HPTN Scholars Program
Frequently Asked Questions

1. Do candidates need to have terminal degree by the time that applications are due?
   A: Yes, candidates must have received their terminal degree by 16 January 2015.

2. Must applicants be US Citizens?
   A: The HPTN follows federal guidelines for eligibility for receipt of NIH funds. Applicants have to be US Citizens or Permanent Residents.

3. What is considered an underrepresented minority for this program?
   A: The NIH does not predefine racial/ethnic minority communities, but rather gives this guidance:
   - “Individuals from racial and ethnic groups that have been shown by the National Science Foundation to be underrepresented in health-related sciences on a national basis.”
     (http://www.nsf.gov/statistics/wmpd/)
   - “This category comprises three racial/ethnic minority groups (blacks, Hispanics, and American Indians or Alaska Native) whose representation in science and engineering is smaller than their representation in the U.S. population.”

4. Can people apply if they do not yet have a home institution?
   A: When applying for the Scholarship, applicants must have a home institution identified where they will be established by the time of the program start date, and that institution must support the application to the Scholarship, as described in the application materials.

5. How does a Scholar balance the funding support the Scholars Program will provide with other employment?
   A: A Scholar cannot receive funding for greater than 100% FTE per NIH rules and the rules of most institutions. Scholars typically arrange, with support of their direct supervisor, for their non-scholarship support to equal ~70% of their salary/workload, allowing them to accept ~30% salary support from the Scholarship.

   In the past, the HPTN has supported Scholars who had 100% salary support from other sources, and only received travel and expenses support from HPTN, but this is not encouraged. Applicants interested in pursuing the scholarship under such an arrangement would need to provide a convincing argument in their proposal that they will have the time and focus to produce the needed outcomes within the scholarship period.

6. Can applicants already be receiving NIH Funds?
   A: Applicants already receiving NIH Funds need to contact their program officer for the NIH projects from which they receive compensation to see if they would also be allowed to receive salary/compensation from the HPTN scholarship. Applicants should contact the appropriate NIH representative before applying to the Scholars program. The experience of the HPTN has been that even in cases where getting funding from two NIH-funding-streams would not be greater than 100% of their time, the NIH has not allowed it. However, in situations in which an applicant has/had NIH funding as a co-investigator, this did not conflict with their ability to be an HPTN Scholar.
7. **What is considered an early career investigator?**
   A: The HPTN Scholarship gives priority to investigators who are within 10 years of completing their terminal research degree, first post-doctoral fellowship, or first medical residency at the time of application and have not previously competed successfully as PD/PI for a substantial NIH independent research award (e.g. R01 grant), in accord with NIH definitions of an “early career” investigator. Investigators who do not meet these criteria may still apply for the scholarship and will be considered. However the time they have held their degree, or prior award experience, will be taken into account by reviewers and may put very experienced persons at a competitive disadvantage.

8. **Is there an age restriction on the HPTN Scholarship?**
   A: There is no age restriction on the HPTN Scholarship.

9. **How much travel is required for the HPTN Scholars Program?**
   A: The amount of travel will depend on a number of factors. Scholars working with a mentor in another state would be expected to meet with their mentor at multiple time points over the course of the program, preferably including a multi-week block of time at the outset of the program, but depending on the project, the scholar’s prior experience with their mentor, etc., travel will vary. All Scholars are expected to attend the HPTN Annual Meeting at the beginning of the program (typically this meeting occurs in springtime) and approximately one year later. As well, all Scholars are expected to attend a workshop approximately 5-6 months into the program.

10. **Can applicants who already have a (non-HPTN) mentor continue to work with that mentor if they also acquire an HPTN-affiliated co-mentor?**
    A: Yes, applicants who have a current mentor outside of the HPTN are encouraged to apply but will need to also arrange a co-mentor who is/was an investigator on the HPTN study upon which the Scholar intends to base their project.