

2018 Call for Proposals

Concept Paper Deadline: July 18, 2018 (3 p.m. ET)



HEALTHY EATING RESEARCH: BUILDING EVIDENCE TO PROMOTE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING AMONG CHILDREN THROUGH NUTRITIOUS FOODS AND BEVERAGES ROUND 11

BACKGROUND

Optimal nutrition and a healthy weight are critical for child health and well-being across a wide range of dimensions, including physical, socioemotional, and cognitive development. Proper nutrition is particularly important during a child's early years, as key nutrients are critical for neurodevelopment and long-term physical and mental health. Inadequate nutrition, poor diet quality, and obesity are most pronounced in residents of lower-income communities, who often lack access to healthy foods or experience an overabundance of unhealthy foods, as well as in households with limited funds to buy or time to prepare healthful foods.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) has provided national leadership in efforts to improve the health of all of our nation's children, especially those in lower-income communities and communities of color. This landmark work continues today as part of our vision to build a national Culture of Health that enables everyone in our diverse society to lead healthier lives now and for generations to come. Building a Culture of Health requires action in four areas: Making Health a Shared Value; Fostering Cross-Sector Collaboration to Improve Well-Being; Creating Healthier, More Equitable Communities; and Strengthening Integration of Health Services and Systems. Accordingly—our efforts to ensure that all children and their families have the opportunity and resources to experience the best physical, social, and emotional development possible through nutritious foods and beverages—rely on building the evidence to identify promising and effective strategies that catalyze and support change in those action areas.

Healthy Eating Research (HER) is an RWJF national program, which supports research on policy, systems, and environmental (PSE) strategies with strong potential to promote the health and well-being of children at a population level. Specifically, HER aims to help all children achieve optimal nutrition and a healthy weight. HER grantmaking focuses on children and adolescents from birth to 18, and their families, with a priority on lower-income and racial and ethnic minority populations that are at-risk of poor nutrition and obesity. Findings are expected to advance RWJF's efforts to ensure that all children and their families have the opportunity and resources to experience the best physical, social, and emotional health possible, promote health equity, and build a Culture of Health.

Healthy Eating Research issues calls for proposals (CFPs) to solicit scientifically rigorous, solution-oriented proposals from investigators representing diverse disciplines and backgrounds. This CFP is for two types of awards aimed at providing advocates, decision-makers, and policymakers with evidence to promote the health and well-being of children through nutritious foods and beverages. The award types are Round 11, small- and large-scale grants. The two funding opportunities are described in more detail beginning on page 2.

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THE PROGRAM

Healthy Eating Research is an RWJF national program. Its goals are to:

- Establish a research base for PSE strategies that promote the health and well-being of children at the population level, primarily through achieving healthy dietary patterns without excess weight gain.
- Build a vibrant, multidisciplinary field of research and a diverse network of researchers.
- Ensure that findings are communicated effectively to inform the development of nutrition and obesity-related solutions in the form of PSE changes, with a particular focus on promoting health equity.

You can learn more about Healthy Eating Research at www.healthyeatingresearch.org.

Funding Opportunity

The two types of funding opportunities included in this CFP are:

- Round 11 small-scale grants (up to \$200,000 and 18 months)
- Round 11 large-scale grants (up to \$500,000 and 24 months)

The topic areas, target populations, and types of studies described below apply to all types of grants.

Please Note: This funding opportunity includes several significant changes from previous CFPs. Please read the CFP in its entirety. For additional information, sign up to attend the CFP webinar and/or view the FAQ document on the HER website.

Priority Topic Areas

RWJF funds efforts to change public and institutional policies, systems, and environments in ways that promote improved nutrition, dietary patterns, and healthy weight among children. RWJF is particularly interested in supporting efforts that will impact those at highest risk of poor health and well-being outcomes (e.g., black, Latino, American Indian/Alaska Natives, Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders; children living in lower-income rural and urban communities), with the aim of promoting health equity. This work ranges from changes at the state or national level to those taking place at the organizational or community levels. Priority is given to solutions that could be replicated and scaled up if effective and have the potential to reach those in greatest need.

Currently, RWJF is focused on PSE strategies that support parents' and caregivers' ability to provide environments that nurture and foster children's physical, socioemotional, and cognitive health and well-being. In the area of food and nutrition, we are particularly interested in PSE strategies that impact families, early care environments, schools, and communities at a population level. Research studies must focus on PSE approaches with strong potential to improve children's physical, socioemotional, and/or cognitive health and well-being through nutritious foods and beverages. Proposals will need to make clear connections between the study's PSE strategies of interest and specific indicators of child health and well-being.

In the past, Healthy Eating Research has focused on diet-related PSE efforts to reduce child obesity. While reducing child obesity still remains a key goal, we also strive to improve dietary intake and patterns that impact a wider variety of children's short-term and long-term health outcomes. Our goal is to

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accelerate evidence-based strategic, actionable, and equitable solutions for improving children's weight and nutrition, diet quality, and food access and security. While important, it is beyond the scope of this CFP to address excessive or deficient intakes of specific micronutrients (i.e., sodium); rather, we are most interested in approaches that impact dietary patterns more holistically.

Topics of interest for this CFP include **but are not limited to** research exploring:

- U.S. Department of Agriculture's Nutrition Assistance Programs [e.g., Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC); and Child Nutrition Programs relevant for school and early-care settings (e.g., Child and Adult Care Food Program, School Breakfast Program, School Lunch Program)];
- Other policies and practices in child-care settings, schools, and retail food outlets;
- PSE changes aimed at (1) increasing access, affordability, and/or demand for healthy foods and beverages (e.g., reforms to agricultural systems; pricing incentives; potable water access; food procurement in early care and pre-K through 12th grade education settings) and (2) decreasing access to and/or demand for less healthy foods and beverages (e.g., product placement, pricing disincentives, calorie or nutrition labeling);
- Industry practices and related systems that influence purchasing and/or consumption of healthy or unhealthy foods and beverages (e.g., marketing of foods and beverages for infants and toddlers and to children and adolescents).

All applicants are encouraged to visit the Healthy Eating Research website at www.healthyeatingresearch.org to learn more about the program and view the abstracts for studies funded previously, keeping in mind that the focus of those studies was only on PSE strategies aimed at reducing childhood obesity.

Targeted Age Groups and Priority Populations

Target age groups for studies funded as part of this CFP are infants, children, and adolescents (ages 0 to 18) and their families.

All studies must have the potential to impact groups at highest risk for poor health and well-being, and nutrition and weight-related health disparities. We are especially interested in studies focused on black, Latino, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander populations; and children living in lower-income rural and urban communities, with the aim of promoting equity. Additional details regarding the importance of proposals addressing equity can be found under Selection Criteria on page 6.

Types of Studies

Studies could include any of the following: experimental or quasi-experimental studies; secondary analyses of existing datasets; evaluations of PSE interventions or natural experiments; retrospective analyses of PSE change successes; case studies; financial, economic, or cost-effectiveness studies; health impact assessments; statistical modeling or simulation studies; policy and legal analyses to identify or evaluate promising PSE interventions; and quantitative meta-analyses. Many of these could be the small-

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scale grants (up to \$200,000 and 18 months). The large-scale grants (up to \$500,000 and 24 months) could include national cost-effectiveness studies, evaluations of policies, including national implementation studies, or evaluations of PSE changes.

Descriptions of the Round 11 grants awarded through Healthy Eating Research are outlined below.

Round 11 Grants

The Round 11 grants have a two-phase application process, including an initial three-page concept paper and subsequent full proposal (if invited). Two different grant types are requested under this CFP:

1. *Small-Scale Grants*: Each grant will award up to \$200,000 for up to 18-months. Approximately eight small-scale grants will be awarded under this CFP.
2. *Large-Scale Grants*: Each grant will award up to \$500,000 for up to 24-months. Approximately two large-scale grants will be awarded under this CFP.

Overall Study Guidelines for All Grants

- The two types of awards described in this CFP (Round 11 small and large grants cover the same objectives and types of studies. Where possible, objective measures of health and well-being outcomes are strongly encouraged (e.g., dietary consumption; food/beverage sales or purchases; academic outcomes; behavioral outcomes). Variables likely to affect the impact and feasibility of the policy and environmental changes studied (e.g., demographics, community characteristics, and other contextual variables) should be assessed.
- Target populations are infants, children, and adolescents ages 0 to 18 and their families from lower-income communities and racial and ethnic populations at highest risk for obesity and nutrition-related health disparities. ***Studies focused on lower-income rural or urban communities or populations mentioned on page 3 will be prioritized.***
- Studies focused solely on behavior change at the individual level or nutrition education interventions ***will not*** be funded.
- Studies conducted in real-world settings are preferred. Experimental studies or laboratory simulations must show promise for generalization to real-world settings, especially in lower-income and racial and ethnic minority populations.
- Researchers should seek input from relevant stakeholders—such as advocates, policymakers, school or community leaders, parents, or children—in order to develop feasible, relevant and sustainable studies.
- Proposals should describe the strategies that will be used to communicate research results. Applicants must include at least one representative of the community or stakeholder group targeted (e.g., advocate, community leader, policymaker) as an ongoing adviser. Specific plans should be outlined for communicating and disseminating research results to advocates, decision-makers, policymakers, relevant stakeholders, and scientists.
- **When developing the proposal, it is important to take into account that grant extensions and cost extensions are not allowed and an exception would be granted only under rare circumstances.** Reasons such as obtaining Institutional Review Board approval or recruitment taking

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longer than expected will not be approved. Therefore, researchers need to be realistic (and not idealistic) in what can be achieved within the time frame of the grant.

- Awards will be made directly to the principal investigator's home institution. Indirect costs (up to 12%) are included in the total project awards.
- Proposed projects may be conducted as supplements to existing studies. Project co-funding is welcome; sources and amounts must be fully described in the proposal. The added value of the proposed research grant should be clearly described.
- In order to ensure that HER research is made accessible to a wide and diverse audience, grantees of the *HER Round 11 Large-Scale Grants* who publish HER data and findings in peer-reviewed publications must do so in open access journals or must include funds in their budgets to cover the cost of making the resulting publications open access (typically \$3,000–\$5,000 per manuscript).

TOTAL AWARDS

Approximately \$2.6 million will be awarded under this CFP for the two award types. The anticipated allocation of funds is as follows:

- Approximately \$1.6 million will be awarded as *small-scale grants, resulting in the funding of up to eight small research grants through this solicitation*. Each grant will award up to \$200,000 for up to 18 months.
- Approximately \$1 million will be awarded as *large-scale grants, resulting in the funding of two large-scale grants through this solicitation*. Each grant will award up to \$500,000 for up to 24 months.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

For All Grant Opportunities

- Preference will be given to applicants that are either public entities or nonprofit organizations that are tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and are not private foundations or Type III supporting organizations. The Foundation may require additional documentation.
- Applicant organizations must be based in the United States or its territories.
- The focus of this program is the United States; studies in other countries will be considered only to the extent that they may directly inform U.S. policy.

OUR EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION STATEMENT

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation is committed to building a Culture of Health that provides everyone in America a fair and just opportunity for health and well-being. Achieving this goal requires focus on equity, diversity, and inclusion.

To that end, we are committed to fostering diverse perspectives. We recognize that individuals' perspectives are shaped by a host of factors, such as their race, ethnicity, gender, physical and mental

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ability, age, socioeconomic status, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, familial status, education, religion, legal status, military service, political affiliation, geography, and other personal and professional experiences.

We know that the presence of diverse perspectives alone is not sufficient. Therefore, we also are committed to creating inclusive environments where all individuals are encouraged to share their perspectives and experiences. We believe that only through valuing our differences and similarities, and remaining vigilant in advancing equity, will we be able to maintain an equitable workplace and actively pursue equity in all aspects of our work. We commit to being continuous learners and working alongside others to cultivate equity, diversity, and inclusion.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Invited full proposals will be reviewed by a committee composed of HER national program office staff, national advisory committee members, other invited expert reviewers, and RWJF senior staff. The committee will use the following criteria to assess proposals:

- ability to identify and assess PSE strategies that promote the health and well-being of children at the population-level, specifically focused on helping children and families achieve healthy dietary patterns without excess weight gain and improving healthy food access and security.
- relevance and timeliness of the study to accelerate evidence-based and equitable PSE solutions for improving children's nutrition, diet quality, and weight;
- relevance to the needs of children in lower-income communities and racial and ethnic minority populations at highest risk for diet and weight-related disparities in health and well-being outcomes (specifically, we will assess whether the proposal's significance, specific aims, research design and methods, and communications plan take into account: intention, ability, and approaches to address health disparities/health equity; and whether the research team, including consultants, has sufficient experience in research that addresses disparities or equity issues or with the populations and settings of interest);
- degree to which the strategies are widely applicable, feasible, and sustainable;
- clarity of study goals, hypotheses, methods, and outcomes;
- use of a clear theoretical framework, conceptual model, or rationale;
- scientific rigor of proposed research and analytic methods, including quality of the measures and data to be used;
- research qualifications and experience of the investigator(s) and appropriateness of disciplines and perspectives represented;
- appropriateness of proposed budget and project time line, including the realistic feasibility of completing the project within the specified funding period;
- approaches for communicating and disseminating research results to advocates, decision-makers, policymakers, and scientists that go beyond an exclusive focus on peer-reviewed publications and/or academic conference presentations; and
- the presence of any real or perceived conflict of interest (either financial or other personal considerations).

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A national advisory committee reviews Healthy Eating Research proposals and makes funding recommendations to Foundation staff. All funding decisions are made by RWJF. RWJF does not provide individual critiques of proposals submitted.

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, we require grantees to participate in the evaluation.

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. We may ask project directors to participate in periodic meetings and 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.

APPLICANT SURVEY PROCESS

For selected programs, the project director of the proposal will be contacted after the deadline by SSRS, an independent research firm. The project director will be asked to complete a brief, online survey about the proposal process and applicant characteristics. This voluntary questionnaire will take no more than 15 minutes to complete. Responses provided to SSRS will not impact the funding decision for your proposal in any way.

SSRS will protect the confidentiality of your responses. RWJF will not receive any data that links your name with your survey responses. The information received will help us measure the effectiveness of RWJF grantmaking and improve the grant proposal experience.

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

In order to ensure that HER research is made accessible to a wide and diverse audience, grantees of the *HER Round 11 Large-Scale Grants* who publish HER data and findings in peer-reviewed publications must do so in open access journals or must include funds in their budgets to cover the cost of making the resulting publications open access (typically \$3,000–\$5,000 per manuscript).

HOW TO APPLY

Applications for this solicitation must be submitted electronically via the RWJF online system.

To apply for HER Round 11, visit www.rwjf.org/cfp/her11 and click on the Apply Online link.

If you have not already done so, you will be required to register at MyRWJF at <http://my.rwjf.org> before you begin the application process. Applicants should log in to the system and familiarize themselves with

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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.

There are two phases in the application process:

Phase 1: Concept Papers

All applicants must submit: 1) a concept paper narrative of up to three pages (1.5 line spacing) describing the study, including overall budget and project timeline estimates; and 2) biosketches for key personnel. The deadline to submit concept papers for small- and large-scale grants is July 18, 2018 (3 p.m. ET). Applicants must follow the instructions and use the templates provided in the RWJF online system.

Phase 2: Full Proposals (if invited)

Selected Phase 1 applicants will be invited to submit a full proposal narrative of up to 15 pages (1.5 line spacing) accompanied by a budget and budget narrative and additional supporting documents. Applicants must follow the instructions and use the templates provided in the RWJF online system. The deadline to submit full proposals for small-scale grants is September 26, 2018 (3 p.m. ET) and October 10, 2018 (3 p.m. ET) for large-scale grants. Please see table below for complete list of key dates and deadlines for each type of grant. NOTE: Those submitting full proposals for the large-scale grants, will require an additional two–three pages focused on study methods.

Late Submissions

RWJF does not accept proposals submitted after the deadline. In accord with RWJF’s Guiding Principle to treat everyone with fairness and respect, RWJF’s deadline policy applies to all applicants. Applicants are expected to notify the program administrator immediately if experiencing difficulty with the online proposal system that may interfere with a timely submission. To do so, click on the “Contact Us” link found in the “Resources” area on the left side of most screens within the online proposal site. We encourage you to submit your proposal in advance of the deadline so that any unforeseen difficulties, e.g., technical problems, may be addressed well before the deadline.

Please direct inquiries to:

Healthy Eating Research

Phone: (800) 578-8636

Email: healthyeating@duke.edu

PROGRAM DIRECTION

Direction and technical assistance for this program is provided by Duke University, which serves as the national program office located at:

Duke Global Health Institute

310 Trent Drive

Duke Box 90519

Durham, NC 27708

Phone: (800) 578-8636

Email: healthyeating@duke.edu

Website: www.healthyeatingresearch.org

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Responsible staff members at the national program office are:

- Mary Story, PhD, RD, director
- Megan Lott, MPH, RD, deputy director

Responsible staff members at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation are:

- Tina Kauh, PhD, MS, *senior program officer*
- Alonzo Plough, PhD, *chief science officer and vice president, Research-Evaluation-Learning*
- Jennie Day-Burget, *communications officer*
- Sofia Kounelias, *senior program financial analyst*

KEY DATES AND DEADLINES

(For all grant types; See table below for separate key dates/deadlines for small-scale vs. large-scale grants.)

May 23–July 18, 2018 (3 p.m. ET)

RWJF online system available to applicants for concept papers.

June 6, 2018 (3 p.m. ET)

Optional applicant webinar. Registration is required. Please visit the program's [website](#) for complete details and to register.

July 18, 2018 (3 p.m. ET)

Concept papers due. Those submitted after July 18, 2018 (3 p.m. ET) will not be reviewed.

August 13, 2018

Applicants notified whether they are invited to submit a full proposal.

March 13–15, 2019

Healthy Eating Research Annual Meeting

Round 11 Grants	Concept Papers Due in RWJF Online System	Applicants Notified Whether They Are Invited to Submit a Full Proposal	Invited Full Proposals Due in RWJF Online System	Notification of Finalists	Awards Begin
Small-Scale Grants	July 18, 2018 (3 p.m. ET)	August 13, 2018	September 26, 2018 (3 p.m. ET)	November 26, 2018	February 1, 2019
Large-Scale Grants	July 18, 2018 (3 p.m. ET)	August 13, 2018	October 10, 2018 (3 p.m. ET)	December 14, 2018	February 1, 2019

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ABOUT THE ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON FOUNDATION

For more than 40 years the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation has worked to improve health and health care. We are working with others to build a national Culture of Health, enabling everyone in America to live longer, healthier lives. For more information, visit rwjf.org. Follow the Foundation on Twitter at www.rwjf.org/twitter or on Facebook at www.rwjf.org/facebook.

Sign up to receive email alerts on upcoming calls for proposals at www.rwjf.org/manage-your-subscriptions.html.

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