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## **Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Expands Program to Improve Community Health**

*Eighteen State and Local Coalitions Receive Grants to Address Impact of Employment, Education, Community Safety and Social Supports that Affect Health—Join Twelve Other Grantees*

**Madison, WI and Princeton, NJ** (December 13, 2012)—The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) has awarded \$3.6 million in *Roadmaps to Health* Community Grants up to \$200,000 each to 18 coalitions across the United States to improve the health of those communities. These alliances aim to create healthier places to live, learn, work, and play. In its second year, the *Roadmaps to Health* grants now support a total of 30 state and local coalitions made up of leaders from government, business, education, health care, public health, and community organizations.

“*Roadmaps to Health* grantees are impressive examples of leaders from multiple sectors—including public health, health care, education, faith and family organizations—working together to improve health. We hope to see more communities learning from these *Roadmaps* collaborations and using the *County Health Rankings* to create a healthier, better life for families,” said James S. Marks, MD, MPH, director of RWJF’s Health Group.

The *Roadmaps to Health* Community Grants are a major component of the *County Health Rankings & Roadmaps* program—[www.countyhealthrankings.org](http://www.countyhealthrankings.org)—a collaboration of RWJF and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute (UWPHI) The program promotes solutions that make it easier for people to be healthy in their own communities by focusing on specific factors that affect health, such as education, employment, social support and community safety. The grants will be managed by Community Catalyst, a national consumer health advocacy organization.

The 18 new *Roadmaps to Health* grantees were selected from more than 400 applicants. The grantees will be funded for two years as they stimulate policy and systems changes that address the factors we know are connected to health. An initiative in Salt Lake City, Utah, will use public-private partnerships to create a comprehensive early learning system for children from birth to five years old and advocate for statewide adoption of early education standards and school readiness programs. Efforts in Colorado Springs, Colorado, will establish a coordinated system of care for service members, veterans, and their families. A grantee in New York City will strengthen a campaign to enact a city ordinance that mandates employers provide a minimum number of sick days to employees. In Manchester, New Hampshire, the focus will be on violence prevention and increased resident engagement by transforming three public schools into community schools. As a result, the role of those schools will expand from educating students to hosting other partner organizations who will also provide a range of social supports to children and families in those communities.

The 12 grantees from the project’s first year are already making significant contributions to their communities. For example, the Pacific Institute in Richmond, California, has worked to develop and expand community re-entry services for recently incarcerated residents of Richmond. County officials

there recently decided to withdraw plans to expand the county jail system and invest in re-entry solutions to assist former inmates' successful transition into the community and the workforce.

In addition to the Community Grants, the *County Health Rankings & Roadmaps* program includes other efforts to mobilize local communities, national partners, and leaders, including: the *County Health Rankings*, an annual check-up that highlights the healthiest and least healthy counties in every state, as well as those factors that influence health outside of the doctor's office; a prize competition to recognize communities taking action that leads to better health; and tools and resources to help groups working to improve the health of their communities. Visit [www.countyhealthrankings.org](http://www.countyhealthrankings.org) to learn more.

Detailed descriptions of all 30 grants are available at [www.countyhealthrankings.org/roadmaps/community-grants](http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/roadmaps/community-grants).

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#### **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 health and health care, the Foundation works with a diverse group of organizations and individuals to identify solutions and achieve comprehensive, measurable, and timely change. For 40 years the Foundation has brought experience, commitment, and a rigorous, balanced approach to the problems that affect the health and health care of those it serves. When it comes to helping Americans lead healthier lives and get the care they need, the Foundation expects to make a difference in your lifetime. For more information, visit [www.rwjf.org](http://www.rwjf.org). Follow the Foundation on [Twitter \(@RWJF\)](#) and [Facebook](#) ([facebook.com/RobertWoodJohnsonFoundation](http://facebook.com/RobertWoodJohnsonFoundation)).

#### **About the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute**

The University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute is the focal point within the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health for translating public health and health policy research into practice. The Institute strives to:

- Address a broad range of real-world problems of topical importance to government, business, providers and the public;
- Promote partnerships of inquiry between researchers and users of research, breaking down barriers between the academic community and public and private sector policy makers; and
- Make useful contributions to public health and health policy decisions that improve the health of the public.

For more information, visit <http://uwphi.pophealth.wisc.edu>.

#### **About Community Catalyst**

Community Catalyst is a national non-profit consumer advocacy organization dedicated to quality affordable health care for all. Community Catalyst works in partnership with national, state and local organizations, policymakers, and foundations, providing leadership and support to improve the health of communities and to improve the health care system so it serves everyone. For more information, visit [www.communitycatalyst.org](http://www.communitycatalyst.org). Read or comment on our blog at <http://blog.communitycatalyst.org>. Follow us on [Twitter \(@healthpolicyhub\)](#).