impact on the use of faculty time? How can the cost of simulation per educational output be optimized? What types of organizational relationships foster efficient use of simulation among schools or within a region? Are changes in the regulatory or policy environments necessary for fostering widespread use of such technology?

■ *Impact of Collaborations to Share Clinical Teaching Responsibilities.*

How do new arrangements for sharing clinical teaching responsibilities with hospitals and other delivery organizations affect the breadth of education of nursing students? What impact do they have on educational capacity? How can hospital-based clinical instructors be appropriately equipped and sustained in these roles? What are the consequences for the supervisory roles of academic faculty? What are the organizational prerequisites for effective implementation of such collaborations?

■ *Impact of Professional Development Programs.*

What are the costs and benefits of new professional development programs aimed at improving faculty recruitment and/or retention? Are there pay-for-performance strategies that are effective in increasing the numbers of graduated nurses per faculty FTE? What are the consequences for faculty morale?

Eligibility Criteria

Types of Organizations and Partnerships

- Eligible applicant organizations are nursing schools or health care organizations responsible for administering the intervention. We will give preference to applicant organizations that are tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and are not private foundations as defined under Section 509(a). *Please note: The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation makes grants to organizations in the United States and its territories only.*
- Each applicant organization must arrange to subcontract with an experienced evaluator who is not affiliated with the primary applicant department/school to assess the intervention. The evaluator may be from a different department at the same institution.
- We will award a maximum of one grant per applicant institution.

Investigators

Each applicant may have more than one principal investigator.

- The first principal investigator is responsible for implementing the intervention at the primary applicant institution. There may be more than one institution involved, but one must take the lead as applicant.
- The other investigator must be an evaluator with relevant expertise and experience to assess the intervention. The evaluator should not be affiliated with the primary applicant school/department; however, an evaluator outside of a nursing school but within the same university is acceptable.

Eligible Interventions

- Interventions must be ongoing and have promise to significantly increase teaching capacity, improve faculty work-life and/or promote faculty recruitment and retention. Preliminary evidence of such promise is required.
- Interventions must include a large enough population (i.e., faculty, students and courses) to permit precise determination of the impact on important outcomes. A consortium of institutions to increase sample size is acceptable, but one institution must be the lead applicant.

Selection Criteria

Applicants must: 1) describe an intervention that is viable and can be replicated; and 2) demonstrate the ability to conduct a rigorous evaluation yielding concrete evidence of its impact on outcomes. More specific criteria for evaluating full proposals include the following:

Viability of the Intervention

- A detailed description of the intervention to guide effective replication in other settings.
- Plans for collecting information on implementation and on strategies for addressing common challenges that will direct other institutions in initiating similar interventions.
- Delineation of a plausible logic model through which the innovation will affect teaching capacity, faculty work-life and/or faculty recruitment and retention.
- Preliminary evidence of the intervention's effectiveness.
- Sufficient scale of implementation to support a controlled evaluation.

Rigor of the Evaluation

- Selection of a robust evaluation design for isolating the impact of the intervention (e.g., a randomized trial, a pre-/post-intervention assessment with appropriate comparison groups).
- The strength of the design in accounting for the effects of likely confounding variables; controlling for the influence of secular trends; assessing the consequences of selection bias; and addressing other potential barriers to attributing causation.
- Identification of suitable comparison groups (if applicable) and assurance of their participation.
- Selection of appropriate outcomes for assessing the intervention's success and access to necessary data for measuring them.
- Incorporation of the NPO-provided measures of quality of education and cost of intervention.
- Presentation of a detailed analysis plan for analyzing the impact on each of the EIN outcomes.
- Demonstrated commitment of key stakeholders to maintain full implementation of the intervention and to cooperate with and facilitate all aspects of the evaluation study.
- Capacity to collect and analyze appropriate outcome data five years beyond the evaluation's initiation (three years beyond the end of the award) and forward it to the NPO.
- The evaluator's expertise and relevant experience.

Evaluation, Human Subjects Approval and Monitoring

We will broadly disseminate project findings with thorough descriptions of the interventions and implementation guidelines. The program will publicly release each individual project's results with attribution to responsible investigators and institutions. We expect grantees to contribute to multisite publications as well as author individual reports of their findings. To increase the power of the evidence base, we will expect grantees to incorporate program-wide measures in their data collection and analyses. *All finalists invited to submit full proposals must provide letters from the relevant Institutional Review Board(s) indicating that their projects are under review by April 23, 2010 and submit letters of approval by June 1, 2010. Review board(s) must confirm eligibility for exempt status.*

We expect grantees to meet RWJF requirements for submission of narrative and financial reports as well as periodic information needed for monitoring overall project performance and management. We will require investigators to participate in periodic meetings and provide progress reports on their evaluations. At the close of each grant, we will require a written report on the project and its findings suitable for wide dissemination.

Use of Grant Funds

RWJF will award a total of \$4.2 million over the next three years. Up to 10 awards of up to \$300,000 each will be available in this round of funding. For this second round of funding, project periods may not exceed 24 months, including start-up, data collection and analyses. We will make individual awards of up to \$300,000 each to nursing schools or health care organizations in partnership with an experienced evaluator.

Grant funds may be used for project 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. Grantees must budget funds for attendance at two national meetings for each of the partners. At least 75 percent of the award amount must support the evaluation. However, with adequate justification, up to 25 percent of the award amount may be used for costs incurred by the nursing school or health care organization for participating in the evaluation. In keeping with RWJF policy, grant funds may not be used to subsidize individuals for the cost of 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

Applicants may submit proposals only through the RWJF Grantmaking Online system at www.EvaluatingInnovationsInNursing.org. There are two stages in the proposal process: 1) submission of a brief proposal describing the innovation and plans for evaluation and; if invited, 2) submission of a full proposal.

Stage I: Brief Proposal

The brief proposal requires a description of the innovation and its prospects for replication, evidence of its effectiveness, plans for implementing a controlled evaluation, commitment of key stakeholders essential to the intervention's implementation and conduct of the evaluation, qualifications of the evaluation partner and preliminary budget. We encourage applicants to participate in an optional Web conference on October 5, 2009 or October 26, 2009 to discuss project goals and assist with the proposal process. Registration is required. Details on scheduling and registration will be posted on the EIN Web site at www.EvaluatingInnovationsInNursing.org. Brief proposals are due November 24, 2009.

Pre-Funding Assistance in Refining the Evaluation Design

We will select up to 20 applicants, based on the brief proposal, to participate in a directed self-study to strengthen the evaluation. A virtual workshop and evaluation workbook will offer insights on the development of a logic model and direction in addressing key issues relevant to evaluation design and implementation. Among the issues addressed: use of the program logic model in guiding the evaluation; options for meaningful comparison groups or other mechanisms for conducting a controlled evaluation; availability of data on appropriate outcomes; strategies for collecting baseline data on ongoing interventions; and methods of documenting the key elements of the intervention and the process of implementation suitable for guiding replication. Applicants will receive individual feedback on their logic model and aspects of their evaluation design.

Stage II: Full Proposal

Applicants who have completed the evaluation self study will be invited to submit a full proposal. Criteria for selection will focus on the evaluation's strength in isolating program effects, its likelihood of yielding sound evidence of effectiveness, and its promise in contributing strategies for other settings to increase teaching capacity and/or promote faculty recruitment and retention. A key challenge inherent in the evaluations is that the intervention's impact on several important outcomes cannot be meaningfully studied within a 24-month timeframe (e.g., number of graduated nurses per faculty FTE). As a result, applicants must credibly assure that these outcomes will be assessed and analyzed five years after initiation of the evaluation (three years beyond the end of their grant period). Full proposals are due April 23, 2010.

We will convene site visits via video conference for invited applicants between June 8 and July 2, 2010. A national advisory committee (NAC) will assist in the selection process, evaluate proposals, participate in site visits and make funding recommendations to RWJF.

RWJF does not provide individual critiques of proposals submitted.

Program Direction

Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, Center for State Health Policy, which serves as the NPO, provides direction and technical assistance for this program. Michael Yedidia, M.P.H., Ph.D., research professor, directs this program. Joanne Fuccello, M.S.W., L.C.S.W., is the deputy director.

Evaluating Innovations in Nursing Education
Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey,
Center for State Health Policy

55 Commercial Avenue, 3rd Floor

New Brunswick, NJ 08901-1340

Phone: (732) 932-4670

Fax: (732) 932-0069

Web site: www.EvaluatingInnovationsInNursing.org

Responsible staff members at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation are:

- Nancy Wieler Fishman, M.P.H., B.S.N.,
senior program officer
- John Lumpkin, M.D., M.P.H., *senior vice president
and director Health Care Group*
- Linda Wright Moore, M.S., *senior communications officer*
- Andrea Daitz, M.A., *program associate*
- Christine Phares, *grants administrator*

**National Advisory
Committee**

Christine A. Tanner, Ph.D., R.N., F.A.A.N., *Chair*
A.B. Youmans-Spaulding Distinguished Professor
Oregon Health Sciences University School of Nursing
Portland, Ore.
Editor, *Journal of Nursing Education*

Janis P. Bellack, Ph.D., R.N., F.A.A.N.
President
Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) Institute
of Health Professions
Boston, Mass.

Julie Beshore Bliss, Ed.D., R.N.
Professor and Chair, Department of Nursing
William Paterson University College of
Science and Health
Wayne, N.J.

Colleen Gillespie, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, Division of General Internal
Medicine
New York University School of Medicine
New York, N.Y.

Colleen J. Goode, Ph.D., R.N., F.A.A.N.
Professor, College of Nursing
University of Colorado Denver
Denver, Colo.

Pamela M. Ironside, Ph.D., R.N., F.A.A.N.
Director of the Center for Research in
Nursing Education
Indiana University School of Nursing
Indianapolis, Ind.

Kathy Mayle, M.N.Ed., M.B.A., R.N.
Director, Center for Health Care Diversity
Duquesne University School of Nursing
Pittsburgh, Pa.

Jack Needleman, Ph.D., F.A.A.N.

Associate Professor, Department of Health Services
University of California, Los Angeles, School of
Public Health
Los Angeles, Calif.

Donald E. Pathman, M.D., M.P.H.

Associate Professor and Director, Program on Health
Professions and Primary Care
Cecil G. Sheps Center for Health Services Research
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Chapel Hill, N.C.

Darrell R. Spurlock, Ph.D., R.N.

Assistant Professor
Mount Carmel College of Nursing
Columbus, Ohio

Barbara Stewart, Ph.D.

Professor Emerita
Oregon Health & Science University School
of Nursing
Portland, Ore.

Cynthia S. Teel, Ph.D., R.N.

Associate Dean, Graduate Programs
University of Kansas School of Nursing
Kansas City, Kan.

Theresa Valiga, Ed.D, R.N., F.A.A.N.

Clinical Professor and Director, Institute for
Educational Excellence
Duke University School of Nursing
Durham, N.C.

Timetable

- **October 5 and October 26, 2009**
Optional applicant Web conferences. Registration is required. Information can be found at www.EvaluatingInnovationsInNursing.org.
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- **June 8–July 2, 2010**
Site visits via video conference with selected applicants.
- **July 2010**
Notification of awards.
- **September 27, 2010**
Start of grants.

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.



Robert Wood Johnson
Foundation

Route 1 and College Road East
P.O. Box 2316
Princeton, NJ 08543-2316

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