

# CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Round VI

Junior Investigator Awards:

Building Research Capacity for  
Public Health Services & Systems Research

October 2012

**National  
Coordinating  
Center for  
PHSSR**



Robert Wood Johnson  
Foundation

*This is a solicitation from the University of Kentucky National Coordinating Center for Public Health Services and Systems Research. This program is supported by a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.*

## **Background**

Public health programs and services vary widely across the United States, as do the institutional and financial instruments used to deliver and manage public health activities. Compared to health services, relatively little is known about the causes and consequences of this variation, the degree of alignment with community needs and preferences, and the effects on population health. Efforts to improve the quality, efficiency, and outcomes of public health policies and practices require a nuanced understanding of how these activities are implemented within communities and their impact on health.

Public Health Services and Systems Research (PHSSR) is a multidisciplinary field of study that examines the organization, financing, delivery and quality of public health services within communities and the resulting impact on population health. It is important to note that PHSSR does not include the study of medical services or “safety net” services provided by local public health departments, Federally-Qualified Health Centers or other healthcare organizations.

The National Coordinating Center for PHSSR (NCC) and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) are committed to expanding the evidence base for effective decision-making in public health practice and policy through research that responds to the questions defined in the [National Research Agenda for PHSSR](#). To support and grow the PHSSR evidence base, the field requires a robust cadre of researchers who understand the nuances of public health services within communities, and can apply advanced methodologies to develop further evidence for practice and policy decision-making.

## **Program Overview**

Increasing the number of qualified investigators engaged in public health services and systems research is one of the central aims of NCC, and this award aims to attract investigators early in their careers to the field of PHSSR. The Junior Investigator Awards provide a mentored research experience for new researchers to work closely with prominent PHSSR experts. Up to ten \$10,000 awards are available for doctoral candidates and junior faculty who are within three years of their initial faculty appointment.

Beyond the monetary support provided by the awards, the program also offers awardees the opportunity to share research progress and network with other junior investigators and NCC staff through monthly teleconferences. The NCC provides tailored technical assistance and research results dissemination support to awardees throughout the award period. Travel support for the 2013 PHSSR Keeneland Conference is provided to Junior Investigator awardees.

## *Research Focus*

Applicants must address research priorities of the [National Research Agenda for PHSSR](#). The applicant should be familiar with the agenda and the research that informed it, specifically the [systematic reviews](#) that summarize the evidence. The proposal must focus on at least one of research questions that are specified in the research agenda. Applicants are encouraged to address these research questions using datasets contained in the [Public Health Systems Research \(PHSR\) subset](#) of the National Library of Medicine's (NLM) Health Services Research Resources (HSRR) database.

Up to five of these awards will be mentored by the lead researcher from member networks of the [Public Health Practice-Based Research Network \(PBRN\) program](#). Information on the Public Health PBRN member networks and their research activities is available at the [Public Health PBRN National Coordinating Center website](#). Proposals mentored by the PH PBRN researchers will further the goals of the sponsoring PBRN.

Applicants who are interested in working with a PBRN-based mentor or who require assistance identifying a PHSSR expert mentor in their research field may contact Jay Swacker via email at [PHSSR212@uky.edu](mailto:PHSSR212@uky.edu) for assistance.

#### *Annual PHSSR Keeneland Conference*

The annual [PHSSR Keeneland Conference](#) brings together PHSSR researchers, practitioners and policy-makers to disseminate and discuss new information that can improve public health services. The Conference is an opportunity for Junior Investigator awardees to present research and receive feedback from peers. The Conference also provides PHSSR grantee networking sessions where junior investigators can meet senior researchers working in similar areas and facilitate collaboration on future research. .

All awardees are required and their PHSSR mentors are encouraged to participate in all conference sessions of the 2013 PHSSR Keeneland Conference in Lexington, Kentucky. Awardees are also encouraged attend the 2014 PHSSR Keeneland Conference to present their research findings. Approved flight, hotel and conference expenses for awardees and their mentors will be paid for by the University of Kentucky in accordance with the University's travel expense guidelines. The University of Kentucky will pay for travel expenses related to attending the 2014 PHSSR Keeneland Conference based on the availability of funds. **You do not need to include costs associated with attending the 2013 or 2014 PHSSR Keeneland Conferences in your proposed budget.**

#### **Eligibility Criteria**

Doctoral candidate applicants must:

- Have completed all the necessary prerequisites to begin the research project, including being advanced to doctoral candidacy,
- Have the written support of the chair of their dissertation, capstone or equivalent, including a commitment to completing research in the specified PHSSR area of inquiry,
- Have a U.S.-based college or university agree to receive and administer the award,
- Demonstrate the ability to complete the research deliverables in the 12-month award period and submit a peer-reviewed manuscript for publication within 12 months after the end of the award,
- Work with a PHSSR expert mentor for the project, to be documented by a letter of support and curriculum vitae from the mentor.

Junior faculty applicants must:

- Be within three years of their initial faculty appointment,
- Have a U.S.-based college or university agree to receive and administer the award,

- Demonstrate the ability to complete the research deliverables in the 12-month award period and submit a peer-reviewed manuscript for publication within 12 months after the end of the award,
- Work with a PHSSR expert mentor for the project, to be documented by a letter of support and curriculum vitae from the mentor

Applicants must be U.S. Citizens, U.S. Non-Citizen Nationals, or Resident Foreign Nationals. This program embraces diversity and inclusion across multiple dimensions such as race, ethnicity, gender, age and disadvantaged socioeconomic status. We strongly encourage applications from candidates who 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.

### **Use of award funds**

Award funds may be used for program staff salaries, tuition, stipends, 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. Award 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.

### **Awards**

Awards will be structured as fixed price subcontracts of \$10,000 from the University of Kentucky to the applicant's university or college and will require approval of the applicant's university or college to administer the contract prior to disbursement of funds. Payment of the awards will be distributed in two \$5,000 disbursements. The first payment will be available upon completion of the contract and the second payment will be available after the junior investigator awardee has completed the required award deliverables described below.

### **Deliverables**

Proposed research projects must contribute to the growing PHSSR evidence base and be consistent with one of the research priority areas defined in the National Research Agenda for PHSSR. NCC staff will provide technical assistance to awardees as needed to complete deliverables and disseminate results.

During the award period, all awardees must:

- Complete the project research plan and literature review, receive approval from the PHSSR mentor, and submit a copy to the assigned NCC contact. Any changes to the originally approved project scope and design must be discussed and approved in writing by the mentor and NCC contact;
- Attend the 2013 PHSSR Keeneland Conference to be held **April 8-11, 2013** in Lexington, Kentucky, to present a progress report of the study and participate in awardee workshop;
- Participate in awardee webinars and regular virtual meetings hosted by NCC;
- Submit timely information to NCC for progress reports to RWJF, as requested;
- Prepare a proposal summary to be submitted to a specific future funding opportunity, as identified in the Junior Investigator Award Proposal.

During the award period, Junior Faculty awardees must also generate a systematic review, which expands the applicable systematic review(s) developed by the NCC in 2011, and summarizes published research literature on the applicant's research focus area. These reviews are available in the [\*American Journal of Preventive Medicine 2012;42\(5S1\):S1–S86\*](#).

During or after the award period awardees should also:

- Submit an article with preliminary findings to the on-line publication, [\*Frontiers in PHSSR\*](#),
- Provide documentation of applications to present research findings at a minimum of one national or regional conference other than the Keeneland Conference,
- Participate in awardee learning opportunities and activities for former awardees hosted by the NCC,
- Submit timely information to NCC for RWJF sponsor progress reports, as requested,
- Submit a manuscript to a peer-reviewed journal on the research findings within 12 months of the end of the award period,
- Submit a research proposal to a specific PHSSR funding opportunity as identified above,
- Document additional methods of dissemination to public health practitioners and policy-makers.

### How to apply

Applications for this solicitation must be submitted electronically. Visit the PHSSR [Junior Investigator Awards](#) webpage and use the “**Apply Online**” link for this solicitation. If you have not already registered at [MyRWJF](#), you will be required to register before you begin the application process.

### Key Dates and Deadlines

**Wednesday, October 24, 2012 (9:00 am EST)** – CFP release date

**Tuesday, November 13, 2012 (2:30 pm EST)** – [Applicant web conference](#)

**Wednesday, December 5, 2012 (3:00 p.m. EST)** – Deadline for receipt of online proposal

**Wednesday, January 16, 2013 (3:00 p.m. EST)** – Notification of awards

**February/March 2013** – Awards begin

**April 8-11, 2013** – Attend 2013 PHSSR Keeneland Conference

**Stay Connected. Stay Informed.**



### Questions may be directed to:

Jay Swacker, MS ACC

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National Coordinating Center for Public Health Services and Systems Research

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Email: [PHSSR212@uky.edu](mailto:PHSSR212@uky.edu)

Website: <http://www.publichealthsystems.org>

## PHSSR Core Publications

Consortium from Altarum Institute; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Robert Wood Johnson Foundation; National Coordinating Center for Public Health Services and Systems Research. (2012). "A National Research Agenda for Public Health Services and Systems." American Journal of Preventive Medicine **42**(5):S72-8 [http://www.rwjf.org/content/dam/farm/articles/journal\\_articles/2012/rwjf72691](http://www.rwjf.org/content/dam/farm/articles/journal_articles/2012/rwjf72691)

Arias, I, Thacker, SB, et al. 2012. "The Value of Public Health Services and Systems Research." American Journal of Preventive Medicine **42**(5): S82-S83. <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0749379712000839>

Larkin, MA, Marks, JS, et al. 2012. "Public Health Services and Systems Research: An Agenda Where Research and Practice Matter to Each Other and to Our Nation's Health." American Journal of Preventive Medicine **42**(5): S79-S81 <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0749379712000852>

Lenaway, D, Halverson, P, et al. 2006. "Public Health Systems Research: Setting a National Agenda." American Journal of Public Health **96**(3): 410-413. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1470524/?tool=pubmed>

Mays, GP and SA Smith 2011. "Evidence Links Increases in Public Health Spending to Declines in Preventable Deaths." Health Affairs **30**(8):1585-1593. <http://content.healthaffairs.org/content/30/8/1585.full.pdf>

Mays, GP, Scutchfield, FD, et al. 2010. "Understanding the organization of public health delivery systems: An empirical typology." Milbank Quarterly **88**(1): 81-111. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed?term=%20%20%20%202020377759>

Mays, GP, Smith, SA, et al. 2009. "Public Health Delivery Systems. Evidence, Uncertainty, and Emerging Research Needs." American Journal of Preventive Medicine **36**(3): 256-265. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19215851>

Merrill, J, Keeling, J, et al. 2009. "Toward Standardized, Comparable Public Health Systems Data: A Taxonomic Description of Essential Public Health Work." Health Services Research **44**(5p2): 1818-1841. <http://www.rwjf.org/publichealth/product.jsp?id=48633>

Meyer, AM, Davis, M, et al. 2012. "Defining organizational capacity for public health services and systems research." Journal of Public Health Management and Practice **18**(6): 535-44. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23023278>

Perez, D and Larkin, M. 2009. "Commentary: Partnership for the Future of PHSSR." Health Services Research **44** (5):1788-1795. <http://www.rwjf.org/pr/product.jsp?id=49189>

Scutchfield, FD, Mays GP, et al. 2009. "Applying Health Services Research to Public Health Practice: An Emerging Priority." Health Services Research **44**(5p2): 1775-1787. <http://www.rwjf.org/pr/product.jsp?id=48629>

Scutchfield, FD. 2009. "Foreword." Health Services Research **44**(5p2): 1773-1774. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19686247>

Scutchfield, FD and Patrick, Kevin 2007. "Public Health Systems Research: The New Kid on the Block." American Journal of Preventive Medicine **32**(2): 173-174. [www.rwjf.org/files/research/8-2007%20-%20PHSSR.pdf](http://www.rwjf.org/files/research/8-2007%20-%20PHSSR.pdf)

Scutchfield, FD, Marks JS, et al. 2007. "Public health services and systems research." American Journal of Preventive Medicine **33**(2): 169-171. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed?term=PMID%3A%20%20%20%202017673106>