



SOUTH JERSEY
Institute for Population Health

2021 FUNDING INITIATIVE

Request for Proposals





OVERVIEW



The South Jersey Institute for Population Health (SJIPH), established by the Rowan-Rutgers Joint Board of Health to improve health outcomes in our region, is pleased to announce its inaugural funding initiative for 2021. SJIPH's Call for Proposals will fund research projects **up to \$20,000** that involve collaborations between Rowan University, Rutgers University-Camden, and community-based organizations in Burlington, Camden, Gloucester, Cumberland, Salem, Atlantic and Cape May Counties.

GOALS

This funding cycle has two goals: 1) advance research and improve health outcomes in southern New Jersey and 2) serve as a foundation for establishing a data hub for research and projects that advance our region. **Projects should focus on 2 areas:**

- **First, individual research projects should use a public health, population health or population medicine approach to directly improve health, build capacity, and/or reduce health disparities and promote health equity in southern New Jersey.** Special consideration will be given to projects that focus on COVID-19 related impacts or COVID-19 (i.e., other infectious disease) identified disparities. In addition, projects should consider the social determinants of health and produce both generalizable knowledge and community impact. Social determinants of health are defined by the World Health Organization as the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age, and which contribute to global health disparities.
- **Second, taken together, the portfolio of funded projects should support the development of the South Jersey Institute for Population Health** by building two-way collaborations between community organizations and higher education partners at Rowan and Rutgers-Camden, initiating projects that can secure sustainable funding and contribute data to the SJIPH.

An important motivation of this funding cycle is to lay the groundwork for ongoing regional collaborations that can integrate current fractured data sources together to inform research and influence population health programs. To support the goal of fostering a wide range of collaborations, we have intentionally created a broad call for proposals for this region.

PROCESS

TIMELINE



Overview. The funding process is iterative. Prospective grantees first submit a brief letter of intent (LOI) by May 31, 2021. After initial review, some applicants will be invited to a daylong sandbox meeting, held October 1, where applicants will meet colleagues across the region and partner with facilitators to improve funding proposals. Final proposals will be due by November 1 with funding decisions made by December 15, 2021.

LOIs. Prospective grantees should submit a short letter-of-intent by May 31st at SJIPH.org. The Letter-Of-Intent submission portal asks prospective grantees to answer questions in the following areas: (1) content of research idea; (2) collaborative team; (3) data sharing; (4) impact; (5) sustainability; (6) budget. Details are below.

Sandbox Meeting: Teams selected from the LOIs should plan to attend the Sandbox Meeting at the Joint Health Sciences Building on **October 1, 2021**.

The Sandbox Meeting will serve three purposes: (a) clearly communicate to potential grantees the goals of the research funding; (b) bring researchers with related interests and complementary skills together; (c) produce, during the meeting, proposal outlines that shape the full research proposals. At the sandbox meeting, prospective grantees will participate in planning sessions organized by clusters of interest, skills, and data ideas. Each group will include a facilitator provided by SJIPH. During the meeting, facilitators and potential grantees will develop proposal outlines. The goal is to cultivate a collaborative rather than competitive environment.

Final proposals: Final proposals will be due on November 1, 2021, and will also be submitted on the application portal. Applicants will be asked to provide more detailed responses to the same questions asked in the letter-of-intent process.

Funding decisions. Final funding decisions will be made by December 15, 2021. Funding will be released in early 2022, and projects are anticipated to last through Spring 2023. The funding period is 12 months. Budgets should be planned for this time frame. Reporting requirements will be outlined at the sandbox meeting. All funded projects will be expected to provide brief updates on their project progress and data on a quarterly basis.



PROPOSAL REVIEW

Projects (both letters-of-intent and final proposals) will be evaluated by a reviewing committee on how well they meet the RFP goals in: (1) content; (2) collaboration; (3) data sharing; (4) impact; (5) sustainability; (6) budgeting.

1. Content

Application question: *What is your project idea?*

Instructions: [250-word limit] Briefly outline your project idea. The proposal must identify the specific priority population(s) under study and address the goals of the funding initiative as described on page 2.

Evaluation criteria: Does the project employ a population health or public health approach (e.g., does it focus on a specific population as opposed to public health broadly) to directly improve health, build capacity, and/or reduce health disparities in Southern New Jersey. Does it focus on COVID-19 related impacts or disparities and consider the social determinants of health?

2. Collaboration

Application question: *Who is your collaborative team?*

Instructions: [No limit] Please list each primary member of your collaborative team. Include email contact information and either attach or include a link to evidence of qualifications for the collaborative team. (For faculty, this might be a CV; for community partners, a resume or link to the organization's website will suffice). Primary members include those involved in proposal design. Secondary members (or project implementation staff) do not need to be mentioned. Teams will also indicate if they are new or established teams (see below). "New Team" applicants may indicate that they need help completing their collaborative team. Where possible, the oversight committee can help facilitate team composition.

Evaluation criteria: Priority will be given to projects that include representation from Rowan, Rutgers, and community stakeholders/community members of the population covered by the project idea. Community organizations serving the population count as community stakeholders. All projects must include academic and community partners. Do team members have the expertise needed to complete the project?

3. Data sharing

Application question: *What data will your project produce that can be shared with SJIPH?*

Instructions: [150 word limit] Please describe what data your project might produce and how this data could be leveraged by others to improve health, build capacity, and/or reduce health disparities.

Evaluation criteria: Will the project include data to support the long-term goals of the South Jersey Institute for Population Health to integrate fractured data, inform research, influence population health programming in the region and become a valuable public resource? Note: For those who are unsure about data sharing, help will be provided at the Sandbox Meeting.

4. Impact

Application question: *What academic impact will your project have? What community impact will your project have?*

Instructions: [200 word limit] Briefly describe the possible academic and community impacts of your project. Select which regions (from 7-county region) in South Jersey your project will impact.

Evaluation: Will the project produce scholarly products (such as papers?) Will the project impact the population under study? How? For example, a study on the effects of food insecurity on behavioral health in schools might include as an academic impact a scholarly article on the findings, and as a population impact, a brief advocating for state resources to the school district working with the researchers. This is just one example. Benefits to the population under study could include direct services, provision of data, community-facing publications, support for acquisition of other resources, and other direct/indirect benefits.

5. Sustainability

Application question: *How can this project lead to future funding?*

Instructions: [150 word limit] Provide ideas about how the project can be sustained over time. Possible sources of funding could include foundations, governments, or state and federal funding agencies. If the project is a smaller, clearly-defined project, then explain how results from this project could serve as the basis for other projects. If known, provide specific funding mechanisms. (E.g. "NSF Smart and Connected Communities" is better than "NSF"; specific NIH institutes and mechanism R01, R21, etc., RWJF specific funding program, etc.).

Evaluation: Is the project sustainable? How likely is the project to secure future funding given this pilot project?

6. Budget

Application question: Please describe broadly the categories of expenditures and the total amount requested.

Instructions: [150 word limit] Applicants should describe in broad strokes the uses of the funding. Specific amounts are not necessary at this juncture. For example, categories could be staff time, human subjects payment or equipment. Applicants should also indicate the total amount requested. Most projects will be funded between \$10,000 and \$20,000. Exceptional projects with broad reach may be considered for additional funding. See below for budget guidelines.

Evaluation: Does the budget fit with the scope of the proposed project? Is the budget consistent with the guidelines?



ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

New and Established Partnerships An important goal of this funding cycle is to build capacity for ongoing collaborative research. Some prospective grantees will be part of teams newly formed to address this call for proposals, while other teams will be established. Newer teams will likely require more technical assistance and help, whereas established teams may develop significant funding proposals on their own. Prospective grantees should indicate whether they are part of a newly formed or established team, and the review process will aim to fund both types of teams. Established teams will likely have stronger initial proposals, but we run the risk of perpetuating the disparities we seek to eliminate if we only fund groups with sufficient capacity and resources to do this work on their own. We also inadvertently disadvantage newer groups from forming, and this may inhibit new areas of interest and research in new populations. For the purposes of this cycle, “established” teams have a track record of working together to secure funding, while “new” teams are those that have desire and motivation to work together, but have not previously had the capacity to secure funding.

Existing Projects This call is not intended as additional support for work already in progress. However, the reviewing committee will consider applications for work already in progress if at least one of the following conditions are met: a) the application demonstrates clearly that the funded work will bring a novel and distinct component to the existing project; or b) the application shows novel partnership development or capacity building consistent with the funding goals.

Portfolio of Projects The call for proposals is broad, and we recognize that creating a sustainable institute will require a diversity of initial projects. In addition to traditional research projects, prospective grantees are encouraged to consider additional types of projects, such as: (a) projects that include the gathering, interpretation, and/or dissemination of South Jersey data to relevant stakeholders, including academic audiences, community organizations, community members, health care providers, policy makers, and funders. Data that support clear action around health and health disparities in South Jersey are particularly encouraged; (b) projects that focus on capacity building or relationship development between different stakeholders in health (community members, community organizations, health care systems, health care providers, researchers); (c) projects that implement or evaluate plans to reduce health disparities; (d) projects that focus on the development of the data infrastructure needed to support the South Jersey Institute for Population Health.

Budgeting. The inaugural funding cycle will consist of up to 10 projects funded at about \$20,000 for a total of \$240,000. A smaller number of exceptional proposals may be funded at higher levels. Projects that can identify matching funds and/or include in-kind support should be submitted. Individual budget determinations will be made by the reviewing committee. Allowable expenses include: % effort for PI/Co-PI/staff, consultants, hourly student wages, supplies, materials, equipment, mileage reimbursement for study-related travel, travel for students to attend professional conferences, software, data analysis or evaluation. Non-allowable costs to include: food (except as related to human-subjects research), equipment exceeding \$3000, and publication subvention.

The South Jersey Institute for Population Health (SJIPH) is focused on advancing collaborative research projects to improve health and well-being in southern New Jersey. In 2018, it was established through a state grant received by the Rowan University/Rutgers-Camden Board of Governors (Joint Board) to integrate the region's medical, educational and research assets, to improve health for Southern New Jersey. The Joint Board will include Rowan University and Rutgers University-Camden as partners in these efforts. SJIPH will serve as a hub for research collaboration, community connection and innovation that improves health and health equity in populations and communities across the region. Learn more at www.sjiph.org.

