



Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Changes in Health Care Financing and Organization (HCFO)



2011 Call for Proposals

Proposal Deadline – Open

Grants are awarded on a rolling basis; proposals may be submitted at any time.

Program Overview

(Please refer to specific sections for complete detail.)

Purpose

Changes in Health Care Financing and Organization (HCFO) supports research, policy analysis and evaluation projects that provide policy leaders timely information on health care policy, financing and organization issues. Supported projects include:

- examining significant issues and interventions related to health care financing and organization and their effects on health care costs, quality and access; and
- exploring or testing major new ways to finance and organize health care that have the potential to improve access to more affordable and higher quality health services.

Eligibility Criteria (page 6)

Researchers, as well as practitioners and public and private policy-makers working with researchers, are eligible to submit proposals through their organizations. Projects may be initiated from within many disciplines, including health services research, economics, sociology, political science, public policy, public health, public administration, law and business administration. RWJF encourages proposals from organizations on behalf of researchers who are just beginning their careers, who can serve either individually as principal investigators or as part of a project team comprising researchers or other collaborators with more experience. Only organizations and government entities are eligible to receive funding under this program.

Preference will be given to applicants that are public agencies or are tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and are not private foundations as defined under Section 509(a).

Selection Criteria (page 7)

Complete selection criteria can be found on page 7.

Total Awards

In January 2011, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) reauthorized this initiative for \$5 million over approximately three years. Grants will be awarded in two categories:

- *Small grants* for projects requiring \$100,000 or less and projected to take up to 12 months or less.
- *Large grants* for projects requiring more than \$100,000 and/or projected to take longer than 12 months.

Deadlines

Grants are awarded on a rolling basis; proposals may be submitted at any time.

How to Apply (page 9)

Proposals for this solicitation must be submitted via the RWJF online system. Please direct all questions to the national program office:

AcademyHealth
1150 17th Street, NW
Suite 600
Washington, DC 20036
Phone: (202) 292-6700
Fax: (202) 292-6800
E-mail: hcfo@academyhealth.org

www.hcfo.org

Background

Changes in Health Care Financing and Organization (HCFO) is a multifaceted program that includes grantmaking, convening, technical assistance, research translation and communications activities. HCFO supports policy analysis, research and evaluation projects that provide policy leaders with timely information on health care policy and market developments. Recently funded projects are exploring value-based insurance design, innovative delivery system models (e.g., retail and workplace clinics) and insurance market reforms. HCFO strongly encourages grantee-initiated publications and presentations. For a list of the projects funded, please visit the HCFO website at www.hcfo.org.

AcademyHealth—which serves as the national program office (NPO)—disseminates information on new grants awarded and interim project findings to health services researchers, policy-makers and key players in the health care market through a series of findings briefs highlighting projects nearing completion, periodic nontechnical reports and an electronic newsletter. All these publications are available at www.hcfo.org.

HCFO convenes grantees and other experts working on similar topics for intensive workshops to synthesize findings, develop research agendas, explore policy implications or break new methodological ground.

The Program

In January 2011, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) reauthorized the HCFO initiative for \$5 million over approximately three years. This call for proposals is intended to stimulate projects that:

- examine significant issues and interventions related to health care financing and organization and their effects on health care costs, quality and access; and
- explore or test major new ways to finance and organize health care that have the potential to improve access to more affordable and higher quality health services.

The results of these projects should be timely and useful for public and private policy-makers—moving beyond the current evidence to inform policy debate. Two types of grants are available: *small grants* for projects requiring up to \$100,000 and projected to take 12 months or less, and *large grants* for projects requiring more than \$100,000 and/or projected to take longer than 12 months. Grants are awarded on a rolling basis.

Two categories of projects will be considered for funding under this solicitation:

- Research and policy analysis focusing on major health care financing strategies, including strategies where financing and organization are integrally related.
- Evaluations of major financing strategies already in place.

All projects must address how current public and private mechanisms for financing health care or proposed major changes in those mechanisms will affect health care costs, access or quality.

No particular interventions or issues are prescribed. Proposals will be evaluated on their potential to inform health care policy. We are interested in proposals that examine the profound changes taking

place in the public and private health care markets, including the components of the delivery system (e.g., individual providers, hospitals, the system) that make a difference in quality of care and health outcomes; and the impacts of significant changes in health insurance benefit design, payment methodologies, incentive structures, cost effective service delivery and new business models. Examples of possible projects include: the impact of policy changes on insurance coverage and costs; organizational reforms that are designed to reduce health care cost growth; and mechanisms to promote high quality and value-based care. For more examples of the types of projects we fund, see our awarded grants list at www.hcfo.org.

One of the hallmarks of the HCFO program is its ability to provide guidance and technical assistance to applicants and grantees. We encourage prospective applicants to call and discuss project ideas with us. While we cannot review concept papers or draft proposals, or make formal assessments by phone, we can provide feedback on how reviewers are likely to respond and advise applicants whether their project fits within the program's purview.

The program features a rolling application process. Once grants are awarded, NPO staff continues to provide or arrange for technical assistance as necessary to ensure the successful completion of the project. The program places a strong emphasis on disseminating findings through peer-reviewed journals, HCFO publications, the program website and other vehicles that reach policy-makers. Periodically, special solicitations on topics of particular interest will be issued under the initiative and posted on the website at www.hcfo.org. Proposals addressing the topics in the special solicitations will compete for funding, with all other proposals submitted under the HCFO program, and will be reviewed using the same criteria.

Eligibility Criteria

Researchers, as well as practitioners and public and private policy-makers working with researchers, are eligible to submit proposals through their organizations. Projects may be initiated from within many disciplines, including health services research, economics, sociology, political science, public policy, public health, public administration, law and business administration. RWJF encourages proposals from organizations on behalf of researchers who are just beginning their careers, who can serve either individually as principal investigators or as part of a project team comprising researchers or other collaborators with more experience. The NPO will provide or arrange for technical assistance to aid researchers whose proposals are found to be of merit but who lack the resources to develop an appropriate research team. To be considered favorably under this solicitation, proposals must examine major issues in health care financing and the organization of care and their effects on cost, and access to, or quality of care. Only organizations and government entities are eligible to receive funding under this program.

Preference will be given to applicants that are public agencies or are tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and are not private foundations as defined under Section 509(a).

Selection Criteria

Proposals will be assessed using the following criteria:

- *Policy significance of the health care financing policy or issue being assessed or tested.* How are findings from the proposed work likely to advance the policy debate, rather than merely provide additional information on a topic about which much is known? Projects providing public and private leaders with information about important market developments are considered policy significant.
- *Uniqueness of the project.* Will new evidence about the topic be developed that provides a major contribution to the understanding of the problem? How will the proposed work complement existing literature on the topic? Is the proposed work likely to produce new information or will it use different data to confirm prior research results?
- *Quality and availability of data to be used and the strength of the proposed methodology.* Depending on the focus of the project, primary data collection may be supported or the use of secondary data may be acceptable.
- *Applicant's experience and qualifications* for conducting the proposed project and the time commitment of key project staff members who have the skills and experience to perform the various operations and analytic tasks required. (Please note: this criterion does not preclude relatively inexperienced researchers from applying and being funded, as long as the proposal demonstrates that the project team comprises the sophistication necessary to conduct the proposed analyses.) Special consideration will be given to project teams emphasizing collaboration among researchers and policy-makers, health plan officials, purchasers or providers, whether in the private or public sectors.
- *Other criteria, specific to individual proposals,* may be considered at the discretion of reviewers.

Use of Grant Funds

Grant funds may be used to support project staff salaries, consultant fees, data processing, supplies and other direct expenses, including a limited amount of equipment essential to the proposed project. In keeping with RWJF policy, grant funds may not be used to subsidize individuals for the cost of health care, to construct or renovate facilities, for lobbying, or as a substitute for funds currently being used to support similar activities. Grant periods are flexible, but generally will not exceed 36 months. For multiyear projects, interim findings and products are expected. Project funding will be commensurate with the size and scope of the proposed activity. Proposals for planning or pilot-testing multiphase projects will be considered when such activities critically affect the design of the entire project. Each phase of multiphase projects must be described in detail.

Grantees will be expected to meet RWJF requirements for the submission of annual and final progress and financial reports. At the close of each grant, project directors are expected to provide a written report on their project and its findings suitable for publication and wide dissemination, as well as a one-page summary of the project and policy-relevant findings.

How to Apply

Because HCFO features a rolling application process, small grant proposals and brief proposals for large grants will be accepted for the duration of this solicitation. Proposals for this solicitation must be submitted via the RWJF online system. Visit www.rwjf.org/cfp/hcfo and use 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. **No hard-copy applications will be accepted.**

All applicants should log in to the system and familiarize themselves with online submission requirements.

Small grants for projects requiring \$100,000 or less and projected to take up to 12 months or less:

Small grants are most often awarded for: (1) quick turn-around policy analyses that are judged to be of great use to policy-makers; (2) projects using case-study data to assess the early impacts of newly implemented major policies; and (3) analyses of data collected under larger projects where critical questions arise after the project and its original analyses are complete.

Applicants for small grants are required to submit proposals of no more than 10 double-spaced pages for review. If they wish, applicants may submit an initial brief proposal, but there is no requirement that they do so. In fact, because a brief proposal is not a prerequisite, in many cases smaller projects move through the review process more quickly.

Large grants for projects requiring more than \$100,000 and/or projected to take longer than 12 months:

Applicants for large grants must submit an initial brief proposal, rather than a fully developed proposal. The brief proposal should be no more than four double-spaced pages and should contain the following information about the proposed project:

- A brief description of the topic to be addressed and its policy significance.
- A statement of the project's principal objectives.
- A description of the research or evaluation methodology to be used.
- A description of how the project findings would complement related work already completed or currently underway.
- Target audiences.
- The qualifications of the applicant and key project staff.

Grant periods for larger grants are flexible, although they generally do not exceed 36 months.

Based on a review of the information in the brief proposal, a full proposal may be requested, usually within two months of receiving the brief proposal. If this is the case, instructions will be provided at that time regarding how to submit a full proposal online.

The quality, clarity and completeness of the application are crucial. Both RWJF and NPO staff will review all proposals. In addition, proposals may be peer-reviewed by selected external reviewers who have extensive knowledge or expertise on the particular topic or methodology. There may be a limited number of applicants who, in the opinion of the technical reviewers and in consultation with NPO and the RWJF, meet the selection criteria but would benefit from technical assistance on the proposed project's methodology. Outside expertise on research design and methodological matters may be made available to these applicants.

RWJF does not provide individual critiques of proposals submitted. Please direct all questions about the program, selection criteria or application process and requirements to the NPO.

Program Direction

Direction and technical assistance for this program are provided by the national program office located at:

AcademyHealth
1150 17th Street, NW
Suite 600
Washington, DC 20036
Phone: (202) 292-6700
Fax: (202) 292-6800
E-mail: hcfo@academyhealth.org
Website: www.hcfo.org

Responsible staff members at the NPO are:

- Bonnie Austin, J.D., deputy director

Responsible staff members at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation are:

- Nancy Barrand, M.P.A., *special advisor for Program Development*
- David Colby, Ph.D., *vice president, Research and Evaluation*
- James Mendez, *grants administrator*

About the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation focuses on the pressing health and health care issues facing our country. As the nation's largest philanthropy devoted exclusively to improving the health and health care of all Americans, we work with a diverse group of organizations and individuals to identify solutions and achieve comprehensive, meaningful and timely change.

For more than 35 years we've brought experience, commitment and a rigorous, balanced approach to the problems that affect the health and health care of those we serve. When it comes to helping Americans lead healthier lives and get the care they need, we expect to make a difference in your lifetime.

For more information visit www.rwjf.org.

Sign up to receive e-mail alerts on upcoming calls for proposals at <http://my.rwjf.org>.



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Foundation

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