



Robert Wood Johnson
Foundation

Active Living Research

Investigating Policies and
Environments to Support
Active Communities

*A Special
Solicitation from
Active Living
Research for
Healthy Eating
Research
Round 1 Grantees*

2007 Call for Proposals—Special Solicitation

Proposal Deadline

February 28, 2007

Program Overview

(Please refer to specific sections for complete detail.)

Purpose

Active Living Research is a \$12.5-million national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation that stimulates and supports research to identify environmental factors and policies that influence physical activity. Findings will inform environmental and policy changes that will promote active living among Americans, both young and old.

The primary purpose of this *special solicitation* is to provide financial supplements to existing *Healthy Eating Research* Round 1 grantees conducting childhood obesity-related studies. The supplements are specifically meant to help these grantees add to their studies measures and analyses of school wellness policies designed to promote physical activity. The research funded under this call for proposals will inform the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's efforts to reverse the childhood obesity epidemic by 2015. *Research topics are described beginning on page 3.*

Eligibility Criteria (page 4)

Preference may be given to applicants that may be either public entities or nonprofit organizations that are tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. **For this Special Solicitation, only Healthy Eating Research Round 1 grantees are eligible to apply.**

Selection Criteria (page 5)

Complete selection criteria are described on page 5.

Total Awards—Special Solicitation

- Up to \$200,000 is available in this Special Solicitation for supplements to Round 1 grants funded by Healthy Eating Research.

Deadline

- **February 28, 2007 (1 p.m. PST)**—Deadline for receipt of full proposals.

How to Apply (page 7)

All proposals must be submitted in hard copy to the Active Living Research national program office as described on page 7. For further information, please contact:

Active Living Research
Chad Spoon, *research coordinator*
Phone: (619) 260-5539
E-mail: cspoon@projects.sdsu.edu

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, between 40 and 70 percent of adolescents do not meet the Surgeon General's youth guideline of 60 minutes of physical activity per day. Physical inactivity is a contributing factor to the epidemic of childhood obesity.

The Program

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) is engaged in multiple strategies to promote healthier communities and lifestyles and to reverse the childhood obesity epidemic by 2015. *Active Living Research* is a \$12.5-million national program of the Foundation, created to stimulate and support research that will identify environmental factors and policies that influence physical activity among Americans. Research funded under this Special Solicitation will inform the Foundation's efforts to reverse the childhood obesity epidemic.

"Active living" is a way of life that integrates physical activity into daily routines. The goal for adults is to accumulate at least 30 minutes of activity each day and for youth, 60 minutes per 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 the 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: (1) to establish a strong research base regarding the environmental and policy correlates of physical activity; (2) to help build a transdisciplinary field of physical activity policy and environmental researchers; and (3) to facilitate the use of research to support policy change.

The chief aim of the Active Living Research program is to support research that identifies environmental factors and policies that have the potential to substantially increase levels of physical activity among Americans of all ages, incomes and ethnic backgrounds. Decision-makers need timely and accurate information about how policies and practices 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. Information about previously funded grants is available on the program's Web site at www.activelivingresearch.org.

Supplements to Healthy Eating Research Round 1 Grants: Evaluating school physical activity policies

This special solicitation is available only to recipients of *Healthy Eating Research Round 1* grants. The purpose is to provide supplemental support to grantees to add measures and analyses of school physical activity policies to their Healthy Eating Research grants. These supplements will allow Healthy Eating Research grantees to examine school policies related to both physical activity and eating, which should enhance the relevance of the research to childhood obesity. We expect to fund up to five grants of up to \$40,000 each (\$200,000 total). Grant periods will range from 12 to 24 months.

The USDA Child Nutrition Act of 2004 required schools participating in federal school meals programs to establish School Wellness Committees and adopt school wellness policies by the start of the 2006-2007 school year. This legislation creates an opportunity to evaluate school policy interventions on student health outcomes. Several grantees funded in Round 1 of RWJF's Healthy Eating Research program are evaluating nutrition policies adopted by School Wellness Committees. With modest supplemental resources, these grantees should be able to add measures and analyses of school physical activity policies to their projects.

Applicants for these supplemental grants from Active Living Research should specify the methods by which school physical activity policies will be collected, coded and analyzed. Applicants should describe plans for documenting school physical activity policies for the same schools where school nutrition policies already are being collected for Healthy Eating Research projects. Applicants should indicate their willingness to participate in the development of common content coding procedures and adopt those procedures for the study. The primary study aim is to describe the content of school physical activity policies, but applicants are encouraged to enhance the scientific value of their proposals with additional aims. Examples of recommended study aims include the following, but we expect that aims will vary in number and type:

- Examination of the relation of quality of school physical activity policies to the structure, composition and decision-making process of School Wellness Committees and school administration support.
- Examination of correlates of the quality of school physical activity policies, including such variables as school and community socioeconomic status and ethnic diversity, prevalence of overweight in the school, academic achievement in the school, school type (e.g., elementary, middle, high) and school size.

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- Comparative analysis of physical activity and nutrition policies in the same schools.
 - Evaluation of the extent of implementation of school physical activity policies and comparison with implementation of school nutrition policies.
 - Examination of the relation of the quality of school physical activity policies and the degree to which they are implemented to changes in physical activity levels, body mass index and academic achievement.

Several of the Round 1 projects funded by Healthy Eating Research are collecting many of the variables that could be used to achieve the aims suggested above. Thus, supplemental funds generally should be devoted to collecting, coding and analyzing school physical activity policy data. However, these funds may be used to collect data that would allow improved analyses of correlates of the quality of the policies, implementation of the policies, and outcomes of the policies. It is expected that applications will vary in number of schools assessed; number of aims addressed; extent of original data collection planned; and need for additional investigators and staff. Thus, budgets need to be justified and consistent with the scope of the planned project. Applicants are encouraged, but not required, to include funds for at least one investigator to attend the Active Living Research Annual Grantee Meeting and Conference. Funds may be used to travel to one other relevant scientific meeting.

Eligibility Criteria

For this Special Solicitation, only Healthy Eating Research Round 1 grantees are eligible. The principal investigator (PI) of a Round 1 Healthy Eating Research grant must be PI or Co-PI of the proposed Active Living Research supplemental project.

Preference may be given to applicants that 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 levels of physical activity among school students. Active Living Research will assess each proposal based on the degree to which it:

- is responsive to guidelines for this supplemental grant funding opportunity;
- substantially expands, but does not duplicate, activities funded by the Healthy Eating Research grant;
- describes a plan for systematic data collection and analysis that will increase understanding of the school physical activity policies developed as a result of the USDA Child Nutrition Act of 2004. Additional contributions to understanding of eating behaviors or obesity-related outcomes would likely be considered strengths of the proposal;
- produces results that are relevant to understanding policies in schools in low-income communities or those that serve a substantial portion of students from ethnic and racial populations at high risk for childhood obesity;
- states that investigators will participate by teleconference and e-mail in the development of common procedures for coding the content of school physical activity policies and will adopt the common procedures in the study;
- documents that the experience, qualifications and time commitment of the investigator(s) and key project staff are adequate for conducting the proposed project; and
- justifies the reasonableness of the budget request and feasibility of the timeline.

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. Grantees also will be expected to participate in the program's evaluation by responding to periodic surveys during and after the actual grant period.

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, consultant fees, data collection and analysis, 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. Active Living Research grant funds may *not* be used to advocate for, implement or promote environmental or policy changes.

Applicants are encouraged to include in their proposed budgets those travel costs needed to present their results to a relevant scientific audience.

In some instances, applicants 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

Proposals must be submitted to Active Living Research national program office (NPO) no later than February 28, 2007 (1 p.m. PST). Decisions about awards will be announced on April 2, 2007.

Active Living Research will host one applicant conference call (listed under *Timetable*) to answer questions about the program, as well as the application and selection processes. Participation in this call is strongly encouraged, but not required.

All interested applicants must request a formal application packet from Active Living Research. To do so, please contact the program by e-mail (cspoon@projects.sdsu.edu) or by calling (619) 260-5539. Complete instructions will be enclosed with the application packet, including forms for signature by applicant institutions.

Some guidelines for the proposal:

- Provide abstract of the study funded under Round 1 of Healthy Eating Research.
- Provide number and description of schools, including socioeconomic status and racial-ethnic composition of schools (maximum 2 pages, single-spaced).
- Submit a narrative of the proposal for supplemental funding from Active Living Research (maximum 5 pages, single-spaced).
- Include in budget justification assurance that the supplemental grant will not duplicate or interfere with efforts funded by the Healthy Eating Research grant.

RWJF does not provide individual critiques of proposals submitted.

Proposals should be submitted via e-mail or courier and must be received by the NPO no later than February 28, 2007 (1 p.m. PST). Please submit proposals to:

Chad Spoon, *research coordinator*
Active Living Research
San Diego State University
3900 Fifth Avenue, Suite 310
San Diego, CA 92103
Phone: (619) 260-5539

or via e-mail to: cspoon@projects.sdsu.edu.

Program Direction

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

Active Living Research
San Diego State University
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Responsible staff members at the NPO are:

- James Sallis, Ph.D., *program director*
- Carmen Cutter, M.P.H., *deputy director*
- Chad Spoon, *research coordinator*
- Amanda Wilson, *research coordinator*
- Irvin Harrison, M.A., *administrative coordinator*
- LeeAnn Adan, *administrative assistant*

Responsible staff members at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation are:

- C. Tracy Orleans, Ph.D., *distinguished fellow and senior scientist*
- James Marks, M.D., M.P.H., *senior vice president and director, Health Group*
- Kathryn Thomas, M.J., *senior communications officer*
- Jan Mihalow, *grants administrator*
- Jeanne Stives, *team coordinator*

Timetable

- **January 29, 2007 (12 p.m. PST)**

Optional teleconference for potential applicants.

For details and pre-registration information, please e-mail cspoon@projects.sdsu.edu or call (619) 260-5539. Applicants will have an opportunity to ask questions during the teleconference about the Special Solicitation and application process.

- **February 28, 2007 (1 p.m. PST)**

Deadline for receipt of proposals.

- **April 2, 2007**

Notification of awards.

- **Mid-June 2007**

Funding initiated.

Applicants must request an application packet from the Active Living Research national program office (see page 7 for details). In fairness to all applicants, we 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 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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