Healthy Eating Research

2019 Call for Proposals

Frequently Asked Questions



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1) All Round 12 Grants

What is the Round 12 funding opportunity?

The Round 12 grants are offered through the Healthy Eating Research 2019 Call for Proposals (CFP). Round 12 grants represent the majority of RWJF's investment in research through this program.

What is the maximum award available through the Round 12 grants funding opportunity? How many grants will be awarded?

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

- 1. *Small-Scale Grants*: Each grant will award up to \$200,000 for up to 18 months. Approximately 7 small-scale grants will be awarded under this CFP.
- 2. *Large-Scale Grants*: Each grant will award up to \$320,000 for up to 24 months. Approximately 2 large-scale grants will be awarded under this CFP.
- 3. *Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) Grants:* Each grant will award up to \$320,000 for up to 24 months. Approximately 2 CBPR grants will be awarded under this CFP.

How do I apply for a grant?

Applications for this solicitation must be submitted electronically via the RWJF online system. Visit <u>http://www.rwjf.org/cfp/her12</u> and click on the "Apply Online" link for this solicitation. If you have not already done so, you will be required to register at <u>http://my.rwjf.org</u> 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 line spacing) describing the study, including the total budget amount and project timeline estimate; and 2) biosketches for key personnel. The deadline to submit concept papers is July 31, 2019 (3 p.m. ET). Applicants must follow the instructions and use the templates provided in the RWJF online system.

Stage 2: Full Proposals (if invited)

Selected Stage 1 applicants will be invited to submit a full proposal narrative of up to 18 pages (1.5 line spacing) accompanied by a detailed budget spreadsheet 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 is October 2, 2019 (3 p.m. ET).

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. When reviewing concept papers, we aim to select those proposals we feel are the strongest in meeting the study parameters as outlined in the CFP, and that are aligned with the overall goals of our program. Some key things we look for include: actionable research with a policy, systems and environmental (PSE) focus, projects that are timely and policy-relevant, strong rationale for the proposed study, projects that have the greatest potential to be scalable, and appropriate qualifications of the PI and other key personnel.

How detailed should my budget be in the concept paper?

You should <u>not</u> 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 spreadsheet and budget narrative. Templates for the required budget documents will be provided at the full proposal stage, if invited.

When is the deadline for the concept paper?

There is one deadline for receipt of concept papers for small-scale grants, large-scale grants, and community-based participatory research grants:

• July 31, 2019 (3 p.m. ET).

Concept papers submitted after July 31, 2019 (3 p.m. ET) will not be reviewed.

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

Applicants for all grant types will be notified whether they are invited to submit a full proposal in mid-August 2019.

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; this will be necessary should any issues arise regarding your submission. Your concept paper will be available to you via http://my.rwif.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 <u>http://my.rwjf.org</u> 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 <u>healthyeating@duke.edu</u> 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, HER national advisory committee members, 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?

Applicants will be contacted via email and informed whether or not they have been selected as finalists. Notification of finalists for all grant types will occur in early December 2019. Awards will begin February 1, 2020.

How can I get more information about Round 12 grants?

Visit <u>www.rwjf.org/cfp/her12</u> or <u>Healthy Eating Research's</u> website to learn more. You may also contact the Healthy Eating Research national program office, at <u>healthyeating@duke.edu</u> or 800-578-8636.

2) Community-Based Participatory Research Grants

NOTE: The guidance provided in this section applies to Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) grant applicants only, not to applicants for Small-scale and Large-scale grants. The guidance provided throughout this document applies to ALL grant applicants, including CBPR grants.

Are there restrictions on who the community partner can be for Community-Based Participatory Research studies? Does it have to be a nonprofit and 501(c)(3)?

Community partners need to be established organizations or associated with a fiscal agent. The community organization does not need to be a nonprofit or 501(c)(3).

Can we submit an application for an ongoing partnership or project?

Yes, we accept applications from existing partnerships and projects, as long as they are for a research project that meets the overall grant parameters as outlined in the CFP. For Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) grants, studies <u>must</u> have in place established partnerships and relationships. Proposed research projects could be conducted as a supplement to existing studies, but if so, the project should have a new component or extension of a current project. In addition to the research design and methods, CBPR applicants will need to clearly describe the partnership(s) (list of existing and potential partners and roles, infrastructure for participation, history of the partnership), and clearly specify how partners will work together to complete and disseminate the findings of the research project, how anticipated results will help to address the health of the target community, and potential plans for future collaboration. A community partner could serve as Co-PI.

For Community-Based Participatory Research grants, does the budget need to be split evenly between the community and academic partners?

The total funding available for CBPR projects is up to \$320,000 for 24-months. This \$320,000 must include all research project expenses for both the researchers and any community partners. One organization must serve as the recipient of the grant from RWJF. This organization will be listed as the "Applicant Organization" in the online system. However, the organization that receives the grant may set up subcontracts to other institutions or individuals. The budget does not need to be equally split, but project leads should strive to ensure an equitable and appropriate allotment depending on the nature of your specific proposal. Budgets should be created collaboratively and should include both research and community organization expenses.

Where can I find additional guidance or resources regarding Community-Based Participatory Research?

<u>Community-based participatory research (CBPR)</u> is defined by NIH as scientific inquiry conducted in communities and in partnership with researchers. The process of scientific inquiry is such that community members, persons affected by the health condition, disability or issue under study, or other key stakeholders in the community's health have the opportunity to be full participants in each phase of the work (from conception - design - conduct - analysis - interpretation conclusions - communication of results). CBPR is characterized by substantial community input in the development of the grant application.

The following resources may be helpful if you have additional questions about the guiding principles and required components of community-based participatory research:

- Wallerstein, N, Duran B, Oetzel J, Minkler M. Community-Based Participatory Research for Health: Advancing Social and Health Equity 3rd Edition, 2018. John Wiley & Sons.
- Community Tool Box chapter on CBPR
- <u>PolicyLink brief</u> on "Community-Based Participatory Research: A Strategy for Building Healthy Communities and Promoting Health through Policy Change"
- Community-Campus Partnerships for Health
- Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality report on CBPR

3) 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 the funding opportunities described in this CFP. The proposals will be reviewed independently, within each funding opportunity. 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. It is rare that we will fund the same PI or project team for two grants.

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

Yes, individuals who have received HER or other RWJF funding in the past are eligible to apply for a Round 12 grant.

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 opportunity. 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 RWJF 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. This organization will be identified in the online system as the "Applicant Organization." The organization receiving the grant may choose to establish a subcontract or consulting arrangement with the other organization(s). You will need to identify 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. This organization will be listed as the "Applicant Organization" in the online system. However, subcontracts to multiple institutions are allowed for the same project through one grant award. The organization that receives the grant will need to manage the subcontracts. The organization receiving the grant may also enter into consulting arrangements with other individuals or institutions.

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 of organizations not meeting these criteria. 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 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 the grant award.

Will RWJF fund individuals?

No. We do not award grants to 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.

Can we submit an application for an ongoing partnership or project?

Yes, we accept applications from existing partnerships and projects, as long as they are for research projects that meet the overall grant parameters as outlined in the CFP. For all grants, it should be made clear in your proposal if this is a new component or extension of your project.

Will you consider funding pilot intervention studies?

Yes. Please see the CFP for a listing of the types of studies that could be funded.

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 not required, but is strongly 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, we encourage a multidisciplinary team of investigators. 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.

4) Proposal Content and Programmatic Questions

What topics are you most interested in for this CFP?

We are most interested in funding research projects that will provide advocates, decision-makers, and policymakers with the evidence needed to impact the key social determinants of health and inequalities that underlie poor dietary patterns and related health consequences. HER is focused on accelerating evidence-based, strategic, actionable, and equitable solutions for improving children's nutrition, diet quality, food access and security, weight, and overall health and well-being outcomes. 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 diet and overall health more holistically. More details on topics of interest for this CFP are provided in the "What We Hope to Learn and Share" section of the CFP.

In addition to nutrition, can we include a physical activity component in our proposal?

The aim of the *Healthy Eating Research* program is to identify promising policies, systems, and environmental (PSE) strategies to advance health equity in the areas of diet quality and nutrition. Specific to this CFP, we are focused on funding research that advances health equity in the areas of nutritional disparities, dietary quality and patterns, and food security, and we hope to shed light on the drivers of inequities in these areas. You may evaluate food policies and environments as adjuncts to existing physical activity interventions, or collect data on physical activity for the purpose of clarifying the impact of energy intake interventions, but we expect that the vast majority of the grant resources will be focused on healthy eating.

What age range are you most interested in for this CFP?

Target age groups for studies funded as part of this CFP are pregnant women and infants and children (ages 0 to 8) and their families.

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 nutritional disparities, poor dietary quality and patterns, and food insecurity is high are of interest to *Healthy Eating Research*.

Will proposals be given consideration even if they do not target lower-income or racial or ethnic minority communities?

The goal of *Healthy Eating Research* is to help all children achieve optimal nutrition and address nutrition-related disparities. 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.

Are the criteria for addressing lower-income and racial and ethnic minority populations exclusive or mutual?

Your study can include lower-income and/or racial and ethnic minority populations at risk for nutrition-related health disparities.

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.

Does the proposed study population need to include children at greatest risk of poor health and well-being and nutrition-related health disparities?

Yes. *Healthy Eating Research* aims to establish a research base for PSE strategies that advance health equity in the areas of diet quality and nutrition. This CFP focuses on children from birth to 8 and their families, and <u>all studies must</u> have the potential to impact groups at highest risk for poor health and well-being, and nutrition-related health disparities. We are especially interested in studies focused on: African American, Latino, American Indian, Alaska Native, Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander populations, with an emphasis on families and children (ages 0 to 8) living in lower-income rural and urban communities.

Grants funded through this program should demonstrate the potential to improve nutritional disparities, healthy eating, and food security, especially in these lower-income and racial and ethnic populations at greatest risk. Findings are expected to advance RWJF's efforts to build a Culture of Health in America, and to advance health equity in the areas of food and nutrition.

While this does not necessarily require including children from these populations in the study sample, relevancy of findings to these high-risk groups must be clearly specified.

Are there specific evaluation methods that are preferred?

No, the evaluation methods and the analysis will be driven by the research question. A variety of designs could be used, including observation and measurement studies, secondary data analyses, analyses of the effect of natural variations in food policies and environments, and evaluating current programs and policies. Survey research looking at associations or correlations also could be included. Mixed-design (qualitative and quantitative) studies are also welcome.

RWJF is interested in funding projects that incorporate participatory approaches to research and that use evaluation as a tool for advancing equity by applying <u>principles of equitable evaluation</u>. Equitable evaluation is an approach that highlights the potential for research and evaluation to contribute to equity.

The core principles of equitable evaluation are:

- 1) evaluation should advance equity;
- evaluation should answer questions about contributors to inequity; the effect of a strategy or policy on different populations and drivers of inequity; and the role of cultural context in an initiative; and
- evaluations should be multiculturally valid and encourage participant ownership <u>(Center</u> for Evaluation Innovation 2017).

<u>All applicants</u> are required to embed the principles of equitable evaluation into proposals submitted under this CFP.

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 organizers/leaders, policymakers, and school or child-care officials. Note that this is a requirement for all grant types, not just CBPR awards.

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

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

5) Budget and Co-Funding

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 worksheets and budget narrative documents. The RWJF online system for full proposal applicants contains detailed budget guidelines.

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

Applicants will need to complete an online summary budget worksheet and a detailed budget narrative and spreadsheet. The online summary budget worksheet reports the total amount of funds requested for the project, as well as the total for each of the four RWJF budget categories: personnel, other direct costs, purchased services, and indirect costs. The detailed budget spreadsheet provides additional information on the included line items within each category. The budget narrative should provide a detailed explanation for how each line item will be spent, and how the amount was determined. 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. Additional instructions for each of these documents can be found in the RWJF online system.

What can grant funds be used for?

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 12 Large-Scale and CBPR 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).

What is the allowable indirect cost rate?

RWJF'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 at the full proposal application stage.

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.

The call for proposals states that funds should be included for the principal investigator to participate in an annual grantee meeting. Can you provide more information?

The *Healthy Eating Research* program convenes grantees each year as a way to learn from each other, present research findings, network and build the field, and provide an opportunity for the *Healthy Eating Research* program to provide technical assistance. Grant funds must be allocated for this purpose, as described in the budget guidelines. Funds for up to two individuals to attend one grantee meeting in each year of funding must be included in the proposed budget. The 2020 meeting will be held March 4-6, 2020 in Denver, CO.

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. It may be beneficial to consider submitting additional supportive documentation regarding the existing grant to ensure that reviewers have as much information as possible during their review.

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.

6) 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 full proposals will be reviewed by a committee composed of the national program office (NPO) staff, members of the National Advisory Committee, 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 final 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. (Note: 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 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.

7) 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 July 31, 2019. Applicants will be contacted via email and informed of whether or not they are invited to submit a full proposal in mid-August.

Stage 2: Invited Full Proposals

Applicants will be contacted via email and informed whether or not they have been selected as finalists. Notification of finalists for all grant types will occur in early December 2019. Awards will begin February 1, 2020.

8) Post-Grant Award

What is required of Healthy Eating Research grantees?

Grantees will be expected to meet the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's (RWJF) requirements for the submission of narrative and financial reports and bibliographies. In addition, grantees are required to submit semi-annual narrative reports to the *Healthy Eating Research* national program office (NPO) at Duke University and respond to periodic surveys and other communications sent from RWJF and the NPO.

Up to two representatives from each grant are required to attend the *Healthy Eating Research* annual grantee meeting. Activities for funded researchers also may include conference calls, working groups, collaborative presentations, and commissioned research (e.g., papers, analyses).

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, RWJF requires grantees to provide information requested for program evaluation activities.