

Healthy Eating Research

Special Solicitation on Beverage Consumption in Early Childhood

Frequently Asked Questions



2018 Special Solicitation Frequently Asked Questions

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1) Beverage Consumption in Early Childhood Grants

What is the Beverage Consumption in Early Childhood funding opportunity?

The Beverage Consumption in Early Childhood grants are offered through the **Special Solicitation on Beverage Consumption in Early Childhood [Call for Proposals \(CFP\)](#)**. This CFP focuses exclusively on research that informs the development of policy and environmental strategies that decrease consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages and/or increase access to and consumption of safe water among 0- to 5-year-olds in the United States.

What is the maximum award available through this funding opportunity? How many grants will be awarded?

Each grant will award up to \$300,000 for up to 24 months. Approximately \$2.1 Million will be awarded under this CFP, resulting in the funding of about 7 grants.

How do I apply for a grant?

Applications for this solicitation must be submitted via the RWJF online system. Visit the [website](#) and click on the “Apply Online” link for this solicitation. If you have not already done so, you will be required to register at <http://my.rwjf.org> before you begin the application process.

There are two stages in the application process.

Stage 1: Concept Paper

Applicants must submit: 1) a concept paper narrative of up to three pages (1.5 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and use the templates provided in the RWJF online system; not doing so will result in your concept paper being withdrawn from consideration for funding.

Stage 2: Full Proposals (if invited)

Selected Stage 1 applicants will be invited to submit a full proposal of no more than 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.

Why do you first use the concept paper instead of accepting a full proposal from all applicants?

The concept paper method saves your time and ours. We review all of the concept papers and invite a limited number of applicants to submit a more detailed full proposal for further consideration.

How detailed should my budget be in the concept paper?

You should **not** include a budget in your concept paper. As part of the concept paper stage, applicants are required to provide only the total amount of funding requested. Applicants invited to submit a full proposal will need to provide detailed budget information via a budget worksheet and budget narrative.

When is the deadline for the concept paper?

October 3, 2018 (3 p.m. ET). Concept papers submitted after the deadline will not be reviewed.

When can I expect to be notified on the status of my concept paper?

October 17, 2018.

How can I check the status of my proposal?

Stage 1: Concept Paper

Upon submission of the concept paper, you will receive a confirmation email from the RWJF online system. Please ensure that you have confirmation of your concept paper submission. Your concept paper will be available to you via <http://my.rwjf.org> for one year from date of submission.

Stage 2: Invited Full Proposals

Upon the successful submission of your proposal, you will receive a confirmation email from the RWJF online system. Please ensure that you have confirmation of your proposal submission. Your full proposal will be available to you via <http://my.rwjf.org> for one year from date of submission.

Note: We expect to receive many proposals. If you have a question about a specific proposal, please send an email to healthyating@duke.edu or call us at 800-578-8636. Please be sure to include the name of the applicant institution, funding mechanism, the principal investigator, and contact information in your communication.

How will proposals be reviewed?

Invited proposals will be reviewed by a committee composed of national program office (NPO) staff, a senior program advisory panel, other expert reviewers, and RWJF senior staff. All funding decisions are made by RWJF. Complete selection criteria for proposals can be found in the CFP.

When will grants be awarded? When will I be notified if I have been awarded a grant or not?

Deadline for receipt of invited full proposals: November 28, 2018 (3 p.m. ET)

Notification of finalists: January 9, 2019

Awards begin: March 1, 2019

Applicants will be contacted via email and informed whether or not they have been selected as finalists.

How can I get more information about this funding opportunity?

You may contact the *Healthy Eating Research* national program office, at **healthyeating@duke.edu** or 800-578-8636.

2) Eligibility

We have two distinct grant proposal ideas. Can we submit both? Is there any chance we could be funded for both?

Yes and yes. Your organization can apply for more than one grant through this funding opportunity. The proposals will be reviewed independently; however, following the completed review period, we will also consider the uniqueness of the project in relation to the mix of potentially funded projects and geographic dispersion of grantees as we make our final funding recommendations to RWJF.

If we have received RWJF funding in the past, can we apply for another RWJF grant?

Individuals who have received RWJF funding in the past are eligible to apply for these grants.

Is it possible for an organization to be awarded more than one grant through *Healthy Eating Research*?

Yes, an organization may apply for multiple grants under this program. Geographic dispersion of grantees and the mix of study topics will be considered in the final selection process, but are not primary considerations.

Can an investigator participate in more than one proposal, or submit multiple proposals?

Yes, an investigator may participate in more than one proposal. For example, an investigator might serve as the principal investigator on one proposal and a co-investigator on another proposal. In making final selections, however, the Foundation will consider the geographic and organizational representation of grantees.

Can two organizations submit a joint proposal?

Yes, two organizations may submit a joint proposal. However, one organization must serve as the recipient of the grant from RWJF. The organization receiving the grant may choose to establish a subcontract or consulting arrangement with the other organization(s). You will need to identify only one principal investigator (PI) and you also may choose to name one co-principal investigator (Co-PI). There is no limit to the number of co-investigators. If the proposal is funded, the person listed as PI will have ultimate responsibility for the grant.

Will you award grants to multiple institutions for the same project?

No. One organization must serve as the recipient of the grant from RWJF. However, subcontracts to multiple institutions are allowed for the same project through one grant award. The organization that received the grant will be responsible for managing the subcontracts. The organization receiving the grant may also enter into consulting arrangements with other individuals or institutions.

Are partnerships encouraged and can a partner fund the intervention?

Partnerships are not specifically encouraged, but they are welcome. For example, a partner could fund an intervention to be evaluated by the *Healthy Eating Research* grant. The partnership will be reviewed for how it may affect the objectivity, or perceived objectivity, of the proposed research. Sources of any proposed co-funding will need to be clearly identified in the proposal.

What types of organizations are eligible to receive a grant under this program?

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.

My organization is not classified as a 501(c)(3) type organization. Can I still apply?

Yes. While preference is given to tax exempt organizations classified as 501(c)(3) organizations by the I.R.S., other types of organizations may apply. Organizations that are not classified as 501(c)(3) organizations may be required to submit additional documentation, or complete additional reporting requirements if a grant is awarded.

Are there restrictions or preferences regarding nonprofit collaborations with for-profit firms?

There are no specific restrictions or preferences. We will review all collaborations for possible actual or perceived conflicts of interest and for issues that might affect the perceived credibility of the research results.

Can governmental entities such as USDA, NIH, the Indian Health Service, and local public health departments apply to this program?

Yes, governmental entities may apply. In some cases, additional documentation/ paperwork may be required if your organization is chosen as a finalist. The *Healthy Eating Research* national program office would advise you about these requirements prior to grant award.

Will the Foundation fund private individuals?

No. We do not award grants to private individuals.

Can an applicant organization be from outside the United States?

No. We do not award grants to organizations from outside the U.S. or its territories.

Will you consider funding pilot intervention studies?

Yes. Please see the [call for proposals](#) for a listing of the types of studies that could be funded under this CFP.

Will you fund community demonstration projects?

No, *Healthy Eating Research* awards grants for research studies. This program does not fund demonstration projects.

Will you fund measurement development studies?

Yes, we will fund measurement development studies.

Will you fund dissertation studies?

No, *Healthy Eating Research* does not fund dissertation studies at this time.

Is it required that the PI have a PhD, JD, MD, etc., or would a master's degree be acceptable?

The experience and qualifications of the research team is one of the primary criteria for proposal review. A doctorate or other terminal degree (e.g., PhD, JD, MD) is preferred for the principal investigator.

Can research associates/postdoctoral researchers be principal investigators?

Yes, research associates and postdoctoral researchers may serve as principal investigators on *Healthy Eating Research* grants. However, you should check your institution's policy regarding this, as some universities only allow faculty members to be principal investigators on grants.

What sort of research expertise are you looking for in an investigator?

In general, research expertise should include a working knowledge of formulating research hypotheses, crafting an appropriate study design and methodology, analyzing and reporting on the findings, and then translating these findings with the potential that they can be widely adopted. It is also important for the research team to have a track record in policy-related research. We also encourage a multidisciplinary team of investigators.

3) Proposal Content and Programmatic Questions

Where can I learn more about HER's national research agenda and priority topic areas for this grant opportunity?

This CFP focuses exclusively on research that informs the development of policy and environmental strategies that decrease consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages and/or increase access to and consumption of safe water among 0- to 5-year-olds in the United States. The priority topic areas included in this [CFP](#) emerged from a 6-month long project led by HER to develop a national research agenda to reduce the consumption of SSBs and increase access to and consumption of safe water among 0- to 5-year-olds. **For more information regarding the development of the national research agenda, the full list of key issue areas, and the specific research questions within each of these areas that may be of interest to RWJF and HER, please see the full research agenda [here](#).**

Do all proposals need to include both water and SSB components? What about proposals focused on other beverages such as milk or 100% juice?

All proposals must focus on research that informs the development of policy and environmental strategies that either decrease consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs) or increase access to and consumption of safe water among 0- to 5-year-olds in the United States. Proposals can focus on both SSBs and water. Proposals that include a secondary focus on other beverages such as 100% juice or milk will be accepted; however, the primary focus of the proposal should be on SSBs and/or water.

How does HER define SSBs? How does HER define safe water?

SSBs are defined as drinks with added sugar, including beverages such as soft drinks, fruit-flavored drinks, sweetened tea, sports drinks, and flavored milks. We are not considering 100% juice to be a SSB.

Safe drinking water is defined as potable water that could be obtained from a tap (faucet, sink, or fountain), bottled water, or other similar culturally appropriate sources.

What is the target age range for this CFP?

All proposed studies in response to this CFP must impact 0- to 5-year-olds. However, studies do not have to include the entire age range of 0 to 5. For example, you can choose to focus only on one age group, such as preschool age children.

Will studies be considered if their primary target is parents/caregivers of young children?

Yes, as long as the applicant can make the connection to how targeting parents/caregivers of young children will lead to changes in children's beverage consumption these studies will be considered.

Can you give an example of a promising or effective policy or environmental change strategy to reduce SSB consumption and/or increase safe water access or consumption?

Some examples of policy strategies or environmental changes relevant for this CFP, include:

- Changing SSB labeling or packaging to discourage consumption
- Reducing physical access to SSBs in settings such as Early Care and Education centers and homes
- Increasing the visibility of water in the food/beverage retail environment
- Making water the default beverage choice in settings where children are served meals

Are you interested in proposals that address issues of water access such as infrastructure or plumbing?

We acknowledge that access to safe water is not universal; however, it is beyond the scope of HER and this CFP to address issues such as infrastructure, plumbing, and water remediation.

Do you have a certain city or region size that you are looking for in terms of the project sites?

No, this is a national program and we hope to receive proposals from across the U.S. in a variety of geographic locations for studies of various-sized communities.

Are rural populations considered to be underserved or special populations?

Yes, rural populations where risk of childhood obesity or low-diet quality is high are of interest to *Healthy Eating Research*.

Will proposals that target communities with higher-than-average BMI be given consideration even if they are not lower-income or racial or ethnic minority communities?

The goal of *Healthy Eating Research* is to help all children achieve optimal nutrition and a healthy weight. Low diet quality and obesity rates are highest in lower-income and certain ethnic and racial populations. If your population includes neither lower-income nor racial and ethnic minority

children, you will need to specify clearly in your proposal how your results will be relevant to these high-risk groups.

Does a proposal need to address both lower-income and racial and ethnic minority populations or can it address just one group?

Your study can include lower-income and/or racial and ethnic minority populations at risk for obesity.

How is lower-income defined in this context?

Lower-income may be defined by the researcher since there are different ways to define and measure income levels. We do not have a specific cutoff for defining lower-income populations. However, there are benchmarks that might be useful to investigators. In child-care, school, preschool, and after-school settings it is useful to use the measure of percentage of children living in households with incomes below 185 percent of the federal poverty line, a common threshold for meal and snack subsidies for federal nutrition assistance programs.

Are there specific evaluation methods that are preferred?

No, the evaluation methods and the analysis will be driven by the research question asked. There can be a variety of designs that could include observation and measurement studies, secondary data analyses, analyses of the effect of natural variations in food policies and environments, as well as evaluating current programs and current policies. Survey research that might look at associations or correlations also could be included. Mixed-design (qualitative and quantitative) studies are also welcome.

Can you please provide more information about the requirement to include a representative of the community or stakeholder group targeted?

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation is committed to funding programs that are responsive to the needs of communities. Researchers should seek input from relevant stakeholders to develop feasible and policy-relevant studies. *Healthy Eating Research* requires grants to include at least one representative of the community or stakeholder group targeted as an ongoing adviser. Examples include advocates, community leaders, policy-makers, and child-care officials.

Do community stakeholders need to be identified in the full proposal?

Yes, at least one community stakeholder must be identified in the full proposal.

4) Budget and Co-Funding

What is the allowable indirect cost rate?

The Foundation's current indirect cost rate is 12 percent. The RWJF online application system contains RWJF Budget Preparation Guidelines and a complete explanation of indirect costs.

Are the indicated award amounts direct costs only or do they include both direct and indirect costs?

The indicated award amounts include both direct and indirect costs.

Do I need to submit a budget with my proposal?

Concept Papers

For the initial three-page concept paper, applicants should **not** submit a budget. Applicants will need to provide only the total amount of funding requested from RWJF.

Invited Full Proposals

Invited full proposal applicants will need to complete detailed budget worksheet and budget narrative documents. The RWJF online system for applicants contains detailed budget guidelines.

How detailed does the budget narrative need to be for the full proposal?

Applicants will need to complete a budget worksheet and narrative. The budget narrative should demonstrate that the finances are consistent with the proposed study design and RWJF budget guidelines, and that the project is financially feasible. If applicable, the budget narrative must include the amount and source of any in-kind support or co-funding.

What can grant funds be used for?

RWJF grant funds may be used for project staff salaries, consultant fees, data collection and analysis, dataset procurement, meetings, supplies, project-related travel, and other direct 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.

I would like to apply for funds to build onto an existing grant. What information do I need to provide?

Describe in the proposal narrative the existing study, its funding level, the funding source(s), and the ways in which your proposal will leverage or supplement existing funding.

What if I am seeking additional support from other funders or I have already secured additional support from other funders?

If additional funding will be sought or required for the project you propose, please specify the source(s), amount, and uses of that funding in the budget, and provide written documentation that required funds will be awarded (if applicable). If you cannot provide documentation of an anticipated award, then indicate in your application materials the status of your requests to other funders. You also should indicate how critical the other funding will be to the success of the proposed project. Finalist applicants may be asked in the future to provide additional documentation about the status of their requests to other funders.

5) Selection Criteria

Will you provide the evaluation criteria to be used by the program in making these awards, with weights?

The evaluation criteria to be used in making funding decisions are outlined in the "Selection Criteria" section of the **call for proposals (CFPs)**. We do not assign weights to these criteria.

How will my proposal be evaluated?

The program grant review process is rigorous to ensure quality, fairness, and integrity. All proposals will undergo an initial screening for completeness and eligibility. Invited proposals will be reviewed by a committee composed of the national program office (NPO) faculty at Duke University, a senior program advisory panel, other expert reviewers, and RWJF senior staff. Please see the **CFP** for a complete listing of the selection criteria used in the proposal review process.

After the proposal review process, finalist applicants will be recommended to RWJF for funding. All funding decisions are made by RWJF.

What kinds of projects will NOT be funded?

Specific guidance on the types of studies that will and will not be funded is provided in the "Study Guidelines," "Eligibility Criteria," and "Selection Criteria" sections of the **CFP**.

Healthy Eating Research does NOT fund proposals that:

- Request funds for organizations outside of the U.S. 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.
- Request funds for individuals.
- Request funds for dissertation studies.
- Focus solely on nutrition education or individual behavior change. However, studies could compare the impact of environmental changes with or without nutrition education or promotion, or identify the most effective components of a multi-component intervention.

6) Notification and Funding

When will we be notified if we have been selected as a finalist or not? When will grants be awarded?

Stage 1: Concept Paper

The initial concept paper must be submitted by 3 p.m. ET on October 3, 2018. Applicants will be contacted via email and informed of whether or not they are invited to submit a full proposal on October 17, 2018.

Stage 2: Invited Full Proposals

Full proposals must be submitted by 3 p.m. ET on November 28, 2018. Finalists will be notified via email on January 9, 2019 and awards will begin March 1, 2019.