



Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation **Health & Society Scholars**



2009–2010 Call for Applications

Application Deadline

October 2, 2009

Program Overview

(Please refer to specific sections for complete detail.)

Purpose

The *Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Health & Society Scholars* program provides two years of support to postdoctoral scholars at all stages of their careers to build the nation's capacity for research and leadership to address the multiple determinants of population health and contribute to policy change. The program is based on the principle that progress in the field of population health depends upon multidisciplinary collaboration and exchange. Its goal is to improve health by training scholars to:

1. investigate the connections among biological, genetic, behavioral, environmental, economic and social determinants of health; and
2. develop, evaluate and disseminate knowledge, interventions and policies that integrate and act on these determinants to improve health.

The program is intended to produce leaders who will change the questions asked, the methods employed to analyze problems and the range of solutions to reduce population health disparities and improve the health of all Americans.

Eligibility Criteria (page 7)

To be eligible, scholars must:

- have completed doctoral training by the time of entry into the program (August or September 2010) in one of a variety of fields including, but not limited to, the behavioral and social sciences, the biological and natural sciences, health professions, public policy, public health, history, demography, environmental sciences, urban planning, engineering and ethics;
- have significant research experience;
- connect their research interests to substantive population health concerns; and
- be citizens or permanent residents of the U.S. or its territories at the time of application.

Selection Criteria (page 7)

Applicants will be evaluated based on the criteria listed on page 7.

Total Awards

- Up to 18 scholars will be selected for two-year appointments beginning in fall 2010.
- Scholars will receive an annual stipend of \$89,000.

Key Dates and Deadlines

- **October 2, 2009 (5 p.m. ET)**—Deadline for receipt of online applications.
- **January 2010**—Finalist interviews.
- **Mid to Late February 2010**—Notification of acceptance.
- **August or September 2010**—Scholars start the program at participating universities.

How to Apply (page 8)

Individuals must apply online through the program's Web site. Additional information and instructions may be obtained by contacting:

Gerard P. Lebeda, *deputy director*

Phone: (212) 419-3566

E-mail: hss@nyam.org

www.healthandsocietyscholars.org

Background

Although the United States spends more for medical care than any other country, our nation ranks poorly on many indicators of health and well-being. Studies comparing the health status of different population groups within the United States also repeatedly demonstrate marked variations in disease patterns associated with social, economic, environmental conditions and marked disparities among population groups. There is also growing recognition that decisions made outside the traditional health sphere can powerfully affect the health of populations.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Health & Society Scholars program seeks to improve the nation's health by addressing the full spectrum of factors that affect health and inform policy. More scholars will need to investigate the effects of contextual factors on behavior and biology to increase the array of population-wide interventions.

There are new sources of funding to support such work and a growing job market among government agencies, universities and public health organizations for individuals capable of researching, developing and implementing interdisciplinary programs to improve population health. However, experts with such knowledge and skills are in critically short supply. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Health & Society Scholars program is designed to fill the void.

About the Cover

This program is part of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's (RWJF) Human Capital Portfolio, which seeks to build and maintain a strong and diverse leadership and workforce in health and health care, and to help develop specific fields.

Cover: RWJF Health & Society Scholars Kimberly Montgomery and Patrick Sharkey (both of the Columbia University site) discuss a project with Dr. Pamela Collins, an Assistant Professor in Clinical Epidemiology and Clinical Psychiatry at Columbia University.

Photo: Amy Hart

The Program

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Health & Society Scholars program enhances and broadens the intellectual perspectives that scholars bring from their original disciplines. Each year, the program enables up to 18 individuals who have completed their doctoral training and produced outstanding work to engage in an intensive two-year program at one of six nationally prominent universities. Training activities at the participating universities are intentionally flexible to meet the diverse backgrounds, interests and needs of individual scholars. Specific offerings vary by site, but include two years of intensive seminars, scholar-directed research and analysis conducted with the guidance or collaboration of distinguished faculty mentors and focused training in the skills necessary for effective leadership, program implementation and policy change. It is anticipated that academic, government and other employers involved in policy-making will seek out program graduates for leadership positions.

The curriculum will foster cross-disciplinary thinking and dialogue, as scholars and faculty from different disciplines explore contributing risk factors, interactions among contextual forces, behavioral predispositions, biological susceptibility, developmental timing and influences, and approaches to intervention. The program thus expands the intellectual scope, collaborative competence, shared language and scientific creativity of both scholars and faculty.

Scholars become familiar with various means of assessing the broad range of factors that influence health, as well as measurement issues related to population health. Scholars study interactions among context, behavior and biology across the life span, and learn to think creatively about the intersections among different disciplines by considering dynamic time processes, inference and causality, and multilevel analytic techniques. Scholars will learn about various approaches to program design, implementation

and evaluation; the effective communication of knowledge to decision-makers and opinion leaders in multiple sectors; models of behavior change; methods of determining cost-effectiveness; and the evaluation of complex multilevel interventions.

Scholars are expected to concentrate their intellectual energies on program-related activities and research. They should not pursue other degrees during the program period, and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Health & Society Scholars program will not provide tuition support for any degree program. Scholars must be in residence at the site throughout the program period.

Participating Universities

The six universities in this program were selected because of their outstanding talent in specific disciplines, their commitment to interdisciplinary collaboration, the breadth and depth of their research opportunities, and the presence of faculty leaders in population health. These institutions have demonstrated an ability to conceptualize and investigate the full range of determinants of health. The sites share their training and research resources for the benefit of scholars and faculty at all sites.

Participating universities and program directors are:

Columbia University

Peter Bearman, Ph.D.

Bruce G. Link, Ph.D.

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Harvard University

Lisa F. Berkman, Ph.D.

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University of Pennsylvania

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David A. Kindig, M.D., Ph.D.

John Mullahy, Ph.D.

Stephanie A. Robert, M.S.W., Ph.D.

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Eligibility Criteria

Individuals who have completed their doctoral training by the time of entry into the program (August or September 2010) in one of a variety of fields including, but not limited to, behavioral and social sciences, biological and natural sciences, health professions, public policy, public health, history, demography, environmental sciences, urban planning, engineering and ethics, are eligible. Applicants are expected to have significant research experience. Past training in health-related areas is not a requirement, but applicants must clearly connect their research interests to substantive population health concerns. Applicants should welcome the challenge of building the field of population health. RWJF is committed to a program that embraces racial, ethnic, gender and disciplinary diversity, and we encourage applications from candidates with diverse backgrounds. Applicants must be citizens or permanent residents of the United States or its territories at the time of application to the program.

Selection Criteria

The following criteria will be considered in evaluating applicants:

- Potential to contribute creatively to the field of population health.
- Demonstrated openness to new ideas.
- Demonstrated critical thinking skills.
- An active interest in interdisciplinary collaboration.
- Commitment to a career consistent with the program's purpose and goals.
- Quality of past research.
- Leadership potential.
- Ability to take advantage of the program's opportunities.
- Recommendations by faculty and other individuals with whom the applicant has studied or worked.

Use of Grant Funds

Grants have been made to the six participating universities in accordance with RWJF's regular funding guidelines. Scholars will have access to a full range of university resources and will receive an annual stipend of \$89,000, plus health insurance from their university site. Scholars will also have access to financial support for research-related expenses, training workshops and travel to professional meetings.

How to Apply

Individuals must apply only through our online system, which will be available through the program's Web site at www.healthandsocietyscholars.org beginning on July 13, 2009. Applications to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Health & Society Scholars program will be screened by the national program office (NPO) and forwarded to members of the national advisory committee (NAC) and program site directors for review. Approximately 50 finalists will be selected for interviews at one or more of the participating sites. After these interviews, up to 18 scholars will be selected to enter the program in August or September of 2010, depending upon each university's academic calendar. Assignment to sites will be based upon a review of selected scholars' preferences for sites and the sites' preferences for specific scholars. Neither the NPO nor RWJF provide individual critiques of applications submitted.

For information and answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs), please visit the program's Web site at www.healthandsocietyscholars.org or contact:

Gerard P. Lebeda, *deputy director*

Phone: (212) 419-3566

E-mail: hss@nyam.org

Program Direction

Direction and technical assistance for the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Health & Society Scholars program is provided by The New York Academy of Medicine, which serves as the national program office.

The New York Academy of Medicine (NYAM) has been advancing the health of people in cities since 1847. An independent organization, NYAM addresses the health challenges facing the world's urban populations through interdisciplinary approaches to policy leadership, education, community engagement and innovative research. Drawing on the expertise of diverse partners worldwide and more than 2,000 elected fellows from across the professions, our current priorities are to create environments in cities that support healthy aging; to strengthen systems that prevent disease and promote the public's health; and to implement interventions that eliminate health disparities.

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Responsible staff members at the NPO are:

- Jo Ivey Boufford, M.D., *national program director*
- David Vlahov, Ph.D, R.N., *national program director*
- Gerard P. Lebeda, *deputy director*
- Jeffrey Price, *administrative assistant*

Responsible staff members at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation are:

- Pamela G. Russo, M.D., M.P.H., *senior program officer*
- John R. Lumpkin, M.D., *senior vice president and director, Health Care Group*
- Linda Wright Moore, M.S., *senior communications officer*
- Lois Shevlin, *senior grants administrator*

The NPO provides technical assistance and direction to the sites, monitors site performance and program progress, manages the annual scholar recruitment and selection process, organizes the program's annual meetings and convenes a NAC.

The NAC, which consists of distinguished representatives from academia, government agencies and public policy, guides program policy, reviews scholar applications, participates in annual meetings and assists in monitoring site performance.

**National Advisory
Committee**

Harvey V. Fineberg, M.D., Ph.D., *chair*
President, Institute of Medicine
The National Academies
Washington, D.C.

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Alvin R. Tarlov, M.D.
Professor of Medicine
Division of General Internal Medicine
Pritzker School of Medicine
The University of Chicago
Chicago, Illinois

Timetable

A new call for applications for the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Health & Society Scholars program will be issued each year. The schedule for 2009–2010 is:

■ **July 13, 2009**

Online application system available at www.healthandsocietyscholars.org.

■ **October 2, 2009 (5 p.m. ET)**

Deadline for receipt of online applications.

■ **January 2010**

Interviews with finalists.

■ **Mid to late February 2010**

Notification of acceptance.

■ **August or September 2010**

Scholars start the program at participating universities.

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 www.rwjf.org/services.



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Foundation

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