



Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Healthy Eating Research

Building Evidence to Prevent
Childhood Obesity



2010 Call for Proposals

Round 5, Rapid-Response and
RWJF New Connections
Grant Opportunities

Program Overview

(Please refer to sections noted in parentheses for complete details.)

Purpose (see Funding Opportunities)

Healthy Eating Research is a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF). The program supports research on environmental and policy strategies with strong potential to promote healthy eating among children to prevent childhood obesity, especially among lower-income and racial and ethnic populations at highest risk for obesity. Findings are expected to advance RWJF's efforts to reverse the childhood obesity epidemic by 2015.

This call for proposals (CFP) is for three types of awards aimed at providing key decision- and policy-makers with evidence to reverse the childhood obesity epidemic. They are: Round 5 grants, rapid-response grants and RWJF *New Connections* grants through the *Healthy Eating Research* program. The three funding opportunities are described in more detail beginning on page 7.

Total Awards (page 7)

Approximately \$2.4 million will be awarded under this CFP for Round 5 grants, rapid-response grants and *New Connections* grants through *Healthy Eating Research*. The anticipated allocation of funds is described starting on page 7.

Eligibility Criteria (page 11)

- Preference will be given to those applicants that are either public entities or nonprofit organizations that are tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.
- Applicant organizations must be based in the United States or its territories. The focus of this program is the United States; studies in other countries will be considered only to the extent that they may directly inform U.S. policy.

Selection Criteria (page 13)

See complete selection criteria starting on page 13.

Key Dates and Deadlines (see Timetable)

- *Proposals for Round 5 grants and New Connections grants:*
 - **May 13, 2010 (3 p.m. ET)**—Deadline for receipt of full proposals.
 - **November 15, 2010**—Awards begin.
- *Proposals for rapid-response grants:*
 - **March 15–September 1, 2010 (3 p.m. ET)**—Concept papers may be submitted.
 - **August 1, 2010–February 15, 2011**—Grants will be awarded on a rolling basis. Initiation of funding will be tied to the full proposal submission date.
 - **October 15, 2010 (3 p.m. ET)**—Final deadline for receipt of invited full proposals. Full proposals will be accepted on a rolling basis until this deadline.

How to Apply (page 15)

See complete instructions on how to apply for any of the three funding opportunities starting on page 15.

www.healthyeatingresearch.org

Background

Childhood obesity poses a serious threat to the health of our nation. Over the past four decades, obesity rates in the United States have more than quadrupled among children ages 6 to 11, more than tripled among adolescents ages 12 to 19, and more than doubled among children ages 2 to 5. Today, more than 23 million U.S. children and teens—nearly one in three young people—are either overweight or obese.

Changes in children’s food environments over the past few decades have increased the availability, appeal, affordability and consumption of foods and beverages that are low in nutrients, but high in fat, sugar and calories. Few children and adolescents consume diets that meet the national recommendations for good health as outlined in the federal *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, with many youths consuming excess fat, sugar and calories. Paralleling changes in the food environment are social and environmental changes that have reduced opportunities for children to be physically active. Few children and youths get the 60 minutes of physical activity per day recommended by the federal government. This makes it even more important to reduce excess calories, especially from low-nutrition foods, in order to achieve the energy balance required for a healthy body weight.

Healthy Eating Research, a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF), supports studies to identify and evaluate policies and environmental approaches that have the greatest potential to improve children’s diets and energy balance to reverse the nation’s levels of childhood obesity. This program parallels and complements RWJF’s *Active Living Research* program, which is building evidence to inform effective policy and environmental strategies to increase physical activity among children and adolescents (www.activelivingresearch.org).

RWJF is committed to tackling childhood obesity and the threat it poses to the health of our nation's children and families. The Foundation's goal is to reverse the epidemic of childhood obesity by 2015 by changing community environments and public policies to help children be more active and eat healthy foods. The Foundation places special emphasis on reaching the children at greatest risk for obesity: Black, Latino, American Indian, Asian/Pacific Islander children, and children who live in lower-income communities.

The Program

Healthy Eating Research is an RWJF national program. Its goals are to:

- establish a research base for policy and environmental factors that influence healthy eating and body weight in children, as well as effective policy and environmental strategies for reversing the childhood obesity epidemic;
- build a vibrant, multidisciplinary field of research and a diverse network of researchers; and
- ensure that findings are effectively communicated to inform policies and guide the development of effective solutions.

Healthy Eating Research issues CFPs to solicit scientifically rigorous, solution-oriented proposals from investigators representing diverse disciplines and backgrounds. The program's overall aims are to identify strategies likely to have important population-level impacts and to provide decision- and policy-makers with evidence to guide and accelerate effective action to reverse the childhood obesity epidemic.

Healthy Eating Research Call for Proposals

Funding Opportunities

The three types of funding opportunities included in this CFP are Round 5 grants, rapid-response grants and *New Connections* grants through *Healthy Eating Research*. The broad topics and types of studies described below apply to all three types of grants.

Topics

We rely on researchers' creativity to generate innovative, solution-oriented environmental and policy studies. Each of the three types of grants described in this CFP supports strategic, policy-relevant research on a wide range of policy and environmental changes. Examples of study topics that could be funded under this CFP include:

- innovative food pricing and economic incentives to encourage healthy food choices;
- varied forms of food and beverage advertising and marketing targeting youth, including youth in high-risk, lower-income and racial and ethnic populations;
- impact of changes in access and proximity to full-service grocery stores and fast-food outlets on youth diets;
- strategies for improving healthy food choices within varied retail settings (e.g., grocery stores, corner stores, mobile vending);
- changes in front-of-package labeling and point-of-purchase prompts within varied food outlets;
- changes in food and beverage formulation to reduce excess (non-nutritive) calories;
- effects of national, state and local school and child-care food policies;
- promising food-related policy and environmental changes in settings where children and their families make food choices, including community, school, after-school and child-care settings; and

- agricultural policies, including those related to commodity foods, agricultural subsidies and food assistance programs.

Types of Studies

Studies could include the following:

- experimental or quasi-experimental studies (such as altering the food environment through changes in pricing, portion size, packaging or point-of-purchase nutrition information);
- secondary analyses of existing datasets using cross-sectional or longitudinal designs to analyze the impact of food policies and environments;
- evaluation of planned interventions or natural experiments to assess the impact of environmental changes or national, state or local policy changes;
- financial, economic or cost-benefit studies evaluating the impacts of changes in the food environment or policy;
- health impact assessments or statistical modeling studies to identify, predict or evaluate the likely changes resulting from policy or environmental changes on diet, energy intake or weight outcomes;
- case studies of policy changes that aim to foster healthy eating in communities at high risk for childhood obesity;
- policy analysis, legal analysis or case studies to analyze the impact of policy or environmental changes that represent powerful levers for childhood obesity prevention;
- quantitative meta-analyses of the relationships between food environments and eating behaviors or weight outcomes; food policies and eating behaviors or weight outcomes; or social environment variables and eating behaviors or weight outcomes; and

- measurement studies to develop, test and validate methods and tools to identify and evaluate food policies and environments and their impact in a variety of settings and among different population groups.

Descriptions of the Round 5 grants, rapid-response grants and *New Connections* grants through *Healthy Eating Research* are outlined below.

Round 5 Grants

The Round 5 grants represent the majority of RWJF's investment in research through this program. Studies funded through such grants support policy-relevant research on a wide range of topics, as presented above. These grants require a one-stage, full proposal application process. Submission of a brief proposal or concept paper is not required. Applicants who qualify for *New Connections* grants through *Healthy Eating Research* also are eligible to apply for Round 5 grants.

- **Total Awards**

Approximately \$1.35 million will be awarded through Round 5 grants of up to \$170,000 each for a 12- to 24-month funding period. There is a six-month period between submission of full proposals and the start of funding for approved Round 5 grants.

Rapid-Response Grants

These grants will support time-sensitive and opportunistic studies on emerging or anticipated changes in food-related policies or environments that can only be conducted during a short window of opportunity and are needed to inform policy debates for local, state or national action. These grants can include the types of studies described above, as well as evaluations of imminent changes in food-related policies or environments (i.e., “natural experiments”), or pre-test or baseline evaluations prior to planned environmental or policy changes, or post-test evaluations when baseline data are available.

Studies that are not urgent and time-sensitive are not eligible for funding as rapid-response grants. It is the responsibility of the applicant to clearly demonstrate the urgency and time-sensitivity of the study. The initial one-page concept paper and subsequent full proposal (if invited) must explain why there is a limited window of opportunity to conduct the research and why the project could not be funded as a Round 5 grant. The one-page concept paper also should outline the relevance of the research to an immediate policy or environmental change effort and describe risks related to possible changes in the timing or nature of the natural experiment or environmental change or policy to be evaluated.

■ ***Total Awards***

Approximately \$900,000 will be awarded for rapid-response grants of up to \$150,000 each, for a maximum funding period of 18 months. Funding for approved studies may be initiated as early as four months after invited full proposals are submitted. Grants will be awarded on a rolling basis; a one-page concept paper may be submitted at any time until September 1, 2010 (3 p.m. ET).

New Connections Grants Through Healthy Eating Research

These grants are for new investigators who have been historically disadvantaged or underrepresented in research disciplines supported by RWJF. This includes researchers who are ethnic or racial minorities, first-generation college graduates and individuals from lower-income communities. Individuals who are eligible for *New Connections* grants through *Healthy Eating Research* also are eligible for Round 5 and rapid-response grants.

This funding opportunity is offered through collaboration with RWJF's *New Connections* program, which is designed to expand the diversity of perspectives that inform RWJF programming and introduce new researchers and scholars to

the Foundation, while simultaneously building evidence relevant to advancing RWJF's programming objectives. For the purpose of this CFP, only new investigators, defined as individuals who received their doctorate or terminal degree within seven years prior to the award date for the grant (after November 15, 2003), are eligible for funding.

Grantees who are awarded *New Connections* grants through *Healthy Eating Research* will become part of a broader network of researchers representing both of these RWJF programs. Grantees will be eligible to participate in all RWJF *New Connections* training and networking events. Grantees also will be eligible to receive mentoring, networking and technical assistance provided by *Healthy Eating Research*.

Applicants for *New Connections* grants through *Healthy Eating Research* are required to identify a mentor in their proposals. Mentors should submit a letter of support with the applicant's proposal. Mentors will participate with the grantees in an initial orientation conference call led by *Healthy Eating Research* to review mentoring roles and responsibilities.

The solicitation for *New Connections* grants through *Healthy Eating Research* has a one-stage full proposal application process. It does not require advance submission of a brief proposal or concept paper.

■ ***Total Awards***

Up to two *New Connections* grants will be awarded through the *Healthy Eating Research* program in this round of funding. Awards will be for 12- to 24-month grants of up to \$75,000 each. Funding may not exceed \$50,000 in a 12-month period. The funding cycle involves a six-month period between submission of full proposals and the start of funding.

Overall Study Guidelines for all Grants

- The three types of awards described in this CFP (Round 5, rapid-response and *New Connections* grants through *Healthy Eating Research*) cover the same topic areas and types of studies, but they represent different funding opportunities. The main outcome variables for grants may vary. Given the limited scope and short duration of these projects, measures of changes in weight or body mass index are not required. Objective measures of food purchases, dietary consumption (especially consumption of non-nutritive excess calories) or estimated impact on average daily caloric intake are encouraged. Variables likely to affect the impact and feasibility of the policy and environmental changes studied (e.g., demographics, community characteristics and other contextual variables) should be assessed.
- Target populations include children and adolescents ages 3 to 18 and their families, especially in lower-income and racial and ethnic populations at highest risk for obesity.
- Studies focused solely on behavior change at the individual level or nutrition education interventions will not be funded. However, studies could compare the impact of environmental changes with or without nutrition education or promotion, or identify the most effective components of a multicomponent intervention.
- Studies conducted in real-world settings are preferred. Experimental studies or laboratory simulations must show promise for generalization to real-world settings, especially in lower-income, and racial and ethnic minority populations.
- Researchers should seek input from relevant stakeholders—such as policy-makers, school or community leaders, parents and children—to develop feasible and policy-relevant project goals and outcomes. Proposals should describe the input received from these stakeholders in designing the study and research questions, and the strategies that will be used to communicate research results.

Applicants should include at least one representative of the community or stakeholder group targeted (e.g., community leader, policy-maker) as a regular adviser.

- Specific plans should be outlined for communicating and disseminating research results not only to scientists, but also to policy-makers and relevant stakeholders (e.g., peer-reviewed papers, briefs and reports, formal presentations at national meetings, convening policy-makers or other stakeholders to present findings and develop recommendations, creative dissemination tools or Web-based dissemination efforts).
- Awards will be made directly to the grantee's home institution. Indirect costs (up to 12 percent) are included in the total project awards.
- Proposed projects may be conducted as supplements to existing studies. Project co-funding is welcome; sources and amounts must be fully described in the proposal. The added value of the proposed research grant should be clearly described.

All applicants are encouraged to visit the Healthy Eating Research Web site at www.healthyeatingresearch.org and view the abstracts for studies previously funded through the program. The Web site also has other pertinent applicant resources, such as examples of studies, a bibliography related to the research topics, syntheses of research recommendations from the Institute of Medicine and other authoritative groups, examples of nationally representative data sources, key reports, and research briefs and syntheses.

Eligibility Criteria

Round 5 and Rapid-Response Grants:

Preference will be given to those applicants that are either public entities or nonprofit organizations that are tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Applicant organizations must be based in the United States or its territories. The focus of this program is the United States; studies in other countries will be considered only to the extent that they may directly inform U.S. policy.

For Rapid-Response Grants Only:

The timing of the program, event or policy change to be studied must justify the rapid-review process in order to answer the proposed research questions.

For New Connections Grants Through Healthy Eating Research Only:

Investigators must:

- have completed a doctorate or terminal degree (e.g., Ph.D., M.D., J.D.) within the past seven years (after November 15, 2003);
- be a citizen or permanent resident of the United States or its territories;
- be affiliated with or sponsored by a university or an organization that is tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and is not a private foundation under Section 509(a) of the Code. The sponsoring institution must agree to receive and administer the grant;
- be from a group that has been historically disadvantaged or underrepresented in research disciplines supported by RWJF. This includes people from ethnic or racial minorities, first-generation college graduates and people from lower-income communities. These examples are intended to be illustrative, not exclusive. Applicants who do not fall within one of these categories but who believe they are from a historically disadvantaged or underrepresented background should check “other” and explain their individual circumstances in the space available in the RWJF Grantmaking Online system;
- hold a faculty or other research position in a university setting, or hold an equivalent position in a non-university setting, such as an independent research organization;
- demonstrate evidence of research skills relevant to the proposed study;
- propose a project that spans 12 to 24 months in duration;

- devote at least 25 percent of their time to the project; and
- not have received previous funding from RWJF.

Selection Criteria

Round 5 Grants, Rapid-Response Grants and New Connections Grants Through Healthy Eating Research

All proposals will be assessed by a committee composed of RWJF staff, national program office (NPO) staff at the University of Minnesota, a senior program advisory panel and other expert reviewers. The committee will use the following criteria to assess proposals:

- ability to identify policies and environmental changes or strategies that hold strong potential to produce changes that accelerate the nation's efforts to reverse the childhood obesity epidemic.
- relevance and timeliness of project to inform policy action. For rapid-response grants, studies must be time sensitive for immediate policy impact.
- relevance to the needs of low-resource communities and children in lower-income and racial and ethnic minority populations at highest risk for obesity.
- degree to which the strategies are widely applicable, feasible and sustainable.
- clarity of project goals, hypotheses, methods and outcomes.
- use of a clear theoretical framework, conceptual model or rationale.
- scientific rigor of proposed research and analytic methods, including quality of the measures and data to be used.
- research qualifications and experience of the investigator(s) and appropriateness of disciplines and perspectives represented.
- appropriateness of proposed budget and project timeline.

- plans for communicating and disseminating research results not only to scientists, but also to policy-makers and relevant stakeholders (e.g., peer-reviewed papers, briefs and reports, formal presentations, stakeholder convenings, Web-based dissemination efforts).

A senior program advisory panel reviews *Healthy Eating Research* proposals and makes funding recommendations to Foundation staff. All funding decisions are made by RWJF. RWJF does not provide individual critiques of proposals submitted.

Evaluation and Monitoring

All grantees are expected to meet RWJF requirements for the submission of narrative and financial reports. As part of the application process, finalists will be asked to disclose any financial arrangements (e.g., fees, funding, employment, stock holdings) or relationships that might compromise the credibility or perceived credibility of the findings, mirroring the types of disclosure requested by leading journals.

Grantees are required to submit periodic information needed for overall project performance monitoring and management. Grantees also will be required to respond to periodic surveys and other communications sent from *Healthy Eating Research*.

Use of Grant Funds

RWJF grant funds may be used for project staff salaries, consultant fees, data collection and analysis, dataset procurement, meetings, supplies, project-related travel, and other direct expenses, including a limited amount of equipment deemed essential to the project. 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.

Principal investigators are expected to participate in an annual grantee meeting. Funds for up to two individuals to attend one grantee meeting in each year of funding should be included in the proposed budget. The full proposal templates on the RWJF Grantmaking Online system contain guidelines for travel budgeting.

How to Apply

Round 5 Proposals

Proposals for Round 5 grants must be submitted only through the RWJF Grantmaking Online system. For detailed formatting instructions and to prepare and submit your proposal, please go to <http://grantmaking.rwjf.org/her5>.

Applicants for these grants need to submit a full proposal of no more than 15 pages (1.5 line spacing) accompanied by a budget, budget narrative and additional supporting documents. Submission of a brief proposal or concept paper is not required. Applicants who qualify for *New Connections* grants through *Healthy Eating Research* also are eligible to apply for Round 5 grants.

Rapid-Response Proposals

Proposals for rapid-response grants require an initial submission of a one-page (single line spacing) concept paper. *The concept paper describing the proposed study may be submitted at any time until September 1, 2010 (3 p.m. ET) via e-mail to the Healthy Eating Research NPO at healthyeating@umn.edu.* Within two weeks of receipt of the concept paper, applicants will be contacted by e-mail and informed whether or not they are invited to submit a full proposal. *Invited full proposals must be submitted through the RWJF Grantmaking Online system at <http://grantmaking.rwjf.org/herrr3>.*

Applicants invited to submit full proposals will be given additional information about formatting requirements and instructions on preparing and submitting the full proposal. Invited full proposals may be submitted at any time until October 15, 2010 (3 p.m. ET).

Funding for approved studies will be initiated approximately four months after full proposals are submitted. Grants will be awarded on a rolling basis.

New Connections Proposals

Proposals for New Connections grants through Healthy Eating Research must be submitted only through the RWJF Grantmaking Online system. For detailed formatting instructions and to prepare and submit your proposal, please go to <http://grantmaking.rwjf.org/bernc4>.

Applicants for these grants need to submit a full proposal of no more than 15 pages (1.5 line spacing) accompanied by a budget, budget narrative and additional supporting documents. Individuals who are eligible for *New Connections* grants through *Healthy Eating Research* also are eligible for Round 5 and rapid-response grants.

Web conference calls will be held to answer questions about the three funding opportunities described in this CFP. Participation in these calls is optional. It is necessary to register in advance at www.healthyeatingresearch.org.

- **March 31, 2010**—Optional Web conference call for potential applicants for **Round 5 and rapid-response** grants. For complete details and to register, visit www.healthyeatingresearch.org.
- **April 2, 2010**—Optional Web conference call for potential applicants for ***New Connections* grants through *Healthy Eating Research***. For complete details and to register, visit www.healthyeatingresearch.org.

Applicant information for all three funding opportunities described in this CFP, including frequently asked questions (FAQs) and applicant resources can be found on the program Web site.

For more information on the grant opportunities described in this CFP, please direct inquiries as follows:

For Round 5 grants:

Kathy Kosiak, *research coordinator*

Phone: (800) 578-8636

E-mail: healthyeating@umn.edu

For New Connections grants through Healthy Eating Research and rapid-response grants:

Laura L. Klein, M.P.H., *research coordinator*

Phone: (800) 578-8636

E-mail: healthyeating@umn.edu

Program Direction

Direction and technical assistance for this program are provided by the University of Minnesota, which serves as the national program office (NPO).

Responsible staff members and advisers at the NPO are:

- Mary Story, Ph.D., R.D., *program director*
- Karen M. Kaphingst, M.P.H., *deputy director*
- Robert Jeffery, Ph.D., *senior adviser*
- Melissa Nelson Laska, Ph.D., R.D., *faculty research associate*
- J. Michael Oakes, Ph.D., *program faculty adviser*
- Kathy Kosiak, *research coordinator*
- Laura L. Klein, M.P.H., *research coordinator*
- Sharanya Johnson, *administrative assistant*

Responsible staff members at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation are:

- C. Tracy Orleans, Ph.D., *senior scientist*
- James S. Marks, M.D., M.P.H., *senior vice president and director, Health Group*
- Jan Mihalow, M.S.M., *grants administrator*

The *Healthy Eating Research* senior program advisory panel is chaired by Shiriki Kumanyika, Ph.D., M.P.H.

Timetable

Round 5 Grants and New Connections Grants Through Healthy Eating Research

■ **March 15, 2010**

RWJF Grantmaking Online system will be available to full proposal applicants.*

■ **March 31, 2010**

Optional Web conference call for potential applicants for Round 5 grants. For complete details and to register, visit www.healthyeatingresearch.org.

■ **April 2, 2010**

Optional Web conference call for potential applicants for *New Connections* grants through *Healthy Eating Research*. For complete details and to register, visit www.healthyeatingresearch.org.

■ **May 13, 2010 (3 p.m. ET)**

Deadline for receipt of online full proposals.*

■ **Late August 2010**

Notification of finalists.

■ **November 15, 2010**

Awards begin.

■ **February 2011**

Healthy Eating Research Grantee Meeting.

** All full proposals must be submitted only through the RWJF Grantmaking Online system. All applicants should log in to the system and familiarize themselves with online submission 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.*

Rapid-Response Grants

■ **March 15–September 1, 2010 (3 p.m. ET)**

Concept papers may be submitted via e-mail to the *Healthy Eating Research* NPO at any time between March 15 and September 1, 2010 (3 p.m. ET). Within two weeks of receipt of the concept paper, applicants will be informed by e-mail whether or not they are invited to submit a full proposal.

■ **March 31, 2010**

Optional Web conference call for potential applicants for rapid-response grants. For complete details and to register, visit www.healthyeatingresearch.org.

■ **October 15, 2010 (3 p.m. ET)**

Final deadline for receipt of invited full proposals.* Full proposals will be accepted on a rolling basis until this deadline.

■ **August 1, 2010–February 15, 2011**

Grants will be awarded on a rolling basis. Initiation of funding will be tied to the full proposal submission date.

■ **February 2011**

Healthy Eating Research Grantee Meeting.

** All full proposals must be submitted only through the RWJF Grantmaking Online system. All applicants should log in to the system and familiarize themselves with online submission 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.*

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.



Robert Wood Johnson
Foundation

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