



Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

# Evaluating Innovations in Nursing Education



**2008 Call for Proposals**

**Brief Proposal Deadline**

January 23, 2009

## Program Overview

(Please refer to specific sections for complete details)

### Purpose

*Evaluating Innovations in Nursing Education* will evaluate models, programs and innovations that expand teaching capacity or promote faculty recruitment and retention in nursing schools. The program aims to increase the number of nursing school graduates by evaluating strategies that address the nurse faculty shortage and disseminating successful strategies so they can be replicated in other nursing education settings.

### Eligibility Criteria (page 7)

- Nursing schools or health care organizations who will act as the applicant institution and sub-contract to the evaluation team. Preference will be given to applicant organizations that are tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and are not private foundations as defined under Section 509(a).
- Each applicant organization must sub-contract with an experienced evaluator (not affiliated with the primary applicant department) to assess the intervention.
- Proposed interventions must be ongoing and have the potential to significantly increase teaching capacity, improve faculty work-life, and/or promote faculty recruitment and retention. Interventions must include a large enough population (i.e., faculty, students, courses) to permit precise determination of their impact on important outcomes.
- A maximum of one grant will be awarded per applicant institution.

### Selection Criteria (page 8)

Proposals will be evaluated using the following criteria:

- Presentation of a logic model/theory of change through which the intervention will improve teaching capacity, faculty work-life, and/or faculty recruitment and retention.
- Preliminary evidence of the intervention's effectiveness.
- Strong evaluation design for isolating the impact of the intervention.
- Selection of appropriate outcomes for assessing the intervention's success and access to data for measuring them.
- Demonstrated commitment of key stakeholders to fully implement the intervention and cooperate with all aspects of the evaluation study.
- The expertise and relevant experience of the evaluation team.

### Total Awards

- Up to nine awards of up to \$300,000 each will be available in this round of funding.

### Key Dates and Deadlines

- **November 21 and December 2, 2008**—Optional applicant Web conference. Registration is required. Details can be found on the program's Web site.
- **January 23, 2009**—Deadline for receipt of brief proposals.
- **May 1, 2009**—Applicants notified if invited to submit a full proposal.
- **June 12, 2009**—Deadline for receipt of full proposals.
- **November 2009**—Notification of awards.

### How to Apply (page 11)

*This program only accepts proposals submitted online through the RWJF Grantmaking Online system.* For more information please contact the national program office by e-mail at [info@EvaluatingInnovationsInNursing.org](mailto:info@EvaluatingInnovationsInNursing.org) or by calling (732) 932-4670.

[www.EvaluatingInnovationsInNursing.org](http://www.EvaluatingInnovationsInNursing.org)

## Background

The U.S. nursing shortage is intensifying even as nursing schools turn away thousands of qualified applicants because there are not enough faculty members available to teach them (AACN 2007). Widespread concern over the nurse faculty shortage is evident in the reports of prominent nursing organizations as well as in the activities of numerous state workforce centers. Awareness of the shortage's consequences has fostered support by nurse educators, health care organizations, and state agencies for diverse strategies to increase educational capacity throughout the country.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) is committed to addressing the nursing shortage by: 1) building nurse leadership capacity; 2) improving the work environment for nurses and faculty; 3) finding innovative ways to educate more nurses; and 4) promoting awareness of their central role in the health care delivery system among policy-makers and the general public. In support of this commitment, *Evaluating Innovations in Nursing Education* will fund evaluations of models, programs and innovations that have demonstrated potential to achieve one or more of the following outcomes:

- Increased enrollment and teaching capacity.
- Improved faculty work-life and satisfaction.
- Enhanced faculty recruitment and retention.

## The Program

Evaluating Innovations in Nursing Education (EIN) will evaluate models, programs and innovations that expand teaching capacity or promote faculty recruitment and retention in nursing schools. By fostering replication of successful strategies to address the nurse faculty shortage, the program's ultimate goal is to increase the numbers of nursing school graduates.

The objectives are to:

- develop and disseminate evidence of the intervention's effectiveness in achieving these ends;
- foster replication of successful strategies in varied settings across the country; and
- assemble benchmark measures of key variables associated with the faculty shortage so that individual nursing schools can compare their status to national norms (e.g., number of graduated nurses per faculty full-time equivalent, faculty satisfaction, intent to leave the faculty).

Examples of models, programs and innovations that warrant evaluation include, but are not limited to:

- training and employment of new types of instructors (e.g., practicing nurses taking on new roles) that will improve the effectiveness and efficiency of education;
- collaborations with hospitals and other delivery organizations that foster new approaches to integrating clinical and didactic education;
- new instructional technology for large segments of the education program;
- systems of more efficient and effective student advising and mentoring;
- faculty development programs for improving faculty work-life and satisfaction; and
- policy changes that create incentives for expanding teaching productivity or enhancing faculty recruitment and retention.

The evaluation proposal should discuss each of the following outcomes in relation to these interventions: (1) the impact on teaching productivity; (2) the effects on faculty work-life; and (3) consequences for the quality of education. Regardless of the main intent of the innovation, it is essential to confirm that it does not have an adverse effect on any of these three outcomes. Examples of measures that may be employed to assess these three sets of outcomes include:

- *Teaching productivity*—Number of graduated nurses per faculty full time equivalent (FTE); number of students accepted and matriculated; number of students progressing through the program on time; number of available clinical spaces.
- *Faculty work-life*—Faculty retention; number of faculty vacancies; intent to leave the faculty; faculty satisfaction; faculty stress; faculty promotion rates; differentials between average faculty salaries and average salaries of comparably prepared nurses in other settings.
- *Quality of education*—Rate of first-time passage of the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX); rate of passage of certification exam for masters program graduates.

Evaluations of these interventions might address the following questions:

- *Impact of New Types of Clinical Instructors*  
What impact does introducing new types of clinical instructors have on the availability of clinical placements and the numbers of graduated nurses per faculty member? How is the morale of the existing academic faculty affected? Are there associated changes in the rates of first-time NCLEX pass rates? What resources are required to adequately prepare these new instructors?

- *Impact of Collaborations to Share Clinical Teaching Responsibilities*  
How do new arrangements for sharing clinical teaching responsibilities with hospitals and other delivery organizations affect the breadth of education of nursing students? What impact do they have on educational capacity? What are the consequences for the supervisory roles of academic faculty? What are the organizational prerequisites for effective implementation of such collaborations?
- *Impact of Simulation Technology*  
How is heavy reliance upon simulation technology integrated into the nursing curriculum? How does it affect teaching capacity? Is there a limit to the range of clinical situations to which it can be applied without compromising the quality of education? How can the cost of new technologies per educational output be optimized? Are there changes in the regulatory or policy environment necessary for fostering widespread use of such technology?
- *Impact of Professional Development Programs*  
What are the costs and benefits of new professional development programs aimed at improving faculty recruitment and/or retention? Are there pay-for-performance strategies that are effective in increasing the numbers of graduated nurses per faculty FTE? What are the consequences for faculty morale?

## Eligibility Criteria

### *Types of Organizations and Partnerships*

- Eligible applicant organizations are nursing schools or health care organizations responsible for administering the intervention. Preference will be given to applicant organizations that are tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and are not private foundations as defined under Section 509(a). *Please note that the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation makes grants to organizations in the United States and U.S. territories only.*
- Each applicant organization must arrange to subcontract with an experienced evaluator (not affiliated with the primary applicant department/school) to assess the intervention.
- A maximum of one grant will be awarded per applicant institution.

### *Investigators*

- Each applicant may have more than one principal investigator.
- The first principal investigator is responsible for implementing the intervention at the primary applicant institution.
  - The other investigator must be an evaluator with relevant expertise and experience to assess the intervention. The evaluator should not be affiliated with the primary applicant school/department; however, an evaluator outside of a nursing school but within the same university is acceptable.

### *Eligible Interventions*

- Interventions must be ongoing and have promise to significantly increase teaching capacity, improve faculty work-life, and/or promote faculty recruitment and retention. Preliminary evidence of such promise is required.
- Interventions must include a large enough population (i.e., faculty, students, courses) to permit precise determination of the impact on important outcomes.

## Selection Criteria

Applicants must: 1) describe an intervention that is viable and can be replicated as well as; 2) demonstrate the ability to conduct a rigorous evaluation yielding concrete evidence of its impact on outcomes. More specific criteria for evaluating full proposals include the following:

### *Viability of the Intervention*

- A detailed description of the intervention to guide effective replication in other settings.
- Plans for collecting information on implementation that will guide other institutions in initiating similar interventions and address common challenges to achieving the expected outcomes.
- Delineation of a plausible logic model/theory of change through which the innovation will affect teaching capacity, faculty work-life, and/or faculty recruitment and retention.
- Preliminary evidence of the intervention's effectiveness.
- The scale and tenure of its current implementation and plans for the immediate future.

### *Rigor of the Evaluation*

- Selection of a robust evaluation design for isolating the impact of the intervention (e.g., a randomized trial, a pre-/post-intervention assessment with appropriate comparison groups).
- The strength of the design in accounting for the effects of likely confounding variables; controlling for the influence of secular trends; assessing the consequences of selection bias; and addressing other potential barriers to attributing causation.
- Identification of appropriate comparison groups (if applicable) and assurance of their participation.
- Selection of appropriate outcomes for assessing the success of the intervention and access to necessary data for measuring them.

- Demonstrated commitment of key stakeholders to maintain full implementation of the intervention and to cooperate with and facilitate all aspects of the evaluation study.
- Capacity to collect appropriate outcome data five years beyond initiation of the evaluation (three years beyond the end of the award) and forward it to the national program office (NPO).
- The expertise and relevant experience of the evaluator.

## Evaluation, Human Subjects Approval and Monitoring

Project findings will be broadly disseminated along with thorough descriptions of the interventions and guidelines for their implementation. The program will publicly release each individual project's results with attribution to responsible investigators and institutions. Grantees will be expected to contribute to multisite publications as well as author individual reports of their findings. To increase the power of the evidence base, grantees will be expected to incorporate program-wide measures in their data collection and analyses. *All finalists invited to submit full proposals must secure approval from their Institutional Review Board for all aspects of the project prior to June 12, 2009; eligibility for exempt status must be confirmed by the review board.*

Grantees are expected to meet RWJF requirements for submission of narrative and financial reports as well as periodic information needed for monitoring overall project performance and management. Investigators will be required to participate in periodic meetings and provide progress reports on their evaluations. At the close of each grant, a written report is required on the project and its findings suitable for wide dissemination.

## Use of Grant Funds

RWJF will award up to 18 grants totaling \$5.4 million over three years. There will be two rounds of funding. For this first round, project periods may not exceed 24 months, including start-up, data collection and analyses. Nine evaluations will be funded in the first round. Individual awards of up to \$300,000 each will be made to nursing schools or health care organizations in partnership with an experienced evaluator.

Grant funds may be used for project 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. Funds must be budgeted for attendance at two national meetings for each of the partners. At least 75 percent of the award amount must support the evaluation. However, with adequate justification, up to 25 percent of the award amount may be used for costs incurred by the nursing school or health care organization for participating in the evaluation. In keeping with RWJF policy, grant funds may not be used to subsidize individuals for the cost of health care, to support clinical trials of unapproved drugs or devices, to construct or renovate facilities, for lobbying, or as a substitute for funds currently being used to support similar activities.

## How to Apply

Applicants may submit proposals only through the RWJF Grantmaking Online system at [www.EvaluatingInnovationsInNursing.org](http://www.EvaluatingInnovationsInNursing.org). There are two stages in the proposal process: 1) submission of a brief proposal describing the innovation and plans for evaluation and, if invited; 2) submission of a full proposal.

### *Stage I: Brief Proposal*

The brief proposal requires a description of the innovation and its prospects for replication, evidence of its effectiveness, plans for implementing a controlled evaluation, commitment of key stakeholders essential to implementation of the intervention and conduct of the evaluation, qualifications of the evaluation partner, and preliminary budget. Applicants may participate in one of the optional Web conferences November 21 or December 2, 2008 to discuss project goals and assist with the proposal process. Registration is required. Details on scheduling and registration will be posted on the EIN Web site at [www.EvaluatingInnovationsInNursing.org](http://www.EvaluatingInnovationsInNursing.org). Brief proposals are due January 23, 2009.

### *Pre-Funding Assistance in Refining the Evaluation Design*

Up to 20 applicants will be selected, based on the brief proposal, to participate in a directed self-study to strengthen the evaluation. A virtual workshop will offer training on development of a logic model and guidance in addressing key issues relevant to evaluation design and implementation. Among the issues addressed: the potential for random assignment; options for meaningful comparison groups; availability of data on appropriate outcomes; existing evidence of effectiveness; prospects for collecting baseline data on ongoing interventions; and assurance of documentation of the intervention suitable for guiding replication. Applicants will receive feedback on their logic model and aspects of their evaluation design.

*Stage II: Full Proposal*

Applicants who have completed the evaluation self study will be invited to submit a full proposal. Criteria for selection will focus on the strength of the evaluation in isolating program effects, its likelihood of yielding sound evidence of effectiveness, and its promise in contributing strategies for other settings to increase teaching capacity and/or promote faculty recruitment and retention. A key challenge inherent in the evaluations lies in the fact that the impact of the intervention on several important outcomes cannot be meaningfully studied within a two-year time frame (e.g., number of graduated nurses per faculty FTE). Applicants must credibly assure that these outcomes will be assessed five years after initiation of the evaluation (three years beyond the end of their grant period). Full proposals will be due on June 12, 2009.

Site visits via video conference will be convened between July 27 and August 28, 2009. A national advisory committee (NAC) will assist in the selection process, evaluate proposals, participate in site visits, and will make funding recommendations to RWJF.

RWJF does not provide individual critiques of proposals submitted.

**Program Direction**

Direction and technical assistance for this program are provided by Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, Center for State Health Policy, which serves as the national program office (NPO). This program will be directed by Michael Yedidia, M.P.H., Ph.D., Research Professor.

Evaluating Innovations in Nursing Education  
Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey  
Center for State Health Policy  
55 Commercial Avenue, 3rd Floor  
New Brunswick, NJ 08901-1340  
Phone: (732) 932-4670  
Fax: (732) 932-0069  
*www.EvaluatingInnovationsInNursing.org*

Responsible staff members at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation are:

- Nancy Wieler Fishman M.P.H., B.S.N., *senior program officer*
- Susan Hassmiller, Ph.D., R.N., F.A.A.N., *senior adviser for nursing*
- John Lumpkin, M.D., M.P.H., *senior vice president and director Health Care Group*
- Linda Wright Moore, M.S., *senior communications officer*
- Andrea Daitz, M.A., *program associate*
- Christine Phares, *grants administrator*

**National Advisory  
Committee Chair**

Christine A. Tanner, Ph.D., R.N.  
A.B. Youmans-Spaulding Distinguished Professor  
Oregon Health Sciences University School  
of Nursing  
Editor, *Journal of Nursing Education*  
Portland, Ore.

**Timetable**

- **November 21 and December 2, 2008**  
Optional applicant Web conference. Registration is required. Information can be found at [www.EvaluatingInnovationsInNursing.org](http://www.EvaluatingInnovationsInNursing.org).
- **January 23, 2009**  
Deadline for receipt of brief proposals.
- **March 13–May 1, 2009**  
Technical assistance (to refine the evaluation design) for those invited to submit a full proposal.
- **May 1, 2009**  
Applicants notified if invited to submit a full proposal.
- **June 12, 2009**  
Deadline for receipt of full proposals.
- **July 27–August 28, 2009**  
Site visits via video conference with selected applicants.
- **November 2009**  
Notification of awards.
- **December 1, 2009**  
Start of grants.

## 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](http://www.rwjf.org).

Sign up to receive e-mail alerts on upcoming calls for proposals at [www.rwjf.org/services](http://www.rwjf.org/services).



Robert Wood Johnson  
Foundation

Route 1 and College Road East  
P.O. Box 2316  
Princeton, NJ 08543-2316

November 2008