

LEGISLATIVE #

120391

40 YEARS OF IMPROVING HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE



Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

40

Forward Promise Innovation Grants Promoting Opportunities for the Health and Success of Young Men of Color



2012 Call for Proposals

Brief Proposal Deadline

October 10, 2012

Program Overview

(For complete details, refer to specific pages/sections noted below.)

Purpose (see Background)

Forward Promise Innovation Grants: Promoting Opportunities for the Health and Success of Young Men of Color is a new initiative of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation that aims to improve the health of middle school- and high school-aged boys and young men of color, as well as their opportunities for success in school, work, and life.

Total Awards

- Up to 10 grants will be awarded under this call for proposals.
- Grantees will receive awards of up to \$500,000 each for up to 30 months.

Eligibility Criteria

- Preference will be given to applicant organizations that are either public entities or nonprofit organizations that are tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and are not private foundations or Type III supporting organizations. The Foundation may require additional documentation.
- Applicant organizations must be based in the United States or its territories.
- Organizations must have an organizational budget of at least \$1.5 million annually.

Selection Criteria

Complete selection criteria can be found on page 9.

Key Dates and Deadlines (see Timetable)

- **September 11, 2012 (1 p.m.–2 p.m. ET)**—Optional applicant Web conference call. Registration is required. Please visit the program's [website](#) for complete details and to register.
- **October 10, 2012 (3 p.m. ET)**—Deadline for receipt of brief proposals.
- **December 17, 2012 (3 p.m. ET)**—Deadline for receipt of invited full proposals.

How to Apply (Page 12)

Proposals for this solicitation must be submitted via the RWJF online system. Visit www.rwjf.org/cfp/fwp and use the Apply Online link. If you have not already done so, you will be required to register at <http://my.rwjf.org> before you begin the application process.

Please direct inquiries to:
Maisha Simmons, MPA, *program officer*
Email: forwardpromise@rwjf.org

www.rwjf.org/goto/forwardpromise

Background

Young people require support from their families, schools, communities and society as they move toward healthy and productive adulthood. This is especially true for middle school- and high school-aged boys and young men, many of whom encounter barriers that make the path to adulthood especially challenging.

Boys and young men of color are more likely to grow up in poverty, live in unsafe neighborhoods, and attend schools that lack the basic resources and supports that kids need in order to thrive. In addition, actions that might be treated as youthful indiscretions by other young men often are judged more severely and result in harsher punishments that have lasting consequences. Down the road, pathways to stable, productive employment can be limited.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's (RWJF) Vulnerable Populations Portfolio focuses on what makes people healthy—or unhealthy—from a perspective that includes factors outside of the medical care system. We recognize that to have meaningful effect on populations that we hope to help, we must consider how complex social factors—poverty, education, employment, housing—affect people's health, and develop solutions within that context. And, we look for ideas that are ready to grow, that can thrive in new communities, and/or that could be expanded to help a new group of people.

Through this solicitation, RWJF seeks innovative projects that work to improve health, education and employment outcomes for middle school- and high school-aged boys and young men of color. Successful projects will recognize that these domains do not exist in isolation and that proposed interventions will require partnerships and holistic approaches to have sustainable impact and improved outcomes for young men. RWJF will support promising, innovative approaches that are poised for growth and/or replication and have the potential to improve the circumstances that affect young men of color in one of the following areas:

- **School discipline approaches that do not push students out of school.** Graduating from high school is an important step toward success. Yet, many boys and young men of color face challenges when it comes to staying in school. One such barrier stems from harsh school discipline approaches that can often ultimately, push young men out of school. Such approaches, including “zero-tolerance” policies, began as an attempt to protect students from drugs, weapons and violence in schools. However, these policies sometimes cause powerful unintended consequences. Over time, schools and districts have utilized out-of-school suspensions and expulsions for less severe school infractions and relied more heavily on police presence to maintain order on school campuses. This policy shift disproportionately affects young men of color, whose suspension and expulsion rates far exceed those of their White peers. Moreover, existing analyses of suspension and expulsion data at the local level suggest that harsh school discipline policies are not enhancing school safety. There are common-sense alternatives to these policies that promote accountability for disciplinary offenses but do not push students out of school.

www.publicinterestprojects.org/wp-content/uploads/Turning-the-Tide-on-School-Discipline_v24.pdf

- **Early interventions that focus on dropout prevention and increasing middle school retention and high school graduation rates.** Evidence suggests that better education outcomes lead to better health outcomes. However, only about half of African American, Hispanic and Native American boys graduate from high school on time with their peers. Interventions based in both school and community settings are utilizing data and specific supports that will keep young men engaged in school. The ability to develop early indicators that identify when a student is likely to drop out can increase opportunities to retain students and keep them on track toward completing school. www.dropoutprevention.org/modelprograms

- **Mental health-based interventions that tailor approaches to boys and young men who have experienced and/or been exposed to violence and trauma.** Specifically, we seek innovations that transform the philosophy and culture of how organizations provide services to youth by adopting the principles and practices of trauma-informed care. Youth who grow up in neighborhoods and conditions that are plagued with chronic violence are more likely to experience trauma and require services and interventions designed to address the consequences of trauma in individuals and facilitate healing.

www.samhsa.gov/nctic/

- **Career training initiatives that promote both workforce and education emphases to ensure that students are college- and career-ready.** Through early work experiences, part-time and summer jobs, internships, and other vocational offerings, youth can become familiar with workplace expectations, gain critical skills, and develop a work portfolio. Early work experience also positively correlates with future labor market success and earnings. We are especially interested in interventions designed for young men who are recent dropouts and/or have been involved with the criminal justice system. *www.serve.gov/new-images/council/pdf/12_0604whccs_finalreport.pdf*

The Program

Forward Promise Innovation Grants will support up to 10 programs that have the potential to achieve fundamental breakthroughs in the health, education and employment outcomes for middle school- and high school-aged boys and young men of color. Grant awards will be up to \$500,000 each, payable over a 30-month period, commencing in June 2013 and concluding no later than December 2015. The goal is to: identify and support innovative programs that address the challenges facing middle school- and high school-aged young men of color and correspond with the interest areas of RWJF (pgs. 4, 5); have potential to change the organization and system(s) of service delivery; be poised for growth and/or replication; and demonstrate the potential to transform social norms within the context of schools and/or communities.

Applicants must have implemented an existing program model that has a fully articulated theory of change or logic model, have preliminary evidence of improving outcomes for this population, and demonstrate potential to be replicated for broader application and greater impact. Preference will be given to organizations or institutions that apply funds to support program infrastructure and project expansion.

No more than 50 percent of the request should be allocated to existing program activities.

Applicants must clearly describe a program model that will address at least one of the following areas of interest:

- school discipline approaches that do not push students out of school;
- early interventions that focus on dropout prevention and increasing middle school retention and high school graduation rates;

- mental health-based interventions that tailor approaches to boys and young men who have experienced and/or been exposed to violence and trauma; or
- career training programs that blend workforce and education emphases to ensure that students are college- and career-ready.

Successful projects must:

- be innovative and seek to improve the system(s) that already exist by making them better through new business or program models;
- be based on an existing program or model of intervention that has a fully articulated theory of change or logic model, show some evidence to suggest that the program model is effective, and demonstrate potential that the program model is poised for growth and/or replication for broader application and greater impact;
- include an innovative program of service that targets middle school- and high school-aged young men of color;
- identify the target population and number of young men to be served and describe the risks and expected outcomes;
- demonstrate that the proposed program or model represents a departure from the status quo and has the potential for broader application in a different setting; and
- demonstrate that the intervention(s) reflect a network of support and partners that can help to generate sustainable impact and success.

Eligibility Criteria

RWJF seeks applications from organizations and/or institutions with existing programs and evidence that their projects are improving outcomes for middle school- and high school-aged boys and young men of color. Applicants must demonstrate potential that their program can be replicated for broader application and greater impact. We seek to support models that are diverse—both in their geographic location, as well as in the racial and ethnic identities of the young men that they serve. Projects will not be considered if they do not indicate explicit program emphasis on improving outcomes for middle school- and high school-aged young men of color.

- Preference will be given to applicant organizations that are either public entities or nonprofit organizations that are tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and are not private foundations or Type III supporting organizations. The Foundation may require additional documentation.
- Applicant organizations must be based in the United States or its territories.
- Organizations must have an organizational budget of at least \$1.5 million annually at the time of proposal submission.

Consistent with RWJF values, this program embraces diversity and inclusion across multiple dimensions, such as race, ethnicity, gender, age and disadvantaged socioeconomic status. We strongly encourage applications that will help us expand the perspectives and experiences we bring to our work. We believe that the more we include diverse perspectives and experiences in our work, the better we are able to help all Americans live healthier lives and get the care they need.

Selection Criteria

The *Forward Promise Innovation Grants* Review Committee, composed of RWJF, the *Forward Promise* Advisory Council and other expert reviewers, will review proposals. All proposals will be screened for eligibility and then reviewed using the following criteria:

- Commitment to improving outcomes for middle school- and high school-aged young men of color.
- A clearly defined focus on at least one of the RWJF areas of interest.
- Rationale on how the program area will affect individual and community outcomes.
- Demonstrated initial evidence of improved outcomes for young men.
- Description of how the project is innovative.
- Nature of collaborations and partnerships with other community providers or systems.
- Potential to serve as a model for other communities and organizations seeking to improve outcomes for the target population.
- A clear articulation of how RWJF funds will support broader application of or strengthen the existing model.
- An annual organizational budget of at least \$1.5 million.

**Evaluation and
Monitoring**

An independent research group selected and funded by RWJF will conduct an evaluation of *Forward Promise*. As a condition of accepting RWJF funds, we require grantees to participate in the evaluation.

Grantees are expected to meet RWJF requirements for the submission of narrative and financial reports, as well as periodic information needed for overall project performance monitoring and management. We may ask project directors to participate in periodic meetings and give progress reports on their grants. At the close of each grant, the lead agency is expected to provide a written report on the project and ensure that its findings are suitable for wide dissemination.

Use of Grant Funds

Grant funds may be used for project staff 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. 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, for political activities, or as a substitute for funds currently being used to support similar activities.

Preference will be given to applicants seeking support to improve their program's existing infrastructure for expansion or replication of the program model. Uses of grant funds include, but are not limited to: improving the existing data collection system, business planning and implementation; assessment for strategic growth and/or expansion; evaluability assessments; and branding and communications strategies. Applicants may also allocate funding for program implementation, but those resources must be linked to implementing the capacity-building activities of this project. No more than 50 percent of the request should be allocated to existing program activities.

Grantees should include travel costs in their budgets for two people to participate in up to two annual grantee meetings, using the Foundation's travel estimate of \$1,300 per person for a two-night/two-day trip where air travel is required. This amount should be included in the proposed application budget.

How to Apply

Proposals for this solicitation must be submitted via the RWJF online system. Visit www.rwjf.org/cfp/fwp and use the Apply Online link. If you haven't already done so, you will be required to register at <http://my.rwjf.org> before you begin the application process.

All applicants should log in to the system and familiarize themselves with online submission requirements well before the final submission deadline. 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 submissions.

There are two stages in the competitive proposal process: (1) applicants submit a brief proposal that describes the project and, *if invited*; (2) select applicants then submit a full proposal and line-item budget for a grant for further consideration.

Stage 1: Brief Proposals

Applicants must submit a brief proposal narrative no more than three pages that describes the project and includes a one-page preliminary budget. The complete submission should be no more than four pages in length. The brief proposal must include the following concise descriptions of:

- The RWJF area of interest to be addressed, along with data that support the rationale for engaging in the issue.
- The applicant organization's capacity and how the organization's mission aligns with the proposed project.
- The target community, including the number of young men served, geographic background, and the racial and ethnic diversity of the participants.
- The program model and how it is innovative and poised for growth and/or replication.

- The evidence and/or indicators of success that demonstrate improvement in outcomes for middle school- and high school-aged young men of color.
- Additional partners or collaborators in the program design.
- Capacity-building supports requested.
- Estimated total budget request and proposed use of RWJF funds.
- Expected duration of the proposed grant (not to exceed 30 months).

Stage 2: Full Proposals

Selected Stage 1 applicants will be invited by email by November 12, 2012 to submit a full proposal of no more than 10 pages, accompanied by a comprehensive budget and budget narrative. Applicants who submit full proposals may be selected to participate in virtual site visits with the proposal review team. Further description of the proposal requirements will be provided to successful Stage 1 applicants.

For more information on the program and proposal requirements, please contact:

Maisha Simmons, MPA, *program officer*
Forward Promise: Promoting Opportunities for the
Health and Success of Young Men of Color
Email: forwardpromise@rwjf.org

RWJF does not provide individual critiques of proposals submitted.

Timetable

- **August 20, 2012**
RWJF online system is available to applicants.*
- **September 11, 2012 (1 p.m.–2 p.m. ET)**
Optional applicant Web conference call. Registration is required. Please visit the program's website at www.rwjf.org/goto/forwardpromise for complete details and to register.
- **October 10, 2012 (3 p.m. ET)**
Deadline for receipt of brief proposals.*
- **November 12, 2012**
Applicants notified if they have been invited to submit a full proposal.
- **December 17, 2012 (3 p.m. ET)**
Deadline for receipt of invited full proposals.*
- **February 1, 2013–February 28, 2013**
Virtual site visits.
- **March 2013**
Notification of awards.
- **June 2013**
Start of grants.

* All proposals must be submitted via the RWJF online system. All applicants should log in to the system and familiarize themselves with online submission requirements well before the final submission deadline. Staff may not be able to assist all applicants in the final 24 hours before the submission deadline. In fairness to all applicants, late submissions will not be accepted.

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 health and health care, the Foundation works with a diverse group of organizations and individuals to identify solutions and achieve comprehensive, measurable, and timely change.

For 40 years, the Foundation has brought experience, commitment, and a rigorous, balanced approach to the problems that affect the health and health care of those it serves. When it comes to helping Americans lead healthier lives and get the care they need, the Foundation expects to make a difference in your lifetime.

For more information, visit www.rwjf.org.

Follow the Foundation on Twitter, www.rwjf.org/twitter or Facebook, www.rwjf.org/facebook.

Sign up to receive email alerts on upcoming calls for proposals at <http://my.rwjf.org>.



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