



Robert Wood Johnson
Foundation

New Connections

Increasing Diversity of RWJF Programming

*Junior
Investigators
Program*

2008 Call for Proposals—Round 4

Proposal Deadline

November 13, 2008

Program Overview

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's (RWJF) *New Connections: Increasing Diversity of RWJF Programming* aims to expand the diversity of perspectives that inform RWJF programming and introduce new researchers and scholars to the Foundation, while simultaneously helping to meet staff needs for data analysis. The program invites *Junior Investigators*—scholars from historically disadvantaged and underrepresented communities who have received their doctorate within the last seven years—to address specific questions posed by one of RWJF's program areas using secondary data analysis. Eligible scholars include individuals from ethnic or racial minorities or low-income communities, first-generation college graduates, or others who historically have been underrepresented in research disciplines that RWJF supports.*

We will award up to 12 two-year grants of up to \$75,000 each during this fourth funding round. New Connections grantees and alumni will also be eligible to receive a grant of up to \$15,000 to support the publication and dissemination of the research they conduct under this grant. New Junior Investigators will be eligible for this additional grant during the last six months of their award.

In this funding round, we ask applicants to address research questions from six RWJF program areas: Childhood Obesity, Coverage, Human Capital, Public Health, Quality/Equality and Vulnerable Populations.

* *The New Connections program is open to applicants from any group that has been historically disadvantaged or underrepresented in research disciplines. This includes, but is not limited to, individuals from ethnic and racial minorities historically underrepresented in research disciplines. It also includes persons of all races and ethnicity who come from groups that have historically been disadvantaged or underrepresented in research disciplines, such as first-generation college graduates and people from low-income communities. These examples are intended to be illustrative, not exclusive.*

The Program

The New Connections program provides support and training to *Junior Investigators* to address specific research questions posed by six RWJF program areas: Childhood Obesity, Coverage, Human Capital, Public Health, Quality/Equality and Vulnerable Populations. A brief overview of each area's specific questions is included on pages 4-6. Please go to www.rwjf-newconnections.org under Program Links and click on "Topics for Study" for more detail.

Junior Investigators must answer the program team questions using secondary data analysis. *Junior Investigators* are encouraged to use any appropriate dataset to answer the proposed question. Among other sources, existing datasets can be found at the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research Health and Medical Care Archive (ICPSR), and the California Health Interview Survey (CHIS). *Junior investigators* are responsible for identifying and acquiring the dataset(s). We will consider mixed method applications if *Junior Investigators* have additional financial support for the qualitative component.

In their proposal, candidates must develop a monthly work plan detailing the milestones, timeline and key deliverables of their proposed project. *Junior Investigators* must submit at least two manuscripts for publication in a peer-reviewed journal by the end of the grant. We will not accept, as a project deliverable, manuscripts developed or published prior to the grant start date.

Applicants must select a mentor, who is to submit a letter to RWJF detailing his/her in-kind support. Applicants may also submit a letter of support from their institution. *Junior Investigators* must enroll in up to two methodological training programs during the grant. They may use some of their funding to hire a consultant, such as a biostatistician, mentor or research assistant. *Junior Investigators* are to participate in two New Connections Annual Symposiums in the summers of 2010 and 2011 and to attend one of our Research and Coaching Clinics in either the fall of 2009 or 2010. We may also require awardees to attend one meeting at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. *Junior Investigators* may include in their budgets travel expenses to present and disseminate their research at up to two key national meetings, but they may need to solicit additional funds from their home institution. We encourage applicants to participate in a Web conference for more detailed information about budget guidelines. Please see page 8 for more details about the Web conferences.

We will assign *Junior Investigators* to work with a liaison at RWJF. The liaison, who will either be a Research and Evaluation program officer or a program officer from the team with which the *Junior Investigator* is working, will clarify the team’s research needs and help explain the particular program areas at RWJF and how the Foundation operates. We expect grantees to speak with their liaison by phone monthly.

RWJF will award grants to the *Junior Investigator’s* home university or other home institution. We will require grantee institutions to submit financial reports and other grant-related information on behalf of the *Junior Investigators*. We also expect grantee institutions to support the *Junior Investigator’s* attendance at annual training events, such as the New Connections Research and Coaching Clinic and New Connections Symposium, and methodology training, presentations and other networking and mentoring events.

Topics for Study

The six program areas participating in this solicitation have each identified specific research questions they would like addressed in this funding cycle. Below you will find a brief description of each team's research interests. To view the detailed descriptions, please go to www.rwjf-newconnections.org under Program Links and click on each area's "Topics for Study." Applicants must submit proposals for one of the topics described below and should select the questions that are more suitable for secondary data analysis.

Childhood Obesity

The Childhood Obesity team is studying how changes in local policies and environments affect physical activity and food consumption in children. The team is interested in the following research that uses the California Health Interview Survey from 2003, 2005 and 2007:

- Analysis of changes related to the implementation of The California Endowment's Healthy Eating Active Communities (HEAC) program.
- Analysis of changes before and after the implementation of Kaiser Permanente's Healthy Eating Active Living Community Health Initiatives.
- Other California policy changes affecting physical activity and food consumption among children.

Coverage

The Coverage team seeks to reduce the number of uninsured Americans. The causes of health disparities among different underserved populations are complex, and studies have shown that health insurance coverage is one of several factors that can explain differences between these groups. In recent years, many states have implemented policies to expand health insurance coverage. The Coverage team is interested in learning more about the extent to which these coverage expansions can narrow gaps in health and health care disparities by examining:

- the impact that current state health expansions and reforms have on coverage and access to health care for different populations;
- successful strategies to address the needs of underserved populations in state health care reform and whether successful reforms lead to observable changes in the health of those populations; and
- how to improve the take-up rates of newly expanded health insurance programs.

Human Capital

The Human Capital portfolio seeks to ensure that the nation’s health care workforce is adequately staffed and skilled by attracting, developing and retaining a capable and diverse health care workforce to improve the health and health care of all Americans. Staff are interested in exploring:

- the perceived financial disincentive for nurses to pursue careers as faculty in nursing schools; and
- programs that enhance the ability of the frontline workforce to climb career ladders and increase the diversity of the health and health care workforce.

Public Health

The Public Health team seeks to strengthen the U.S. public health system to make it better prepared to promote the health of all Americans. The team has identified several priority research areas:

- How policy-makers use evidence to make decisions about public health system structure, resource allocation and oversight and management.
- The implications of variation in the practice of public health on system performance and health outcomes and how variations in quality impact health care disparities.
- Identifying whether public health services and systems research, current state laws or funding requirements can be used to address racial/ethnic/socioeconomic status disparities in population health.

Quality/Equality

The Quality/Equality team aims to improve the quality of the health care system and believes measuring patients’ experience is an important quality measure. Staff want to understand the differences in patient assessments of care that have been found between patients of different health statuses, education level and genders. To that end, the team is interested in:

- identifying the patient characteristics that correlate with patients’ evaluations of the quality of care they receive;
- analyzing how much measurement error is seen between “true” and “observed” differences; and
- identifying underlying cultural issues that may cause different subpopulations to rate the quality of care they receive in a way that varies from what may be considered an objective assessment.

Vulnerable Populations

The Vulnerable Populations portfolio is committed to improving health outcomes by supporting projects that address social factors, such as housing, employment, poverty, immigration status and involvement with certain systems, like schools, jails or foster care. Our programs create sensible solutions that allow people to overcome the social barriers that prevent better health. Particular areas of include:

- approaches and interventions affecting interpersonal violence within the workplace, among adolescents in school, and among different immigrant groups;
- effective strategies for mental health services within low-income families and children; and
- elements of programs successful in promoting health among young African-American and Latino males.

Eligibility Criteria

New Connections program applicants must:

- have completed a doctorate within the last seven years (obtained by June 1, 2002 or later);
- be a citizen or permanent resident of the United States or its territories at the time of application;
- be affiliated with or sponsored by a nonprofit university or an organization that is tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and is not a private Foundation as defined under Section 509(a) of the Internal Revenue Code;
- be from a group that has historically been underrepresented in the research activities supported by RWJF, such as people from ethnic or racial minority groups, first-generation college graduates and people from low-income communities*;
- be a first time New Connections Junior Investigator;
- provide evidence of research skills addressing various aspects of health and health care (research fellowship or equivalent training or experience); and
- be committed to the goals and mission of New Connections, RWJF and its specific interest areas.

Selection Criteria

The New Connections program is intended to attract first-time Junior Investigators to RWJF.

The following factors will be used in the selection process:

- Significance and relevance of the proposal to RWJF and team-specific questions.
- Uniqueness of the proposal. We seek proposals that will develop new evidence about the topic that provides a major contribution to the understanding of the problem.
- How the proposed work complements existing literature on the topic. We prefer research that is likely to produce new information, rather than use different data to confirm prior research results.
- How well the proposal incorporates secondary analysis in answering RWJF- and team-specific questions.
- Soundness of the project's conceptual framework and methodology.
- Availability and appropriateness of datasets needed to answer the research question.
- Clarity of deliverables described in the proposal.

An internal RWJF committee will review all proposals. RWJF does not provide individual critiques of proposals submitted.

Use of Grant Funds

Junior Investigators are eligible to receive a total grant award of up to \$75,000 each. Grant funds may be used to cover the costs associated with completing all research, consulting services, methodological training and travel. 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. The New Connections program guidelines specify the use of funds allowable under this program. The majority of funding should be used for the *Junior Investigator's* salary, travel, trainings, mentoring and costs associated with full participation in the New Connections program. Additional funds to support these activities should be specified.

How to Apply

There are two stages in the proposal process. The first is the submission of a brief proposal that describes the project. We will review brief proposals and invite selected applicants to submit full proposals in a second stage.

Complete submission details and program information are available on the program's Web site at www.rwjf-newconnections.org. **All applicants must submit brief proposals online through the RWJF Grantmaking Online system at <http://grantmaking.rwjf.org/nci4>. The deadline for receipt of brief proposals is November 13, 2008 at 3:00 p.m. ET.**

By January 19, 2009 we will notify selected applicants to submit a full proposal. Information on the submission of full proposals will be provided to selected applicants at that time. **The deadline for receipt of full proposals is 3:00 p.m. ET on March 12, 2009.**

We strongly recommend that all applicants log in to the system and familiarize themselves with the online submission process and 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. In fairness to all applicants, the program will not accept late proposals.

We will invite finalists to participate in a phone interview during the week of April 13 with RWJF staff to allow finalists to discuss their proposals in greater detail.

Please ensure your proposal addresses at least one of the research questions detailed in the "Topics for Study." A list of detailed research questions can be found at www.rwjf-newconnections.org under Program Links "Topics for Study."

Optional Applicant Web Conference Calls

We will hold a Web conference call for applicants to provide additional information on the program's goals, to assist applicants with the brief proposal process, and to offer an opportunity for questions. The first conference call is scheduled for October 22, 2008 from 3:00–4:30 p.m. ET.

For those invited to submit a full proposal, a second applicant conference call will be held February 18, 2009 from 3:00–4:30 p.m. ET.

We highly encourage prospective applicants to participate in the Web conference call. Applicants can learn more about these Web conference calls and register for them by going to the program's Web site at www.rwjf-newconnections.org. Registration is required to participate.

Program Direction

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation is responsible for direction of this program.

Responsible staff members at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation are:

- Debra Joy Pérez, Ph.D., M.P.A., M.A., *senior program officer*
- Sue Hassmiller, Ph.D., R.N., F.A.A.N., *senior program officer*
- John Lumpkin, M.D., M.P.H., *senior vice president and director, Health Care Group*
- Hallene Williams, *National Urban Fellow*
- Linda Wright Moore, M.S., *senior communications officer*
- Steve Theisen, *grants administrator*

Please direct all other inquiries about the program, selection criteria, proposal requirements or submission process to:

Hallene Williams, *National Urban Fellow*
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Web site: www.rwjf-newconnections.org

Timetable

- **October 22, 2008 (3:00–4:30 p.m. ET)**
Optional applicant Web conference call for Junior Investigator brief proposal applicants. To register, please visit www.rwjf-newconnections.org.
- **November 13, 2008 (3:00 p.m. ET)**
Deadline for receipt of brief proposals (must be submitted online).
- **January 29, 2009**
Select applicants invited to submit full proposals.
- **February 18, 2009 (3:00–4:30 p.m. ET)**
Optional applicant Web conference call for full proposal applicants.
To register, please visit www.rwjf-newconnections.org.
- **March 12, 2009 (3:00 p.m. ET)**
Deadline for receipt of full proposals (must be submitted online).
- **April 13–17, 2009**
Finalist phone interviews.
- **May 1, 2009**
Notification of awards.
- **June 15, 2009**
Start of awards.

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 it serves. 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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