

## 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 30 December 2011.

**2. Must applicants be a US Citizen?**

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: For this program, the definition of an underrepresented minority includes “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 (see <http://www.nsf.gov/statistics/wmpd/>). In addition, it is recognized that underrepresentation can vary from setting to setting and individuals from racial or ethnic groups that can be convincingly demonstrated to be underrepresented by the grantee institution are eligible for support under this program.” In general, ethnic groups underrepresented in health-related sciences include African Americans, Native American Indians and Hispanics. Assessment of the eligibility of other applicants of different demographic backgrounds as underrepresented minorities will be a considered when their applications are reviewed.

**4. Can people apply if they do not yet have a home institution?**

A: Applicants who are not sure where they will be working during the scholarship year may apply for the scholarship, but the applicant should include information to assure reviewers that they will be stably housed at an institution before the program start date. This will be taken into consideration during the review process by the review committee.

**5. How does a scholar balance the funding support the Scholars Program will provide with other employment?**

A: NIH rules (and rules of most institutions) prevent a scholar from receiving funding for greater than 100% FTE. 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 year.

**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. 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. Can a Scholar be linked with a Mentor that is a Co-Chair on one of the Scientific Committees with in HPTN?**

A: Applicants can be linked with a mentor that is a Co-Chair of a Scientific Committee within the HPTN. However, if that Scientific Committee chair is not an investigator on an HPTN Domestic Study, the scholar will also need co-mentorship by an investigator working on a current or completed HPTN Domestic Study.

**8. What is considered an early career investigator?**

A: In accord with NIH definitions, the HPTN Scholarship is available for investigators who are within 10 years of completing their terminal research degree or 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).

**9. Is there an age restriction on the HPTN Scholarship?**

A: There is no age restriction on the HPTN Scholarship.

**10. 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 year, 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.

**11. 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 and will be linked with a HPTN mentor working on a current or completed HPTN domestic study.