

2016 Call for Proposals

Concept Paper: Multiple Deadlines—See Pages 11 and 12

HEALTHY EATING RESEARCH: BUILDING EVIDENCE TO PREVENT CHILDHOOD OBESITY ROUND 10 AND RWJF NEW CONNECTIONS

BACKGROUND

Childhood obesity is one of the most serious threats to the health of our nation. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF), through its commitment to reversing the childhood obesity epidemic, has provided national leadership in efforts to achieve a healthy weight for all of our nation's children, especially those in lower-income communities and communities of color. This landmark work continues today as part of its vision to build a national Culture of Health that will enable all Americans to live longer and healthier lives, now and for generations to come. Building a Culture of Health requires action in four areas: making health a shared value among everyone in our diverse society; increasing collaboration within and across sectors; creating healthier and more equitable communities; and improving the integration of the health and health care sectors.¹ Accordingly, the Foundation's efforts to ensure that all children grow up at a healthy weight relies on building the evidence to identify promising and effective strategies that catalyze and support change in those action areas.

Healthy Eating Research: Building Evidence to Prevent Childhood Obesity is an RWJF national program. The program supports research on environmental and policy strategies with strong potential to promote healthy eating among children to prevent childhood obesity, especially among groups at highest risk for obesity: black, Latino, American Indian, Asian/Pacific Islander, and children who live in lower-income communities (urban, suburban, and/or rural). Findings are expected to advance RWJF's efforts to help all children achieve a healthy weight, promote health equity, and build a Culture of Health.

This call for proposals (CFP) is for two types of awards aimed at providing advocates, decision-makers, and policymakers with evidence to reverse the childhood obesity epidemic. The award types are: Round 10 grants and RWJF *New Connections* grants awarded through the *Healthy Eating Research* program. The two funding opportunities are described in more detail beginning on page 2.

THE PROGRAM

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

- Establish a research base for policy and environmental factors that influence healthy eating and body weight in children, as well as effective policy and environmental strategies for helping all children achieve a healthy weight and promoting equity.
- Build a vibrant, multidisciplinary field of research and a diverse network of researchers.

¹ RWJF Culture of Health. 2016. "Building a Culture of Health." Accessed January 15, 2016. www.cultureofhealth.org/

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- Ensure that findings are communicated effectively to inform policies and guide the development of effective solutions.

Healthy Eating Research issues CFPs to solicit scientifically rigorous, solution-oriented proposals from investigators representing diverse disciplines and backgrounds. The program's overall aims are to identify strategies likely to have important population-level impacts and to provide advocates, decision-makers, and policymakers with evidence to guide and accelerate effective actions to reverse the childhood obesity epidemic, particularly among children at highest risk. You can learn more about *Healthy Eating Research* at www.healthyeatingresearch.org.

Funding Opportunities

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

- Round 10 grants
- RWJF *New Connections* grants awarded through *Healthy Eating Research*

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

Priority Topic Areas

RWJF funds efforts at the organizational, community, state, and federal levels to change public and institutional policies and environments in ways that promote improved nutrition and physical activity—both of which are critical to energy balance and ensuring that children in America grow up at a healthy weight. RWJF is particularly interested in supporting efforts that will impact those at highest risk (e.g., black, Latino, American Indian, Asian/Pacific Islander, and children living in lower-income 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 building a Culture of Health that enables all individuals to lead healthy lives now and for generations to come by supporting efforts that align with the action areas described in the *Background* section. The Foundation has four objectives related to food, nutrition, and healthy eating that will help to ensure that children, particularly those at greatest risk for obesity, grow up at a healthy weight. These objectives are:

1. Ensure that all children enter kindergarten at a healthy weight.
2. Make a healthy school environment the norm and not the exception across the United States.
3. Make healthy foods and beverages the affordable, available, and desired choice in all neighborhoods and communities.
4. Eliminate the consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages among 0- to 5-year-olds.

The majority of grant funds (approximately 90%) for Round 10 grants and RWJF *New Connections* grants awarded through *Healthy Eating Research* will be allocated to studies focused on some aspect

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related to one or more of these objectives. The remaining grant funds will support other topics of established or emerging importance.

Research studies must focus on environmental or policy approaches with strong potential to reduce excess calorie intake needed to help children achieve and maintain a healthy weight. We rely on researchers' creativity to generate innovative, solution-oriented, policy-relevant environmental and policy studies that have the likelihood of being generalizable to other communities or localities in the United States and can eliminate ethnic/racial, income, and/or geographic disparities in childhood obesity rates.

Topics of interest for this CFP target the four RWJF objectives listed above. Possible studies could 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 (e.g., Child and Adult Care Food Program, School Breakfast Program, School Lunch Program, Summer Food Service Program)];
- Policies and practices in child-care settings; schools; out-of-school-time settings; restaurants; retail food outlets; health care settings; and workplaces;
- Population-level prevention strategies related to pre- and perinatal determinants of childhood obesity;
- Policies, programs, or environmental changes aimed at increasing access to, affordability of, and/or demand for healthy foods and beverages (e.g., reforms to agricultural systems; healthy food financing initiatives; nutrition prescriptions; pricing incentives; tap water access) and 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, cap and trade systems for sugar);
- Consumer attitudes about healthy/unhealthy foods and beverages and awareness of the impact of those foods and beverages on children's health.

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 previously funded through the program.

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, including pregnant women and soon-to-be parents.

All studies must have the potential to impact groups at highest risk for obesity (e.g., black, Latino, American Indian, Asian/Pacific Islander, and children living in lower-income communities), with the aim of promoting equity.

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For Round 10, up to one-third of the funds available will be earmarked for studies focused on any of the following underserved geographic locations or populations:

1. Rural areas of the United States, including the Appalachian region as defined by the Appalachian Regional Commission (www.arc.gov);
2. Asian/Pacific Islanders; and/or
3. American Indians.

Types of Studies

Studies could include any of the following: experimental or quasi-experimental studies; secondary analyses of existing datasets; evaluations of planned interventions or natural experiments; retrospective analyses of policy change successes; case studies; financial, economic, or cost-effectiveness studies; health impact assessments; statistical modeling studies; policy and legal analyses to identify or evaluate promising interventions; quantitative meta-analyses; and measurement studies to develop, test, and validate methods and tools.

Descriptions of the Round 10 grants and RWJF *New Connections* grants awarded through *Healthy Eating Research* are outlined below.

Round 10 Grants

The Round 10 grants represent the majority of RWJF's investment in research through this program. These grants have a two-phase application process, including an initial three-page concept paper and subsequent full proposal (if invited).

RWJF New Connections Grants Awarded Through Healthy Eating Research

RWJF *New Connections* grants awarded through *Healthy Eating Research* have a two-phase application process, including an initial three-page concept paper and subsequent full proposal (if invited).

These grants support policy-relevant research of early-career investigators from backgrounds that are underrepresented in research disciplines supported by RWJF or historically disadvantaged. For the purpose of this CFP, only new investigators, defined as individuals who received their doctorate or terminal degree within 10 years prior to the award date for the grant (after December 1, 2006), are eligible to apply for these awards. (See full *Eligibility Criteria* starting on p. 6.)

This funding opportunity is offered in collaboration with RWJF's *New Connections* program (www.rwjf-newconnections.org), which is designed to expand the diversity of perspectives that inform RWJF programming and introduce new researchers and scholars to the Foundation.

The grants will support research development of investigators who are in the early stages of a research career and bring enriching perspectives and experiences to the childhood obesity research field. Eligible researchers may also apply for the larger-scale Round 10 grants, but not simultaneously for the same research proposal. Investigators who are awarded RWJF *New Connections* grants through *Healthy Eating Research* will become part of a broader network of researchers representing both of these RWJF

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programs. Grantees will be eligible to participate in all RWJF *New Connections* and *Healthy Eating Research* meetings, training, and networking events, and technical assistance offerings.

Mentoring for RWJF *New Connections* investigators funded through *Healthy Eating Research* will be coordinated and funded by the *Healthy Eating Research* national program office. Grant applicants are required to identify a proposed mentor in their application materials. Staff members from the national program office are available to provide advice and guidance to applicants on identifying an appropriate mentor for the proposed research project. The proposed mentor should have expertise appropriate to the investigator's specific research project and broad career development needs. The proposed mentor must submit a letter of support with the applicant's full proposal (if invited). It is recommended that the applicant ask his or her proposed mentor to review and provide feedback on the concept paper and subsequent full proposal (if invited) prior to submission.

Overall Study Guidelines for All Grants

- The two types of awards described in this CFP (Round 10 grants and RWJF *New Connections* grants awarded through *Healthy Eating Research*) cover the same objectives and types of studies. Given the limited scope and short duration of these projects, measures of changes in weight or BMI are not required, but are encouraged if data are available. Objective measures of food sales or purchases, dietary consumption (especially consumption of non-nutritive excess calories), or estimated reductions in average daily caloric intake are encouraged. 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, including pregnant women and soon-to-be parents, from lower-income communities and racial and ethnic populations at highest risk for obesity.
- Studies focused solely on behavior change at the individual level or nutrition education interventions will not be funded. However, studies could compare the impact of environmental changes with or without nutrition education or promotion, or identify the most effective components of a multicomponent intervention.
- 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. Retrospective studies of policy changes that can reliably evaluate effects on reducing excess calorie intake, youth obesity prevalence, or BMI are particularly encouraged.
- Researchers should seek input from relevant stakeholders—such as advocates, policymakers, school or community leaders, parents, or children—to develop feasible and policy-relevant 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.

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- 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.

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:

Round 10 Grants

Approximately \$2.4 million will be awarded through Round 10. Each grant will award up to \$190,000 for a maximum funding period of 18 months. Approximately one-third of the funds available under Round 10 will be earmarked for studies focused on any of the following underserved geographic locations or populations: 1) rural areas of the United States, including the Appalachian region as defined by the Appalachian Regional Commission (www.arc.gov); 2) Asian/Pacific Islanders; and 3) American Indians.

RWJF New Connections Grants Awarded Through Healthy Eating Research

Up to two RWJF *New Connections* grants will be awarded through the *Healthy Eating Research* program. Awards will be for 12- to 18-month grants of up to \$100,000 each.

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.

For RWJF New Connections Grants Awarded Through Healthy Eating Research

In addition to the eligibility criteria listed above, investigators must, at the time of application:

- have completed a doctorate or terminal degree (e.g., PhD, MD, JD) within 10 years of the start date of the grant (after December 1, 2006);
- be a U.S. Citizen, permanent resident, or individual granted Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) status by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services at the time of application;

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- not be related by blood or marriage to any Officer or Trustee of RWJF, or be a descendant of its founder, Robert Wood Johnson. The Officers are the Chairman of the Board of Trustees; President and CEO; Chief of Staff; Executive Vice President, General Counsel; Secretary; Assistant Secretary; Treasurer; and Assistant Treasurer of the Foundation;
- be affiliated with or sponsored by a university or an organization that is tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and is not a private foundation under Section 509(a) of the Code. The sponsoring institution must agree to receive and administer the grant;
- be from a background that has been historically disadvantaged or underrepresented in research disciplines supported by RWJF. The term “historically disadvantaged” refers to the challenges facing individuals because of their race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or similar factors. Eligible individuals include, but are not limited to, individuals from ethnic and racial groups historically underrepresented in research disciplines, first-generation college graduates, and people from lower-income communities. These examples are intended to be illustrative, not exclusive. Applicants who do not fall within one of these categories but who believe they are from a historically disadvantaged or underrepresented background will have an opportunity to describe their individual circumstances as part of the online application process;
- hold a faculty or other research position in a university setting, or hold an equivalent position in a non-university setting, such as an independent research organization;
- demonstrate evidence of research skills relevant to the proposed study;
- propose a project that spans 12 to 18 months in duration;
- devote at least 25 percent of their time to the project; and
- not have received previous funding from RWJF as principal investigator.

DIVERSITY STATEMENT

Consistent with RWJF values, this program embraces diversity and inclusion across multiple dimensions, such as race, ethnicity, gender, disability, age, and socioeconomic status. We strongly encourage applications from investigators who will help us expand the perspectives and experiences we bring to our work. We believe that the more we include diverse perspectives and experiences in our work, the more successful we will be as we strive together to build a Culture of Health, enabling all in our diverse society to lead healthier lives, now, and for generations to come.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Invited full proposals will be reviewed by a committee composed of 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 policies and environmental changes or strategies that hold strong potential to support all children in achieving a healthy weight while also promoting equity;

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- ability to inform RWJF's food/nutrition-related objectives and advocacy efforts regarding childhood obesity;
- relevance and timeliness of the study to inform policy action;
- relevance to the needs of low-resource communities and children in lower-income communities and racial and ethnic minority populations at highest risk for obesity;
- 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 timeline;
- 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;
- the presence of any real or perceived conflict of interest (either financial or other personal considerations).

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

As part of the application process, finalists will be asked to disclose any financial arrangements (e.g., fees, funding, employment, stock holdings) or relationships that might compromise the credibility or perceived credibility of the findings, mirroring the types of disclosure requested by leading journals.

Grantees are required to submit periodic information needed for overall project performance monitoring and management. Grantees are expected to meet RWJF requirements for the submission of narrative and financial reports and bibliographies. Grantees also will be required to respond to periodic surveys and other communications sent from *Healthy Eating Research*.

RWJF may select and fund an independent research group to conduct an evaluation of the *Healthy Eating Research* program. As a condition of accepting RWJF funds, grantees are required to provide information requested for program evaluation activities.

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APPLICANT SURVEY PROCESS

To help us measure the effectiveness of RWJF grantmaking and improve the grant application experience, we will survey the principal investigator listed in applications submitted under this CFP. Shortly after the application deadline, the principal investigator will be contacted by Princeton Survey Research Associates International (PSRAI), an independent research firm, and asked to complete a brief, online survey about the application process and applicant characteristics. This voluntary questionnaire will take no more than 15 minutes to complete. Responses provided to PSRAI will not impact the funding decision for the application in any way.

PSRAI will protect the confidentiality of the responses. RWJF will not receive any data that links a name with the survey responses.

If you have any questions about the survey or the use of the data, feel free to email applicantfeedback@rwjf.org.

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, 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. Principal investigators are expected to participate in annual grantee meetings. The full proposal templates in the RWJF online system contain guidelines for travel budgeting.

HOW TO APPLY

Round 10 Proposals

Applications for this solicitation must be submitted via the RWJF online system. Visit www.rwjf.org/cfp/her10 and use 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.

There are two phases in the application process:

Phase 1: Concept Paper

All applicants must submit: 1) a concept paper narrative of up to three pages (1.5 line spacing) describing the study, and 2) biosketches for key personnel. 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 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.

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All proposals must be submitted through the RWJF online system. Applicants should log in to the system and familiarize themselves with 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. In fairness to all applicants, the program will not accept late proposals.

Deadlines, requirements for application materials, and information about funding for approved studies are listed in the *Key Dates and Deadlines* section.

RWJF New Connections Proposals Through Healthy Eating Research

Applications for this solicitation must be submitted via the RWJF online system. Visit www.rwjf.org/cfp/hernc9 and use the *Apply Online* link for this solicitation. 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.

There are two phases in the application process:

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All applicants must submit: 1) a concept paper narrative of up to three pages (1.5 line spacing) describing the study, and 2) biosketches for key personnel. Applicants must follow the instructions and use the templates provided in the RWJF online system.

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Deadlines, requirements for application materials, and information about funding for approved studies are listed in the *Key Dates and Deadlines* section.

Please direct inquiries to:

Healthy Eating Research

Phone: (800) 578-8636

Email: healthyeating@umn.edu

PROGRAM DIRECTION

Direction and technical assistance for this program are provided by Duke University and the University of Minnesota, which serve as the national program office located at:

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Healthy Eating Research

Phone: (800) 578-8636

Email: healthyeating@umn.edu

Website: www.healthyeatingresearch.org

Responsible staff members at the national program office are:

- Mary Story, PhD, RD, *program director*
- Laura Klein, MPH, *deputy director*
- Megan Lott, MPH, RDN, *senior associate for policy and research*

Responsible staff members at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation are:

- Tina Kauh, PhD, MS, *program officer*
- John Lumpkin, MD, MPH, *senior vice president and director*
- Jan A. Mihalow, PhD, MSM, *program financial analyst*

KEY DATES AND DEADLINES

Round 10 Grants

March 9–August 3, 2016 (3 p.m. ET)

RWJF online system for concept papers available to applicants.* Applicants may submit a concept paper for either of the two deadlines listed in the table below. Concept papers submitted after August 3, 2016 (3 p.m. ET) will not be reviewed.

Invited full proposals must be submitted via the RWJF online system.* The full proposal deadline will correspond to the deadline under which the concept paper was submitted, as shown in the table below.

Round 10 Grants Only	Concept Papers Due in RWJF Online System*	Applicants Notified as to Whether or Not They Are Invited to Submit a Full Proposal	Invited Full Proposals Due in RWJF Online System*	Notification of Finalists	Awards Begin
Deadline 1	May 11, 2016 (3 p.m. ET)	May 25, 2016	July 20, 2016 (3 p.m. ET)	Late September 2016	November 15, 2016
Deadline 2	August 3, 2016 (3 p.m. ET)	August 17, 2016	October 12, 2016 (3 p.m. ET)	Mid-December 2016	February 1, 2017

Spring 2017

Healthy Eating Research Annual Meeting.

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** All concept papers and invited full proposals must be submitted via the RWJF online system. Visit www.rwjf.org/cfp/her10 and click on the Apply Online link for this solicitation. If you haven't already done so, you will be required to register at MyRWJF at <http://my.rwjf.org> before you begin the application process. All applicants should log in to the system and familiarize themselves with online application requirements well before the final submission deadline. Staff may not be able to assist all applicants in the final 24 hours before the submission deadline. In fairness to all applicants, late submissions will not be accepted.*

RWJF New Connections Grants Awarded Through Healthy Eating Research

March 9, 2016

RWJF online system for concept papers available to applicants.*

June 1, 2016 (3 p.m. ET)

Deadline for receipt of concept papers.*

June 15, 2016

Applicants will be contacted by email regarding whether or not they are invited to submit a full proposal. Invited full proposals must be submitted via the RWJF online system.*

August 24, 2016 (3 p.m. ET)

Deadline for receipt of invited full proposals.*

Late October 2016

Notification of finalists.

December 1, 2016

Awards begin.

Spring 2017

Healthy Eating Research Annual Meeting.

** All concept papers and invited full proposals must be submitted via the RWJF online system. Visit www.rwjf.org/cfp/hernc9 and click on the Apply Online link. If you haven't already done so, you will be required to register at MyRWJF at <http://my.rwjf.org> before you begin the application process. All applicants should log in to the system and familiarize themselves with online application requirements well before the final submission deadline. Staff may not be able to assist all applicants in the final 24 hours before the submission deadline. In fairness to all applicants, late submissions will not be accepted.*

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

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live longer, healthier lives. For more information, visit www.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/funding.

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