



Robert Wood Johnson
Foundation

New Connections Initiative

Bringing Diversity to
RWJF Grantmaking and Increasing
Secondary Data Analyses

*Senior
Consultants
Program*

2007 Call for Proposals—Round 3

Proposal Deadline

January 4, 2008

Program Overview

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's (RWJF) *New Connections Initiative* is designed to expand the diversity of perspectives that inform RWJF programming and introduce new researchers and scholars to the Foundation, while simultaneously helping to meet staff needs for data analysis that measures progress towards program objectives. *New Connections* invites *Senior Consultants* from historically disadvantaged and underrepresented communities to address specific questions posed by one of RWJF's program areas. *Senior Consultants* are individuals who have the expertise and/or research skills necessary to address relevant issues in health and health care. Consultants from historically disadvantaged and underrepresented communities include individuals from ethnic or racial minorities or low-income communities, first-generation college graduates, or others who have historically been underrepresented in research disciplines supported by RWJF.

In Round 3, *Senior Consultants* will receive awards up to \$50,000 each to undertake research projects based on the topics for study listed on pages 4–5. All funding is expected to last one year. *Senior Consultants* are eligible for contracts made with them directly, or grants may be awarded to their home institution.

In Round 3 of *New Connections*, we ask applicants to address research questions from six programming areas: Health Insurance Coverage, Human Capital, Pioneer, Public Health, Quality/Equality, and Vulnerable Populations.

The Program

The New Connections Initiative provides support to *Senior Consultants* to help address the research and information needs of RWJF's programming areas. *Senior Consultants* must have expertise in a particular RWJF area of interest and be knowledgeable about the Foundation's program objectives. The initiative will support activities including secondary data analysis; methodological training; submission of an article to a peer-reviewed journal; mentoring/consulting; and limited travel. Projects may be quantitative or qualitative. Qualitative proposals may include activities, products and deliverables such as literature reviews, research syntheses and tools development; policy analysis with policy recommendations; exploration of new topic areas to advance team programming and strategy; case studies; program replication planning; and environmental scans.

In this round of New Connections, we ask applicants to address research questions submitted by six program teams or portfolios: Health Insurance Coverage, Human Capital, Pioneer, Public Health, Quality/Equality, and Vulnerable Populations. A brief overview of the specific questions is included on pages 4 and 5 or go to www.rwjf-newconnections.org under Program Links and click on "Topics for Study" for more detail.

Proposals must include a work plan detailing the proposed project, milestones, timeline and key deliverables. Robert Wood Johnson Foundation staff overseeing the New Connections program must approve the work plan.

Senior Consultants will be assigned a liaison from the RWJF team with which they are working. In addition to clarifying the research needs of the team, the liaison will help the *Senior Consultant* develop a better understanding of the particular programming area and of the Foundation in general.

Senior Consultants will present their preliminary and final results to the New Connections program office and will also write midterm and final reports. Both reports must include recommendations for future program development and ideas for targeted research related to their specific projects. *Senior Consultants* must meet additional reporting requirements of program teams. In addition, all *Senior Consultants* are required to submit financial reports and other contract-related information.

Senior Consultants are required to participate in the New Connections Annual Grantee Symposium that will be held in the summer of 2008. Awardees may also be required to travel to up to two meetings at RWJF. *Senior Consultants* may also include travel expenses to present and disseminate their research as well as attend up to two key national meetings. *Senior Consultants* are expected to complete their work at their home institution or in the field.

Topics for Study

The six program areas participating in this solicitation have each identified specific research questions they would like addressed in this funding cycle of the New Connections Initiative. Below you will find a brief description of the research interests of each area. For more detailed descriptions, please go to www.rwjf-newconnections.org under Program Links and click on each programming area's "Topics for Study." Applicants must submit proposals for one of the topics described below. The proposals may address questions that are either quantitative or qualitative.

Health Insurance Coverage

The Coverage Team seeks to ensure that everyone in America has stable, affordable health care coverage through the development of policies and programs to expand health coverage and maximize enrollment in existing coverage programs. The team is interested in exploring:

- how individuals and families from different racial and ethnic groups define affordability and cope with rising health care costs; and
- financial distress related to health care and how it may differ across racial and ethnic groups.

Human Capital

The Human Capital Portfolio seeks to attract, develop and retain a capable and diverse health care workforce to improve the health and health care of all Americans. The portfolio is interested in exploring:

- the value of programs to increase the diversity of the health professions (e.g., pipeline programs for students and frontline workers);
- the nature and extent of quality improvement training programs for health care professionals;
- what changes in the training and recruiting of nurses should be made to respond to future needs; and
- emerging or new professions in health and health care.

Pioneer

The Pioneer Portfolio is committed to supporting novel, high-return ideas that may have far-reaching impact on people's health, the quality of care they receive and the systems through which that care is provided. As the Pioneer Portfolio looks to nontraditional sources, it is interested in exploring:

- facilitators, inhibitors and outcomes of Americans' use of video games for health; and
- issues related to the use of self-reported online health information.

Public Health

The Public Health Team seeks to strengthen our public health system to make it better prepared to promote health and protect all Americans from a wide range of threats—from bioterrorism to emerging infectious diseases to health problems such as obesity, tobacco use and asthma. The team is interested in exploring:

- public health laws, regulations and policies as important tools to reduce health disparities and improve conditions that affect the public's health;
- initiatives that use communications, marketing, advocacy, grassroots outreach and other tactics to affect public health policies; and
- assessing and addressing health disparities.

Quality/Equality

The Quality/Equality Team aims to dramatically improve the quality of care that people with chronic illnesses receive in outpatient settings. The team is interested in exploring:

- factors that influence the implementation of quality guidelines for specific chronic medical conditions;
- what measures of quality are seen as important by different stakeholder groups, including patients; and
- the impact of pay-for-performance programs in given markets.

Vulnerable Populations

The Vulnerable Populations Portfolio addresses health and health care problems that intersect with social factors—housing, poverty and inadequate education—and affect society's most vulnerable people. The team is interested in exploring:

- how domestic violence is screened and the social factors that relate to domestic violence among different subgroups;
- innovative approaches to providing mental health services to low-income families, children and adolescents; and
- strategies to improve health and social outcomes for African-American and Latino male adolescents and young adults.

Eligibility Criteria

Senior Consultants applying for the New Connections Initiative must demonstrate:

- evidence of expertise and/or research skills addressing various aspects of health and health care;
- familiarity with the goals and mission of RWJF and specific interest areas;
- U.S. citizenship or permanent residency in the United States or its territories at the time of application; and
- that they are from a group that has historically been underrepresented in the research activities supported by RWJF, such as people from ethnic or racial minority groups, first-generation college graduates and people from low-income communities.

Selection Criteria

An internal RWJF committee will review all proposals. RWJF does not provide individual critiques of proposals submitted. The following factors will be used in the selection process:

- Significance and relevance of proposal to RWJF and team-specific questions.
- Uniqueness of the proposal. Will new evidence about the topic be developed? Does it provide a major contribution to the understanding of the problem? How will the proposed work complement or respond to 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?
- Demonstrated expertise in the area of study proposed.
- Familiarity with the goals and mission of RWJF and its specific interest areas.
- Clarity of product and deliverable as described in the proposal.
- As appropriate, *Senior Consultants* must have the ability to link with appropriate community resources for their project, such as businesses, schools, local agencies (e.g., transportation, recreation, social services), faith-based or social service organizations, media, food services, local health departments and local funders.

This project is intended to attract first-time grantees and consultants to RWJF. Alumni of the Foundation's Human Capital programs are also eligible to apply.

Use of Grant Funds

Senior Consultants are eligible to receive a total grant award of up to \$50,000 each. Grant funds may be used to cover the costs associated with completing all research, consulting services, methodological training and travel. Grantees will be expected to meet RWJF requirements for submission of final narrative and financial reports. 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, or as a substitute for funds currently being used to support similar activities.

How to Apply

There are two stages in the proposal process. The first is the submission of a brief proposal that describes the project. Brief proposals will be reviewed, and select applicants will be invited to submit full proposals in a second stage.

Complete details on the submission process and program information are available on the program's Web site at www.rwjf-newconnections.org. **All applicants must submit brief proposals online only through the RWJF Grantmaking Online system at <http://grantmaking.rwjf.org/nci3> and received no later than January 4, 2008 at 3 p.m. ET.**

By February 4, 2008 we will notify selected applicants to submit a full proposal. Information on the submission of full proposals will be provided to the selected applicants at that time. **The deadline for receipt of full proposals is 3 p.m. ET on March 13, 2008.**

We strongly recommend that all applicants log in to the system and familiarize themselves with the online submission process and requirements well before the final submission deadline. Program staff may not be able to assist all applicants in the final 24 hours before the submission deadline. In fairness to all applicants, the program will not accept late proposals.

Finalists will be chosen and then invited to participate in a phone interview with RWJF staff overseeing the New Connections program the week of April 21, 2008. At that time, finalists will have the opportunity to discuss the proposals in greater detail with RWJF program staff.

Please ensure your proposal addresses at least one of the project or research questions detailed in the “Topics for Study.” A list of project and research questions can be found at www.rwjf-newconnections.org under Program Links “Topics for Study.”

Optional Applicant Web Conference Calls

A Web conference call for *Senior Consultant* applicants will be held to provide information on the program’s goals, to assist applicants with the brief proposal process, and provide an opportunity for applicants to ask questions. The first conference call is scheduled for December 5, 2007 from 12:00–1:30 p.m. ET.

For those invited to submit a full proposal, a second *Senior Consultant* applicant conference call is scheduled for February 13, 2008 from 12:00–1:30 p.m. ET.

Participation in a Web conference call is optional, but highly encouraged. Registration is required for both conference calls. Potential applicants can learn more about these Web conference calls and register for them by going to the program’s Web site at www.rwjf-newconnections.org.

Program Direction

Direction for this program is provided by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Responsible staff members at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation are:

- Debra Joy Pérez, Ph.D., *senior program officer*
- Sue Hassmiller, Ph.D., *senior program officer*
- John Lumpkin, M.D., M.P.H., *senior vice president and director, Health Care Group*
- Catherine West, *National Urban Fellow*
- Linda Wright Moore, M.S., *senior communications officer*
- Steve Theisen, *grants administrator*

Please direct all other inquiries about the program, selection criteria, proposal requirements or submission process to:

Catherine West
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Timetable

- **December 5, 2007 (12:00–1:30 p.m. ET)**
Optional applicant Web conference call for *Senior Consultant* brief proposal applicants. To register, please visit www.rwjf-newconnections.org.
- **January 4, 2008 (3:00 p.m. ET)**
Deadline for receipt of brief proposals (must be submitted online).
- **February 4, 2008**
Select applicants invited to submit full proposals.
- **February 13, 2008 (12:00–1:30 p.m. ET)**
Optional applicant Web conference call for *Senior Consultant* full proposal applicants. To register, please visit www.rwjf-newconnections.org.
- **March 13, 2008 (3:00 p.m. ET)**
Deadline for receipt of full proposals (must be submitted online).
- **April 21–25, 2008**
Finalist interviews.
- **May 9, 2008**
Notification of awards.
- **June 1, 2008**
Start of awards.

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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