



Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

# Changes in Health Care Financing and Organization (HCFO)



## 2009 Call for Proposals

### Proposal Deadline—Open

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

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## Program Overview

(Please refer to specific sections for complete detail.)

### Purpose

*Changes in Health Care Financing and Organization* (HCFO) supports policy analysis, research 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 apply. 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. Multidisciplinary teams and researchers who are just beginning their careers—perhaps teaming with a more senior researcher to develop the analytic approach—are especially encouraged to apply.

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 6)

Complete selection criteria can be found on page 6.

### Total Awards

In October 2007, the Foundation reauthorized this initiative for \$11 million over three years.

- *Small grants* for projects requiring \$100,000 or less and projected to take 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 8)

Proposals for this program must be submitted through the RWJF Grantmaking 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: [hcf@academyhealth.org](mailto:hcf@academyhealth.org)

[www.hcfo.net](http://www.hcfo.net)

## 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 variation in health care cost growth, resource use and efficiency in episodes of care, and the cost and benefits of computerized physician order entry. HCFO strongly encourages grantee-initiated publications and presentations. For a list of the projects funded, please visit the HCFO Web site at [www.hcfo.net](http://www.hcfo.net).

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 a newsletter. All these publications are available at [www.hcfo.net](http://www.hcfo.net).

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. Recent workshops have focused on the behavior of firms and employees on insurance choices and the implications of supply and organization of the delivery system on health care reform.

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## The Program

In October 2007, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) reauthorized the HCFO initiative for \$11 million over 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:

- Policy analyses and research to design and analyze 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, especially the increasing consumer role in health care decisions; 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. Examples of possible projects include: analyses of how to foster and measure efficiency in care delivery; the impact of policy changes on insurance coverage and costs; and mechanisms to promote high quality and value-based care.

One of the hallmarks of the HCFO program is its ability to provide guidance and technical assistance to applicants and grantees. The program features a rolling application process that provides feedback whenever needed. 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 Web site 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 Web site at [www.hcfo.net](http://www.hcfo.net). 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.

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## Eligibility Criteria

Researchers, as well as practitioners and public and private policy-makers working with researchers, are eligible to apply. 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 researchers who are just beginning their careers to apply under this initiative, either individually 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.

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).

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## 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.

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## 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 three years. 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's 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. All proposals must be submitted through the RWJF Grantmaking Online system. No hard-copy applications will be accepted. There are different application processes and online application sites for small and large grants.

*Small grant projects requiring up to \$100,000 and projected to take 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.

For application instructions, additional information and a link to the secure online application site, please visit [www.hcfo.net](http://www.hcfo.net). Alternatively, applicants may go directly to the secure online application site for small grants at <http://grantmaking.rwjf.org/hfo2>.

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 of up to four pages at the application site for brief proposals, <http://grantmaking.rwjf.org/hfo1>, 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 grant projects requiring \$100,000 or more and/or projected to take longer than 12 months:*

For application instructions, additional information and a link to the secure online application site, please visit [www.hcfo.net](http://www.hcfo.net). Alternatively, applicants may go directly to the secure online application site for brief proposals for large grants, <http://grantmaking.rwjf.org/hfo1>.

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 statement of the project's principal objectives.
- A description of the research or evaluation methodology (or demonstration approach) to be used.
- A description of how the project's findings would complement related work already completed or currently under way, as well as how it would contribute to the policy debate.
- Dissemination plans, including target audiences.
- An estimated timetable and budget for completion of the project.
- The qualifications of the applicant and key project staff members.
- The name of the primary contact person.

Grant periods for larger grants are flexible, although they generally do not exceed three years.

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](mailto:hcfo@academyhealth.org)  
Web site: [www.hcfo.net](http://www.hcfo.net)

Responsible staff members at the NPO are:

- Sharon Arnold, Ph.D., *program director*
- Bonnie Austin, J.D., *deputy director*

Responsible staff members at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation are:

- Nancy Barrand, Ph.D., M.P.A., *special advisor for Program Development*
- David Colby, Ph.D., *vice president, Research and Evaluation*
- Brian Quinn, Ph.D., *program officer*
- Adam Coyne, *director of public affairs*
- Fran Ferrara, *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 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).



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