

# CALL FOR PROPOSALS



## ROUND 3

***Cycle One Grants Deadline: February 18, 2004***

***Cycle Two Grants Deadline: September 1, 2004***

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

(Please refer to specific sections for complete detail.)

### Purpose

*Active Living Research* is a \$12.5-million national program to stimulate and support research that will identify environmental factors and policies that influence physical activity. Findings are expected to inform environmental and policy changes that will promote active living among Americans.

### Eligibility Criteria (page 8)

Preference may be given to applicants who may be either public entities or nonprofit organizations that are tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

### Selection Criteria (page 8)

Proposals must address one of the following topics:

1. Environmental characteristics and physical activity in under-studied populations.
2. Impact of changes in community environments or policies on physical activity.

*Complete selection criteria are described on page 8.*

### Total Awards – Round 3

- Up to \$3 million is available in this third round of funding for research grants.
- Two cycles of funding are available in Round 3:
  - *Cycle One* for proposals requesting up to \$600,000 total for up to three years.
  - *Cycle Two* for proposals requesting up to \$150,000 total for up to two years.
- An applicant may apply as a New Investigator in either cycle of funding. In addition, funds are available for Dissertation Awards. *Details on additional funding can be found on page 12.*

### Deadlines (page 15)

- **February 18, 2004 (1 p.m. PST)** – Deadline for receipt of brief proposals for *Cycle One*.
- **April 15, 2004** – *Cycle One* applicants will be notified if invited to submit full proposals.
- **June 15, 2004 (1 p.m. PDT)** – Deadline for receipt of invited full proposals for *Cycle One*.
- **September 1, 2004 (1 p.m. PDT)** – Deadline for receipt of full proposals for *Cycle Two*.

### How to Apply (page 10)

**All proposals other than those requesting dissertation funding must be submitted through the RWJF Grantmaking Online system.** For detailed information and submission guidelines, please contact the National Program Office or visit the program's Web site:

*Active Living Research*

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[www.activelivingresearch.org](http://www.activelivingresearch.org)

## BACKGROUND

Physical inactivity is one of the most important modifiable threats to health. Despite the well-documented social, physical and mental health benefits of physical activity, at least 60 percent of adult Americans do not meet the recommendations of the U.S. Surgeon General for accumulating 30 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity most days of the week. Physical inactivity is estimated to be responsible for more than 200,000 deaths and \$77 billion in direct health care costs each year. It is widely recognized as one of the nation's most pressing health problems.

We know that the majority of Americans are insufficiently active, but we do not fully understand why. Some research supports the idea that physical activity has been engineered out of our lives because of changes in how communities and buildings are designed, growing dependence on automobiles, widespread use of labor-saving devices, and sedentary work and recreation patterns. Yet little is known about the impact of these trends or how to counter them to promote physical activity.

## THE PROGRAM

*Active Living Research* (formerly Active Living Policy and Environmental Studies) is a \$12.5-million national program of The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF), created to stimulate and support research that will identify environmental factors and policies that influence physical activity. Findings are expected to inform environmental and policy changes that will promote active living among Americans.

“Active living” is a way of life that integrates physical activity into daily routines. The goal is to accumulate at least 30 minutes of activity each day. Individuals may do this in a variety of ways, such as walking or bicycling for transportation, exercise or pleasure;

playing in the park; working in the yard; taking the stairs; and using recreation facilities.

The *Active Living Research* program focuses on relationships among characteristics of natural and built environments, public and private policies, and personal levels of physical activity. *Active Living Research* has three primary objectives. The first is to establish a strong research base regarding the environmental and policy correlates of physical activity. The second is to help build a transdisciplinary field of physical activity policy and environmental researchers. The third is to facilitate the use of research to support policy change.

This Call for Proposals is intended to encourage experts in fields such as exercise science, public health, transportation, urban planning, architecture, the behavioral sciences, health care, recreation, landscape architecture, geography, law enforcement, economics, policy studies and education to form transdisciplinary teams to identify environmental factors and policies that are related to physical activity.

The chief aim of the *Active Living Research* program is to fill this knowledge void by supporting research to identify environmental factors and policies with potential to substantially increase levels of physical activity among Americans of all ages, incomes and ethnic backgrounds. Because decisions about community design are being made continually, decision-makers need timely and accurate information about how their design and construction choices can affect the physical activity and health of entire populations. Research supported by this program will provide policy-makers with evidence about how to create more activity-friendly communities. Each year, *Active Living Research* will prioritize different topics to stimulate research on the wide variety of issues that are relevant to understanding how environments and policies can support active living.

*Active Living Research* plans to release annual Calls For Proposals focusing on topics of current interest. Information about previously funded grants is available on the Grants page of the program's Web site at [www.activelivingresearch.org](http://www.activelivingresearch.org). Round 3 of funding will make available up to \$3 million for research grants.

*There are two high-priority research topics for Round 3:*

- First, the environmental and policy correlates of physical activity in under-studied populations. We expect proposals under this topic to fill gaps in the existing literature.
- Second, the impact of changes in community environments or policies on physical activity.

Round 3 priority topics are described in detail below. *Active Living Research* also will consider uniquely creative, rigorous and timely proposals that fall within the broader field of physical activity policy and environmental research.

### ***1. Environmental characteristics and physical activity in under-studied populations.***

Research in transportation and urban planning demonstrates that patterns of land use are associated with nonmotorized transport, such as walking and cycling. Research in the health fields demonstrates that leisure-time physical activity can be affected by such variables as access to recreation facilities and programs. However, most studies have been conducted with able-bodied adults in urban and suburban settings and do not reflect the diversity of populations or environments in the United States. Because environmental and policy correlates of physical activity are likely to differ by population subgroups, specific studies of those subgroups are necessary. Of particular interest are populations that are more likely to be physically inactive and to suffer from related health problems, such as cardiovascular disease, obesity and diabetes.

*Active Living Research* seeks proposals that describe research to improve understanding of the environmental and policy correlates of physical activity in one or more of the following population subgroups:

- Children and adolescents.
- Low-income and ethnic minority groups.
- Older adults.
- People with physical challenges.
- Residents of rural areas.

Each of these groups is itself diverse, and it will not be possible to fund separate studies on highly specific subgroups. Therefore, proposals should examine a relatively broadly defined population group.

*Active Living Research* encourages proposals that build upon previous concepts in the urban planning/transportation and health/physical activity literature. For example, an investigator might examine physical activity for recreation, transportation and other purposes as related to characteristics of land use, community design, transportation systems and recreational facilities. Proposals that are likely to have the most generalizable results and broadest potential impact on science and policy will be favored.

For most of these subgroups, there are no well-developed, subgroup-specific hypotheses about environmental and policy correlates of physical activity. Thus, a systematic approach to original data collection that addresses the topic could include the following phases:

- a. Development of hypotheses about environmental and policy characteristics that might be positively and negatively related to physical activity in the target population. This could be accomplished by surveys, focus groups, interviews, observations or other means.

- b. If needed, development of measures of the most promising environmental and policy variables for the specific population. This should include both perceived and objective measures, where possible, as well as an evaluation of the reliability of any newly developed measures.
- c. Use of new and/or existing measures to examine a broad range of environmental and policy correlates of physical activity in the target population.

The use of geographic information systems (GIS) is recommended in the measurement and analysis of environmental data. Both objective and perceived (i.e., self-reported) environmental measures may be included. Objective measures of physical activity (e.g., validated accelerometers) are recommended.

## ***2. Impact of changes in community environments or policies on physical activity.***

Grants in this category will take advantage of “natural experiments” presented by planned environmental or policy changes by providing funds for pre- and post-change evaluation of communities. For example, an investigator might assess physical activity in a community before and after the introduction of traffic-calming methods, biking and walking trails, major park enhancements, a walk-to-school program, or changes in parking availability or fees. Or an investigator might evaluate the impact of special events, such as TV turnoff week, bike-to-work day, or days on which roads are open only to pedestrians and cyclists. In addition to assessing the specific type of physical activity likely to be affected by the intervention, it may be appropriate to assess the contribution of the change to overall physical activity. Simultaneous assessments of comparable communities that are not implementing the changes would strengthen proposals. Documentation of actual environmental and policy changes should be included. If the planned changes will take place over an extended period, the applicant may request funding for a baseline assessment of the intervention and control communities. The proposal should describe the scientific value and planned

analyses of the data to be collected during the baseline assessment. The applicant also should include a plan for post-change assessment that could be funded by a later grant.

*Active Living Research* grant funds should not be used for advocating, implementing or promoting environmental or policy changes.

## ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Preference may be given to applicants who may be either public entities or nonprofit organizations that are tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

## SELECTION CRITERIA

Proposals should demonstrate the potential to produce high-quality, scientifically sound research that could be used to inform policy-makers about environmental and policy changes that could increase physical activity levels in the United States. *Active Living Research* will assess each proposal based on the degree to which it:

- Addresses one or more of the topics listed in this Call for Proposals or is a uniquely creative, rigorous and timely proposal that advances research related to environmental and policy influences on physical activity.
- Uses transdisciplinary research approaches and teams to provide the variety of conceptual, measurement, study design and analytic methods needed for the best possible research.
- Articulates a clear theoretical framework, conceptual model or rationale for selecting the proposed environmental or policy variables.
- Demonstrates the quality of environmental, policy and physical activity measures. Objective measures are preferred whenever possible.

- Reflects the willingness of investigators to use common measures, when appropriate, to allow for meta-analyses of multiple *Active Living Research* studies.
- Shows sufficient range and variability in environmental characteristics and physical activity to demonstrate associations.
- Emphasizes modifiable environmental variables and policies that have the potential to inform policy changes that could affect a large number of people.
- Clearly defines the target population(s).
- Assesses, when appropriate, additional outcomes, such as quality of life, psychological health, socialization, transportation mode choice, crime, safety characteristics of the environment, injury or injury risk, and economic factors.
- Documents that the experience, qualifications and time commitment of the investigator(s) and key project staff are adequate for conducting the proposed project.
- Justifies the reasonableness of the budget request and feasibility of the timeline.
- Describes a plan to disseminate research results to scientists and policy-makers.

## EVALUATION AND MONITORING

Grantees will be expected to meet RWJF requirements for the submission of narrative and financial reports. Grantees also will be required to submit periodic information needed for overall project performance monitoring and management. Project directors may be asked to attend periodic meetings and to give progress reports on their grants. *Active Living Research* staff or consultants will be available to provide technical assistance when needed to ensure the success of the project. At the close of each grant, the grantee is expected to provide a written report on the project and its findings, suitable for wide dissemination.

## USE OF GRANT FUNDS

Funding will be commensurate with the size and scope of the proposed activity. Grant funds may be used for project staff salaries, training, consultant fees, data collection and analysis, dataset procurement, meeting costs, project-related travel, supplies, computer software and other direct expenses essential to the proposed project, including a limited amount of equipment. 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 annual grantee meetings or technical assistance training sessions, and funds for such meetings should be included in the proposed budget. In some instances, principal investigators and co-investigators may be asked to participate in media and policy briefings and other forums that will help communicate research results to a wide audience.

## HOW TO APPLY

There are two funding cycles for this Call for Proposals. The first allows for proposals requesting up to \$600,000 total and begins with a brief proposal stage. The second allows for proposals requesting up to \$150,000 total and begins with a full proposal.

***All proposals other than those requesting dissertation funding must be submitted through the RWJF Grantmaking Online system. To apply, use the Web links that follow.***

RWJF does not provide individual critiques of proposals submitted.

Guidelines and information, including a list of frequently asked questions, are available on the *Active Living Research* Web site at:

[www.activelivingresearch.org](http://www.activelivingresearch.org). *Active Living Research* will host applicant conference calls (listed under Timetable) to answer questions about the program, as well as the application and selection processes. Participation in these calls is encouraged, but not required.

### **Cycle One: Proposals requesting up to \$600,000**

In this cycle, *Active Living Research* will accept proposals for projects requesting up to \$600,000 total for up to three years. These projects will fund original data collection as part of a new study or as a supplement to an existing study. There are two stages of review for this cycle of funding:

#### *Stage 1: Brief Proposal*

Applicants must submit a brief proposal (2,000-word limit) that describes the project and a brief preliminary budget table.

Please go to <http://grantmaking.rwjf.org/pap3> to submit your brief proposal.

#### *Stage 2: Full Proposal*

Successful Stage 1 applicants will be invited to submit a full proposal of no more than 25 pages accompanied by a budget and budget narrative and additional supporting documents.

### **Cycle Two: Proposals requesting up to \$150,000**

In this cycle, *Active Living Research* will accept proposals for projects requesting up to \$150,000 total for up to two years. There is only one stage in the competitive application process for this cycle.

#### *Full Proposal*

Applicants must submit a full proposal of no more than 15 pages accompanied by a budget and budget narrative and additional supporting documents.

Please go to <http://grantmaking.rwjf.org/pap4> to submit your full proposal.

## NEW INVESTIGATORS

*Active Living Research* supports the development of investigators in the early stages of their research careers. In the review process, special consideration will be given to investigators who received their doctoral degrees five or fewer years before submitting proposals in either of the above cycles. **An applicant who wishes to apply as a New Investigator may apply under either cycle of funding.** Detailed information and application guidelines are posted at [www.activelivingresearch.org](http://www.activelivingresearch.org).

## DISSERTATION AWARDS

Doctoral candidates may request a total of up to \$25,000 over two years as support for their doctoral dissertations. Projects must address or be closely related to the topics in this Call for Proposals, and only full proposals will be accepted. Dissertation full proposals will be accepted on February 18 and September 1, 2004. Detailed information and application guidelines are posted at [www.activelivingresearch.org](http://www.activelivingresearch.org).

## PROGRAM DIRECTION

Direction and technical assistance for this program are provided by San Diego State University, which serves as the National Program Office (NPO):

### Active Living Research Program

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Responsible staff members at the NPO are:

- James F. Sallis, Ph.D., *Program Director*
- Leslie S. Linton, J.D., M.P.H., *Deputy Director*
- Julie Weitzel, M.A., *Research Coordinator*
- Irvin Harrison, *Administrative Coordinator*

Responsible staff members at The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation are:

- M. Katherine Kraft, Ph.D., *Senior Program Officer*
- C. Tracy Orleans, Ph.D., *Senior Scientist and Senior Program Officer*
- Kathryn Thomas, M.J., *Senior Communications Officer*
- Jeanne Stives, *Grants Administrator*



## ABOUT RWJF

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation® is the nation's largest philanthropy devoted exclusively to health and health care. It concentrates its grantmaking in four goal areas:

- To assure that all Americans have access to quality health care at reasonable cost.
- To improve the quality of care and support for people with chronic health conditions.
- To promote healthy communities and lifestyles.
- To reduce the personal, social and economic harm caused by substance abuse—tobacco, alcohol and illicit drugs.

*This document, as well as many other  
Foundation publications and resources, is available  
on the Foundation's Web site:*

[www.rwjf.org](http://www.rwjf.org)

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