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2025 Systems for Action Call for Proposals

Community-Led Systems Research to Address Systemic Racism

February 24, 2025 | 3pm ET

Systems for Action
National Program Office
Systems and Services Research to Build a Culture of Health

colorado school of public health

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

Agenda

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- Overview of the RWJF Systems for Action Program
- Overview of the 2025 Call for Proposals (CFP)
- How to Apply
- Q&A

Housekeeping

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- Session is being recorded
- Link to slides and recording will be sent to all registrants:

  https://systemsforaction.org/applicant-resources

- All attendees are muted during the webinar
- Please submit your questions using the Q&A box

Systems for Action: Leadership

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Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Isabel Cuervo, PhD
Program Officer
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National Program Office | University of Colorado

Glen Mays, PhD, MPH
NPO Director

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Graduate Research Assistant

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Dissemination & Translation

Nate Demeke, MPH
Senior Research Manager

Lanee Bounds
Business Services
Program Manager

Helping medical, social & public health systems work better together to achieve health equity

S4A supports rigorous research to identify novel mechanisms for aligning delivery and financing systems in **medical care, public health**, and **social & community services** in ways that improve **health** and **wellbeing**, promote **efficiencies** in resource use, and advance **health equity**

www.systemsforaction.org

2025 Call for Proposals

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- Community-led pilot studies to test new **system alignment (SA) interventions** that improve health and wellbeing for communities experiencing **systemic racism**
- Led by a **community-based nonprofit, government agency, or tribal organization** that serves communities affected by systemic racism
- Engage all 3 types of systems: **medical, social, and public health**
- Evaluate the **feasibility and acceptability** of the system alignment (SA) intervention and its **potential** to improve health and wellbeing
- Engage people with **lived experience** of systemic racism in developing, refining, and testing the proposed SA intervention
- Partner with an **experienced researcher or research team** to assist with designing and conducting the pilot-test research activities

See Funding Opportunity Brochure: https://anr.rwjf.org/viewCfp.do?cfpId=1736&cfpOverviewId=

Pilot-Study Award Details

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- Up to **$200K** per study for pilot testing the SA intervention
- Up to **12 months** to conduct the study
- Up to **5 studies** selected for funding
- The CBO applicant organization may **allocate up to 50%** of the total project budget to a subcontract with the research partner
- Generate preliminary evidence necessary to pursue **future funding** for larger-scale research

See Page 10 in the Funding Opportunity Brochure: https://anr.rwjf.org/viewCfp.do?cfpId=1736&cfpOverviewId=

Special Topics of Interest

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Topic #1: Addressing Resource Inequities Across Systems

- Strategies for equitably allocating and sharing resources across medical, social, and public health systems in order to support collaborative solutions to systemic racism.
- Helping minority communities and minority-serving institutions secure equitable funding, staffing, and other resources needed to meet community needs.
- New financing mechanisms, payment models, staffing models, or other resource-sharing models that help medical, social, and public health systems work together to address forms of systemic racism.
- Solutions to "wrong pocket problems" that arise when the costs and benefits of collaborative work are distributed unevenly among medical, social, and public health system partners.

See Page 5 of Funding Opportunity Brochure: https://anr.rwjf.org/viewCfp.do?cfpId=1736&cfpOverviewId=

Special Topics of Interest

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Topic #2: Strengthening the Voice and Authority of Marginalized Communities

- Strengthening the voice and influence of marginalized, racialized, and Indigenous communities in shaping how medical, social, and public health systems operate.
- Novel governance models, such as governing board representation and authority, novel community deliberation and decision-making mechanisms, such as participatory budgeting strategies, novel approaches to public reporting and disclosure requirements, and other innovative approaches to community oversight and accountability.
- Engaging people with lived experience related to systemic racism in developing solutions to systemic racism.
- Indigenous governance models and community-led decision-making processes that honor Indigenous values and practices.

See Page 5 of Funding Opportunity Brochure: https://anr.rwjf.org/viewCfp.do?cfpId=1736&cfpOverviewId=

Special Topics of Interest

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Topic #3: Equitable Use of Decision Support Tools

- Novel decision support tools, technologies, policies, and practices that are designed to help medical, social, and public health system decisionmakers identify forms of systemic racism and work together to dismantle and disrupt these forms of racism.
- Novel data systems and algorithms that are designed to identify and flag possible instances of unjust racial patterning in the discretionary decisions of health and social system personnel
- Policies and practices designed to reduce the risk of implicit bias and discrimination when health and social system personnel make discretionary decisions.

See Page 5 of Funding Opportunity Brochure: https://anr.rwjf.org/viewCfp.do?cfpId=1736&cfpOverviewId=

Key Characteristics of Successful Proposals

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- Engage **all three sectors**: medical care, public health, and social services.
- Clear & convincing logic model describing how the SA intervention will address health equity problems and address **systemic racism and inequities**.
- **Rigorous & relevant scientific approach** for pilot-testing the proposed SA intervention on a small scale and evaluating its acceptability, feasibility, and potential for impact.
- Clear description on how the lead-CBO applicant will work in partnership with an experienced research team to design and carry out the pilot research activities
- A commitment to **prioritizing community-initiated and community-engaged study approaches** by incorporating individuals with lived experience with systemic racism and individuals in all three sectors with expertise in approaches for dismantling systemic racism.
- A strong strategy for helping relevant audiences access and use study findings (**designing for dissemination)**
- Clear plan for how pilot-test results will be used to pursue **subsequent research opportunities** for further testing and evaluation of the SA intervention.

See Funding Opportunity Brochure: https://anr.rwjf.org/viewCfp.do?cfpId=1736&cfpOverviewId=

Key CFP Resources

- **CFP Landing Page:**
  https://www.rwjf.org/en/grants/active-funding-opportunities/2025/systems-for-action-community-led-systems-research-to-address-systemic-racism.html?rid=0032S000028RF4HQAW&et_cid=2199526
- **Full 18-Page Funding Opportunity Brochure**:
  https://anr.rwjf.org/viewCfp.do?cfpId=1736&cfpOverviewId=
- **S4A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**:
  https://systemsforaction.org/frequently-asked-questions
- **Full Proposal Narrative and Budget Templates:**
  https://systemsforaction.org/funding-opportunities
- **S4A Research Agenda**:
  https://systemsforaction.org/research-agenda
- **Descriptions of Previously Funded S4A Research Studies:**
  https://systemsforaction.org/our-research

Key CFP Resources

- Weekly CFP Office Hours: **https://systemsforaction.org/applicant-resources**
- Technical assistance resources and supports available through the **System Alignment Innovation Hub**

  https://www.tacinc.org/project/the-systems-alignment-innovation-hub/

  saih@tacinc.org

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Carefully read the full 18-page Funding Opportunity brochure

https://www.rwjf.org/en/grants/active-funding-opportunities/2025/systems-for-action-community-led-systems-research-to-address-systemic-racism.html?rid=0032S000028RF4HQAW&et_cid=2199526

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Note the Six Selection Criteria on Pages 11 and 12

SELECTION CRITERIA

- ***Focus on Systemic Racism:*** The application describes a form of systemic racism that has important implications for the health and wellbeing of populations residing within the U.S. and/or its territories. The application clearly describes the population groups affected by the systemic racism and the current state of scientific knowledge about the systemic racism, including important gaps in evidence and uncertainties.

- ***Novel Systems Alignment Intervention:*** The application describes a novel SA intervention designed to help representatives within social service systems, medical care systems, and public health systems work together to dismantle or disrupt forms of systemic racism. The SA intervention engages representatives from all three types of systems. A clear theory of change is described for how the SA intervention is expected to improve health and health equity for population groups that experience systemic racism. The SA intervention has the potential to be adapted, scaled, and spread to other communities and settings, if successful, to achieve broad national impact.

- ***Evaluating Acceptability, Feasibility and Potential for Impact:*** The application describes a rigorous and relevant approach for pilot-testing the proposed SA intervention on a small scale and evaluating its acceptability, feasibility, and potential for improving health and wellbeing for communities that experience systemic racism.

See Funding Opportunity Brochure: https://anr.rwjf.org/viewCfp.do?cfpId=1718&cfpOverviewId=

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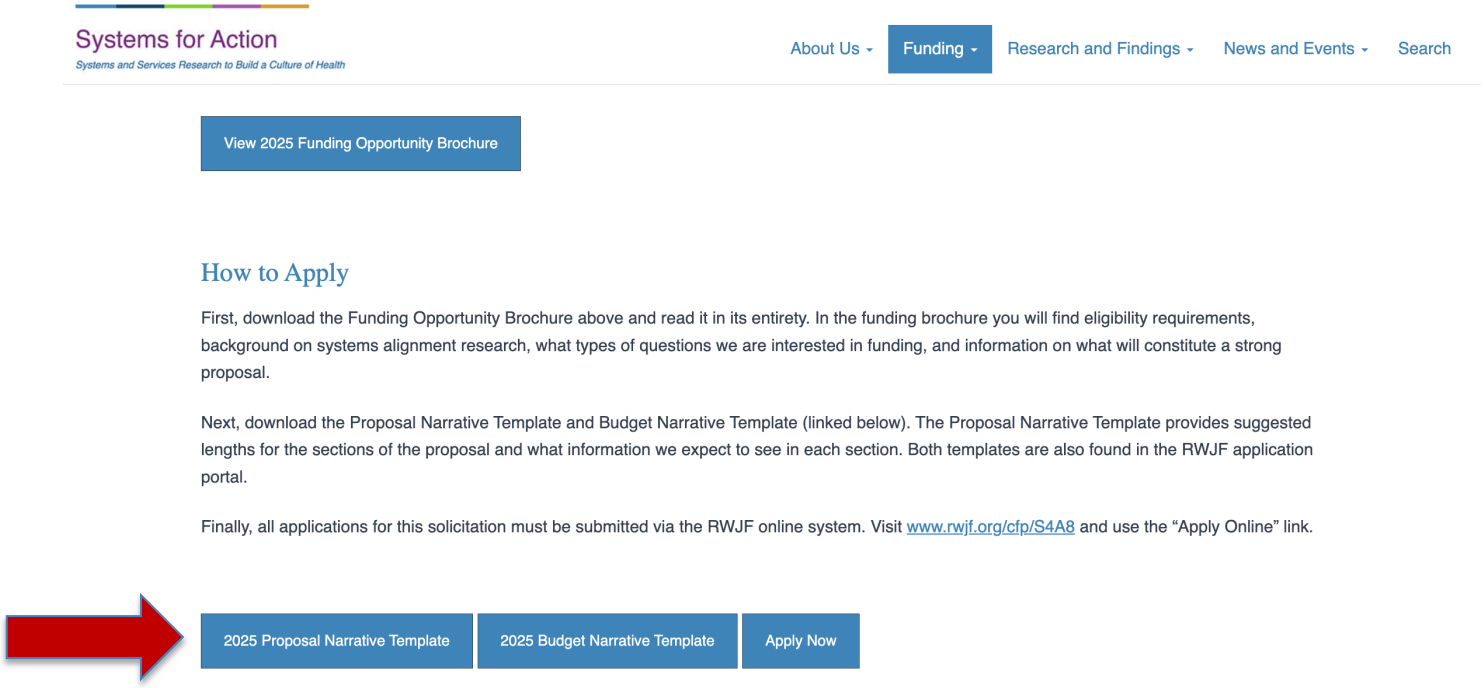
Applicants should carefully review the Proposal Narrative template



Download Templates: https://systemsforaction.org/funding-opportunities

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Note what to include in the Proposal Narrative Template

Project Title: (your project title goes here)

Proposal I.D.: (your proposal ID goes here—found in the upper right corner of any screen in this online system)

Applicant Name: (your project director's name goes here)

Legal Name of Applicant Organization: (legal name of applicant organization goes here)

1. Systemic Racism Focus:

- Describe the specific form(s) of systemic racism your proposed research study will address, including the population group(s) affected by this racism.
- Describe how this systemic racism operates within or affects medical, social and public health systems.
- Briefly summarize the current state of scientific knowledge about this form of systemic racism and its connection to medical, social and public health systems, noting important gaps in evidence that your proposed research will address.
- We recommend devoting up to 2-3 pages to this section.

2. Novel Systems Alignment Intervention:

- Describe your proposed system alignment (SA) intervention for helping representatives within social service systems, medical care systems, and public health systems work together to dismantle or disrupt the form(s) of systemic racism described in Section 1. Your SA intervention must engage representatives from all three types of systems. See the S4A program's FAQ page for more information about how these systems are defined, including delivery systems and financing systems.
- Describe your theory of change or logic model for how the SA intervention is expected to dismantle, disrupt or remedy the health effects of the chosen form of systemic racism. Include any references to scientific evidence and/or practical/lived experience that support

Download Templates: https://systemsforaction.org/funding-opportunities

Eligibility

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- For the purposes of this CFP, CBOs eligible to serve as applicant organizations include Section 501(c)(3) charitable organizations, local and state government agencies, and tribal organizations.

- Preference will be given to applicants 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. RWJF may require additional documentation.

- Applicant organizations must be based in the United States or its territories.

- If necessary, the applicant organization may utilize the services of a fiscal sponsor to support the project's financial management and grants management and reporting activities. The fiscal sponsor can be the research partner that the CBO has partnered with in this proposal.

Important Dates - One More Time

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- **January 15th, 2025 (9am ET)**
  CFP launched

- **January 27 through May 29, 2025**
  Weekly Office Hours Help Session for Applicants. Registration required. To view schedule and register, please visit https://systemsforaction.org/funding-opportunities

- **June 4th, 2025**
  Deadline to submit applications. Late submissions will not be accepted for any reason.

- **August 22nd, 2025**
  Applicants notified of funding decisions.

- **October 1st, 2025:** Grant start date (subject to change)

All proposals or applications 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 submission deadline. Program 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.

Questions?

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S4A Research-in-Progress Webinar Series

Register for the March 5th webinar, ***Equity-Centered Public Health Practices***, with S4A Director Glen Mays.

Register for the March 26th webinar, ***Multisector Task-Sharing to Improve Mental Health in Harlem, NY***, with S4A Grantee Vicky Ngo.

Familiarize yourself with the S4A portfolio and join a Research-in-Progress webinar:
https://systemsforaction.org/research-progress-webinars

Acknowledgements

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