

Solicitation for HIV Prevention Trials Network (HPTN) Domestic Scholars Program

Overview Information

The HIV Prevention Trials Network (HPTN) is a National Institutes of Health (NIH)-supported network designed to study strategies and technologies to prevent HIV transmission and acquisition. It addresses the global HIV epidemic through discovery and/or application of innovative interventions for prevention. This funding opportunity announcement (FOA) is intended to encourage early career U.S. minority investigators who wish to collaborate with the HPTN in the development and implementation of its research agenda by becoming mentored HPTN Domestic Scholars.

The HPTN invites applications from individuals who wish to engage the HPTN by working with a mentor who has been an investigator on an HPTN study (see a list of HPTN studies available for Scholars' proposals below). Mentors may be affiliated with an independent academic or research institution or one of three central supportive bodies for the HPTN Leadership and Operations Center (LOC) at FHI 360, the Laboratory Center (LC) at Johns Hopkins University, or the Statistics and Data Management Center (SDMC), "SCHARP", at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center.

Scholars are not required to be co-located in the same city as their mentor, but this is preferred. For additional considerations about mentors, see the "Identification of Projects and Mentors" section below.

Background

The [HPTN Scholars Program](#) is funded by the NIH to increase the number of scientists from populations currently underrepresented in HIV science who are prepared to pursue careers in HIV prevention research in a variety of disciplines.

Through funding to the HPTN LOC at FHI 360, support will be provided from **01 June 2022** through **30 November 2023** for a limited number of HPTN Scholars, who will be selected on a competitive basis.

Applicants for the new Scholar positions will submit projects that would utilize the data sets from a completed HPTN study. Available studies include: HPTN 037, HPTN 039, HPTN 043, HPTN 052, HPTN 058, HPTN 063, HPTN 061, HPTN 064, HPTN 065, HPTN 067, HPTN 068, HPTN 069, HPTN 071, HPTN 073, HPTN 074, HPTN 075, HPTN 077, HPTN 078 or HPTN 082.

Additional information is available on the [HPTN website](#). HPTN studies that are in early development and implementation or are still ongoing will not be made available to Scholars since such studies may not gain funding or provide timely data.

Scholarship Criteria

HPTN Domestic Scholars should:

- Be a citizen or permanent U.S. resident.
- Be a member of **underrepresented racial/ethnic minority communities**. Persons from such communities who are also of minority sexual orientation and/or gender identity are

particularly encouraged to apply. The NIH gives this guidance regarding such underrepresented racial/ethnic minority communities:

- “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 (Black/African American, Latinx/e, and American Indians or Alaska Native) whose representation in science and engineering is smaller than their representation in the U.S. population.”
(<https://nces.nsf.gov/pubs/nsf19304/digest>)
- Possess some experience conducting research with populations at risk in the U.S.
- Have technical background suitable to become involved in a substantial component of the HPTN science agenda.
- Demonstrate plans to work with and be mentored by an investigator actively involved in HPTN research, based at an independent institution or at the Central Resources of the HPTN.
- Have the support of their host academic institutions that would allow them the time to participate in the mentored research program, and to travel as required to work with their mentor and to key HPTN meetings.
- The amount of time varies per Scholar but is between 10% and 30% full-time equivalent (FTE).

Researchers, who are part of an underrepresented racial/ethnic minority community, with an interest in specific issues related to sexual minorities are encouraged to participate and are the target of the initiative. We seek persons with special insight and potential to address research in the highest risk minority subpopulations in the U.S.

The HPTN scholarship will give 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 Program Director/Principal Investigator (PD/PI) for a substantial NIH independent research award (e.g., R01 grant).

Scholarship Program Goals

The goals of the Scholars program are:

1. Through completing the scholarship requirements and by working with their mentor(s), the HPTN Scholars will acquire new knowledge, skills, and connections to further their careers as independent investigators in HIV science.
2. The HPTN Scholars develop a research project, to be approved through study specific HPTN review processes, which will make use of data the Scholars will identify from completed or ongoing HPTN studies. Further, that the Scholars, working with their mentors and other HPTN resources, will have completed their approved project and will present findings from their projects at the HPTN Annual Meeting (and preferably at one or more other scientific meetings) and submit a manuscript from the project to a peer-reviewed journal by the end of the 18-month program period (typically with the scholar as the lead author).

3. Through the experience of the program, HPTN Scholars will become knowledgeable of the process of doing research in NIH-funded HIV networks and have the opportunity to build their research networks within the context of the HPTN.

The HPTN Scholars Program is designed to provide partial salary support (up to 30% time) to complement other support that the Scholars receive from their home institution.

Scholarship Program Offerings

1. Regular meetings, in-person, with the primary mentor on-site - if the mentor and mentee are co-located in the same city - or by conference call if not co-located.
2. In-residence experience at the mentor's institution, during which the scholars will be encouraged, to the degree possible, to participate in study design, conduct, analysis, writing, and community engagement. For travel to a mentor's institution which constitutes international travel, this in-residence experience is limited to two weeks.
3. Travel to up to two (2) HPTN annual meetings and to one (1) national or international scientific meeting, during the program period. International travel is approvable only if affordable and if a Scholar is presenting work, although this does not have to be HPTN work. Attendance at the HPTN Annual Meetings is **required** and must be included in the budget. The additional conference must also be included in the original budget.
4. Participation in a series of group activities designed for further career development of the Scholars, including monthly conference calls to discuss ongoing research projects, new funding sources for career development, and opportunities for wider collaboration as well as additional training activities coordinated by relevant NIH bodies.
5. Travel to and participation in a mid-program networking and skills-building meeting coordinated by the Program. This meeting is routinely held in Seattle, WA USA.
6. Proposed 10% to 30% scholar salary support, depending upon the nature of the proposal and resources available.

Identification of Projects and Mentors

Each Scholar must work with an HPTN mentor to participate in the program. The mentor must be affiliated with the HPTN study that the Scholar's proposed project will be based upon. The initial task of a prospective applicant therefore is to identify both a dataset (study) that will allow support development of a research project of interest, **and** a mentor from that study who is willing to work with the Scholar.

Mentors must be contacted by well in advance to allow the potential Scholar and mentor to have enough time to work together on the proposal before the **due date for the proposal**.

Applicants should put thought into potential research topics prior to contacting a prospective mentor and should remember that it is not the role of a mentor to come up with a research topic for the applicant. It is the decision of potential mentor(s) whom to support or whether to support any Scholars.

Co-Mentoring

Persons who already have a mentor outside of the HPTN (or who have an HPTN mentor not affiliated with the study upon which the proposed project will be based) are also encouraged to apply for the program. In such cases, the Scholar will need to identify a co-mentor from the relevant study. The co-mentorship arrangement will be evaluated as part of consideration of the applicant for the HPTN Scholars Program.

If further information is needed or if the applicant has difficulty locating a mentor, the applicant may contact [Sherri Johnson](#).

Scholarship Application Materials

Applications must be completed in full. The following is contained within the official application:

- All contact and demographic information, including date of birth, self-identified gender, and ethnic/racial self-identification
- Education and employment history, unless covered in NIH biosketch
- Letters of support from the following:
 - A US-based HPTN investigator offering to serve as primary mentor to the Scholar
 - The researcher's immediate supervisor, confirming that appropriate time will be made available to allow the Scholar to fully engage in the opportunities of the HPTN Scholar Program
 - One additional professional letter from a past mentor, professor, employer, etc.
- A maximum 1,000-word statement of intent describing how the mentored HPTN Scholars Program experience would foster the applicant's research career
- A maximum 750-word project proposal describing the research the Scholar wishes to accomplish as part of the HPTN Scholars Program. **Note:** An additional copy of the project proposal in **Word** format should be included so that text can be inserted as the scope of work in the sub-agreement, if awarded.

All application attachments should be provided in **.pdf** format, except for the project proposal, which should be provided as a separate **Word** (.doc) file.

1. A **PHS 398 proposal**, including the following forms:

- **Signed** Face Page
- Detailed budget (Form Page 4 –two total detailed budgets
 - One for the first six-month (6) funding period (6), **01 June 2022 through 30 November 2022**
 - One for the following twelve-month funding period, **01 December 2022 through 30 November 2023**
- Budget justification for each period of performance (on the “Continuation Format Page” - a written justification of Attachment 1 below) – these justifications should be very detailed and thorough. A separate budget justification must be submitted for each funding period
- Biographical Sketch format page(s)

- PHS 398 Other Support page
- Checklist Form Page, with a copy of your institutional Negotiated Indirect Cost Recovery Agreement (NICRA).

Please use the PHS 398 template uploaded to the [Scholars' webpage](#), as it has been tailored for use in this application. Please also see the example PHS located on the Scholars' webpage.

2. A **budget**, similar in format to the example provided in Attachment 1 (“Detailed Budget Assumptions for Illustrative Purposes for New Scholars”), but customized for the applicant’s specific situation, encompassing:
 - Salary support of 10% to 30%
 - Fringe benefits as per the Scholar’s institution of origin
 - Travel to the mentor’s location (local or out-of-town, depending on the location of the site and the home of the Scholar)
 - Travel to two HPTN Annual meetings in 2022 and 2023 (tentative dates: June 4-8, 2022 and June 3-9, 2023, mandatory)
 - Travel to networking and skills-building training (date TBA; Seattle, WA)
 - Travel to one other professional meeting
 - Scholar-related expenses up to \$2,250/year that may include books, software, communication, photocopying, and/or a computer or related hardware
3. Additional information:
 - A copy of your institution’s financial audit (A133) for a pre-award review
 - Verification of current human subjects protection (HSP) and good clinical practice (GCP) training

Important Notes:

- Selected Scholars will need to determine if IRB approvals at their institution are required and if this will delay the execution of a sub-agreement.
- Scholars must be able to receive NIH funds from the HPTN through a supporting institution via an agreement with FHI 360. This institution must submit the PHS package as the receipt of funds. This arrangement must be worked out in advance of submission of the application and is a requirement for acceptance as a Scholar. Scholars must consider not only the institution that will support them but must also determine whether other awards from which they receive support will allow the Scholar to receive additional NIH funds. It is the Scholar’s responsibility to make these determinations and arrangements.
- If awarded, the mechanism for funding is a cost-reimbursement sub-agreement. Therefore, an applicant must be able to cover the costs of all travel and other expenses up front, to be reimbursed after their institutional invoice is paid by FHI 360.

Submission of Application Materials

Incomplete, non-responsive, or late submissions will not be considered.

Applications not submitted as requested (with documents submitted in **.pdf** with a copy of the project proposal in **Word** (.doc) format, using titles listed below) will not be considered.

Please use the following document titles in submission:

- lastname_Application Checklist DSP C12
- lastname_Application DSP C12 (in .pdf)
- lastname_Project Proposal DSP C12 (in .doc)
- lastname_PHS 398 DSP C12 (in .pdf)
- lastname_Attachment 1 DSP C12 (in .pdf)
- lastname_Fin Audit DSP C12
- lastname_HSP DSP C12
- lastname_GCP DSP C12
- Letters of support (submitted directly to Sherri Johnson)

Review Criteria and Selection Process

Applicants will be evaluated by HPTN Scholars Program Leadership according to the review criteria below.

- Potential for the candidate to contribute to the scientific objectives of the HPTN prevention agenda
- Quality of the project proposed by the scholar
- Appropriate personal and professional background to meet the objectives of the mentored research training objectives
- Commitment of the candidate, host HPTN investigator and mentor, and home supervisor
- Appropriate budget package that follows the guidelines of the instructions above and adequately supports the proposed scope of work

For more information: We encourage your inquiries concerning this funding opportunity and welcome the opportunity to answer questions from potential applicants.

Primary Contacts

- **Sherri Johnson, MPH**, sjohnson@fhi360.org, (202) 884-8677
- **Tanette Headen**, theaden@fhi360.org, (919) 321-3494
- **Jennifer Womack**, jwomack@fhi360.org, (919) 321-3917

Additional Contacts

- **Darrell Wheeler, PhD, MPH, MSW**, dwheeler@iona.edu
- **Sten H. Vermund, MD, PhD**, sten.vermund@yale.edu