



Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Consumer Voices for Coverage

Strengthening State Advocacy Networks to Expand Health Coverage



2007 Call for Proposals

Proposal Deadline

September 18, 2007

Program Overview

(Please refer to specific sections for complete detail.)

Purpose

Consumer Voices for Coverage: Strengthening State Advocacy Networks to Expand Health Coverage seeks to strengthen advocacy efforts to promote health care policies that will expand health insurance coverage.

Eligibility Criteria (page 7)

- Applicant organizations must be based in the United States.
- The program will fund organizations in up to 10 states, with a maximum of one award per state, including the District of Columbia. To ensure that only one organization per state applies, all applicant organizations must register with the program by July 13, 2007 (3 p.m. ET). *The program will only fund proposals from one registered applicant per state.*
- Applicant organizations must:
 - be consumer advocacy organizations with expertise in health care policy;
 - operate statewide or have experience working with partners on a statewide basis;
 - have a state-level policy agenda;
 - have experience working with policy-makers, including state government officials, in developing health care policies;
 - have a history of engaging and collaborating with other consumer groups and key health care stakeholders such as business, government officials, labor, payers and providers; and
 - have a 2007 operating budget at least equal to the level of annual funding requested; and
 - be nonprofit organizations that are tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Selection Criteria (page 8)

- For a complete list of selection criteria, please see page 8.

Total Awards

- Organizations in up to 10 states will be awarded grants.
- Grants of up to \$750,000 over a three-year period will be awarded per state.

Key Dates and Deadlines

- **June 28 and July 11, 2007 (2–4 p.m. ET)**—Optional applicant Web conference calls. Registration is required.
- **July 13, 2007 (3 p.m. ET)**—Deadline for applicant registration on the RWJF Grantmaking Online system.
- **September 18, 2007 (2 p.m. ET)**—Deadline for receipt of proposals.

How to Apply (page 10)

- This program only accepts proposals submitted through the RWJF Grantmaking Online system.

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www.voicesforcoverage.org

Background

Consumer Voices for Coverage will take advantage of the current groundswell of activity at the state level to reduce the large number of Americans living without health insurance. This program will support the important role that state-based consumer health advocacy can play in promoting innovative and comprehensive health reform efforts at the state and national levels.

In October 2006 Community Catalyst, a nonprofit advocacy organization, released a study, funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, of health care advocacy capacities in 16 states. The report highlighted six types of organizational capacities needed by consumer advocacy networks to be effective in states. These capacities include the ability to: (1) analyze complex legal and policy issues in order to develop achievable policy alternatives that will attract broad support; (2) build a strong grassroots base of support; (3) design and implement media and other communications strategies to build timely public and political support for reform and to weaken opposition arguments; (4) build and sustain strong broad-based coalitions and maintain strategic alliances with other stakeholders; (5) develop and implement strategic health policy campaigns; and (6) generate resources from diverse sources to build organizational infrastructure and maintain core functions and implement campaigns. The Community Catalyst report notes that all six of these capacities seldom exist within a single organization or a single type of organization. The findings underscore the importance of addressing this challenge by supporting state health reform advocates in building a single, integrated advocacy network within a state. Given these observations and the report's recommendations, *Consumer Voices for Coverage* seeks to enhance and strengthen these six capacities in statewide health care reform advocacy networks in selected states.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's (RWJF) strategic objective in the area of coverage is to achieve stable and affordable health care coverage for all

Americans. To reduce the number of uninsured Americans, RWJF is supporting states in their efforts to plan and implement policies and programs designed to achieve coverage expansions based on shared responsibilities between individuals and the public and private sectors. RWJF believes that these policies should lead to health insurance coverage that is affordable, includes necessary, appropriate and effective services, is continuous and portable, and promotes high-quality, cost-effective care.

This program is a key component of RWJF's strategy to help states implement coverage expansions. RWJF believes that effective advocacy efforts will educate policy-makers and opinion leaders about the need for coverage expansions and encourage them to adopt significant reforms. A strong and robust advocacy infrastructure will increase the chances of achieving a coverage expansion agenda. RWJF will broadly disseminate findings about state successes.

The Program

The program will strengthen the capacities of state consumer advocates to advance state-level health policy change and to expand health insurance coverage. A secondary goal of this advocacy program is to support the work of consumer advocates to promote federal coverage expansions.

Applicant organizations will be required to submit a plan addressing how they will create, solidify and grow a network of partner organizations representing key consumer groups that is capable of working with other stakeholders to promote significant health care reform. To do this, applicant organizations must be consumer advocacy organizations that can assume a coordination and leadership role and must provide evidence to mobilize other consumer advocacy groups to influence health care coverage debates. As part of the proposal process, applicant organizations will be required to secure letters of commitment from partner organizations that will

form the leadership team of the consumer advocacy network describing how they will collaborate and contribute to the overall advocacy effort. Preference will be given to applicant organizations that are able to demonstrate experience in strategic collaboration with other stakeholders.

Selected health care advocacy organizations will receive grants of up to \$750,000 over a three-year period to support the strengthening of state advocacy networks and their collaborating organizations. The funds can be used by the applicant organization and allocated to partner organizations in the network for planning, convening, coordinating and developing infrastructure that is needed to conduct coordinated health policy campaigns.

Consumer Voices for Coverage, under the direction of Community Catalyst, which serves as the national program office (NPO), will provide grantees and their networks significant training and support to help develop and enhance the six core competencies needed for effective consumer advocacy networks in states, including building and sustaining viable, broad-based coalitions; fostering collaborative partnerships with grassroots organizations; conducting legal and policy research and analysis; enhancing media and communication skills; developing and implementing effective health policy campaigns; and promoting sustainability. Assistance will also be provided to help develop strategic health policy campaigns and support and foster peer-to-peer learning among grantees.

Effective, strategic communications are critical to building the capacity of advocacy networks: there are likely to be fundamental communications infrastructure needs in many of the states. Communications assistance will include: training in strategic media advocacy; developing a communications/media plan; creating and maintaining media monitoring, tracking and distribution systems; developing effective messages

for campaigns; and using media tools (i.e., Web sites, e-advocacy, polling).

Technical assistance and training tools will be developed based on identified need. Examples of such assistance may include:

- model policies, shared communications tools and templates of reports for local and state adaptation;
- ongoing strategic assistance to grantees and their networks, geared to their specific needs (e.g., integrating the use of electronic communications tools into a health policy campaign, conducting specific types of policy analyses, or coalition development). Assistance may also include consultation on developing expert testimony, event and specific message framing for a particular campaign or press event, and communicating with national policy-makers; and
- materials to assist in resource development such as prospect research, cultivation and proposal writing.

Consumer Voices for Coverage grantees and their networks will be successful if, at the end of three years, they have: (1) strengthened their six core capacities needed for effective consumer advocacy networks in states; (2) helped shape health care policies to expand coverage in their states; and (3) generated support for federal-level initiatives.

Eligibility Criteria

■ *Only One Proposal per State/District of Columbia.*

Applicant organizations must be based in the United States. The program will fund up to 10 organizations, with a maximum of one award per state, including the District of Columbia. All potential applicant organizations must register online before submitting a proposal. Only registered applicants may submit proposals. The deadline for registration is July 13, 2007 by 3 p.m. ET. For information about how to register, please see page 10.

■ *Applicant Organization.* Applicant organizations must:

- be consumer advocacy organizations with expertise in health care policy;
- operate statewide or have experience working with partners on a statewide basis;
- have a state-level policy agenda;
- have experience working with policy-makers, including state government officials, in developing health care policies;
- have a history of engaging and collaborating with other consumer groups and key health care stakeholders such as business, government officials, labor, payers and providers;
- have a 2007 operating budget at least equal to the level of annual funding requested; and
- be nonprofit organizations that are tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Lobbying Prohibition

RWJF's *Conditions of Grant* prohibits any portion of the award being used for direct or grassroots lobbying as those terms are defined in federal tax law and regulations. Any lobbying activities must be supported with non-RWJF funds. We expect applicants to detail in their proposals how they plan to comply with this restriction. Proposed budgets must identify non-lobbying activities at least equal to the total RWJF funds requested.

Selection Criteria

- **State Health Policy Experience.** Applicant organizations must demonstrate a track record in engaging in state health care reform efforts and furthering grassroots involvement in such efforts.
- **Leadership Structure.** Applicant organizations must play a leadership role in developing and coordinating a network of consumer advocacy organizations, which will include activities such as policy analysis, coalition building, strategic communications and grassroots organizing. The applicant organization must identify a leadership team whose members include individuals with decision-making authority from the partner organizations that will lead the network and that will collaborate with the applicant organization and others in the network on this effort. Letters of commitment will be required from each partner organization on the leadership team. This letter should include specific information about how the leadership team organizations will work together and what each will contribute to the overall project. The letter should outline:
 - why the organization seeks to participate;
 - who will participate on behalf of the organization and confirm that the leadership team participant will be able to make decisions on behalf of the partner organization;
 - the organization's role; and
 - how the organization will contribute to the success of the network.
- **Strategic Alliances.** Applicant organizations must demonstrate credible partnerships and/or identify strategies to develop strong working relationships with a range of other stakeholder groups above and beyond the partner organizations, including business, government officials, labor, payers and providers. Preference will be given to those applicant organizations that are also able to obtain letters of support from these stakeholder groups in addition to the required letters of commitment from leadership team organizations.

- **Work Plan.** Applicant organizations must submit a preliminary work plan that outlines:
 - how the network will advance state- and federal-level health policy change and expand health insurance coverage;
 - their policy agenda for significant coverage expansion in their state;
 - evidence of the progress made to date towards achieving that policy agenda and the feasibility of reaching policy goals within the grant period;
 - current capacities (strengths and gaps) and a capacity-building plan that identifies priorities;
 - how grant funds will be allocated, including whether subcontracts will be given to partner organizations;
 - the kinds of technical assistance that they would find useful; and
 - how they will comply with lobbying restrictions.
- **Sustainability.** Applicant organizations must identify a process for institutionalizing new or improved capacities for the state's consumer health advocacy network. Strong preference will be given to applicants that demonstrate that a viable, coordinated and collaborative consumer advocacy network will survive beyond the funding period. Preference will be given to applicant organizations that are able to secure additional funds.

Evaluation and Monitoring

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.

Apart from the independent evaluation, RWJF and NPO staff will monitor the grantees' efforts and provide careful stewardship of grant funds to ensure accountability. Project directors will be required to participate in periodic meetings and provide progress reports on their grants. At the close of each grant, the applicant organization is expected to provide a written report on the project and its findings.

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 (see page 7), or as a substitute for funds currently being used to support similar activities. Grant funds may not be used to defray capital costs or existing operational expenses or deficits.

Budgets and budget narratives should identify all activities outlined in the proposal, including activities that will be supported by the RWJF grant and those that will be supported with non-RWJF funds.

How to Apply

The program will fund up to 10 organizations, with a maximum of *one award per state*, including the District of Columbia. To ensure that only one applicant organization from a single state submits a proposal, all interested applicants must register through the RWJF Grantmaking Online system prior to submitting a proposal. The deadline for applicant registration is July 13, 2007 at 3 p.m. ET.

The program will use this registration information to help match applicants from the same state so that the state submits only one proposal. The program will accept proposals only from registered applicants.

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

For more information on the program and proposal requirements please contact the program's administrative support office:

Phone: (617) 525-6167

E-mail: info@voicesforcoverage.org

Optional Web Conference Calls

(Registration required)

The program will hold two Web conference calls for applicants on June 28 and July 11 from 2–4 p.m. ET. These calls will provide information on the program goals, assistance with the proposal process and an opportunity for applicants to ask questions. Participation in a Web conference call is not mandatory, but is strongly encouraged. Potential applicants can learn more about the Web calls and must register at www.voicesforcoverage.org. Applicants may attend either one of the calls. *Please note that registration for the Web calls is separate from the proposal submission registration.*

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 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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