



**Solicitation for HIV Prevention Trials Network (HPTN) International Scholars  
Cohort 6  
01 January 2021 – 30 June 2022**

**Initial proposal drafts are due 08 May 2020  
Full applications due 12 June 2020**

***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 non-U.S.-based investigators who wish to collaborate with the HPTN in the development and implementation of its research agenda by becoming mentored **HPTN International Scholars**.

The HPTN invites applications from individuals who wish to engage the HPTN by working with a mentor who has been involved with an HPTN study. A list of HPTN studies available for Scholars' proposals can be found under the "Identification of Projects and Mentors" section 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. However, the mentor must have, in some way, been involved with the HPTN study upon which the Scholar's proposal is based. International scholars are not required to be co-located or in the same country as their mentor, but this is preferred. Mentors not based in the U.S. are also preferred, as building of HPTN site capacity is one of the goals of the International Scholars Program

***Background***

Beginning in 2010, the *Domestic* HPTN Scholars Program was funded by the U.S. National Institutes of Health (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. As an expansion to the Domestic Program, the HPTN International Scholars Program is prepared to fund a limited number of non-U.S.-based Scholars from disadvantaged communities or backgrounds in various geographical areas of the world. Through funding to the HPTN Leadership and Operations Center (LOC) at FHI 360, support will be provided from 01 January 2021 through 30 June 2022 (18 months) for International Scholars. Applicants for the International Scholar positions will submit projects that will utilize data sets from a completed HPTN study.



### **Scholarship Criteria**

HPTN International Scholars should:

- Be a current PhD, MD, or MBChB/MBBS/etc. student (such as Public Health professionals holding an MPH and registered for a PhD, Lab Staff/Scientists/Study Co-ordinators holding relevant Masters' degrees and registered for PhDs, Behavioural Scientists holding an MA and registered for a PhD, or anyone holding a Masters' degree who is also enrolled in a PhD program)
  - OR be within 10 years of graduation with such a terminal degree, first postdoctoral fellowship, or first medical residency at the time applications are due
- Dentists holding a BDS and Pharmacists holding an MPharm may also apply
- *Additionally:* Anyone holding a Masters' degree may apply, if the mentor or Principal Investigator (PI) on the HPTN study strongly sees the candidate as a very promising individual and notes such in the applicant's letter of recommendation.
- Other requirements for applicants:
  - Have experience and/or substantial potential in conducting research with populations at risk
  - Demonstrate plans to work with and be mentored by an investigator actively involved in HPTN research, based at an HPTN site or affiliated independent institution
  - Have the support of their host academic or work 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
  - Communicate effectively in English (via speech, reading, and writing)
  - Plan to continue working in the country in which h/she and his/her mentor are located

Researchers with interest in specific issues related to sexual minorities and high-risk populations are encouraged to participate. We seek persons with special insight and potential to address research in the highest risk minority subpopulations in the world.

Applicants must not have previously competed successfully as Program Director/Principal Investigator (PD/PI) for a substantial NIH independent research award (e.g., R01 grant).

### **Scholarship Program Goals**

Through completing the scholarship requirements and by working with their mentor, the International Scholars will:

1. Acquire new knowledge, skills and connections to further their careers as independent investigators in HIV science
2. Develop a research project, to be approved through the HPTN study-specific review processes, which will make use of data the Scholars will identify from completed or nearly completed HPTN studies
  - Scholars will present findings from their project at the HPTN Annual Meeting, one or more other scientific meetings, and/or via webinar to the broader HPTN community
  - Scholars will 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. 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 International 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.

#### ***International Scholarship Program Offerings***

1. Travel to two HPTN annual meetings during the program period of eighteen months. Attendance at the HPTN Annual Meeting (2021, date TBA) and to the 2022 HPTN Annual Meeting (dates TBA) to present project findings is required. Note: meetings are usually held in May or June each year.
2. Travel to and participation in a networking and skills-building workshop coordinated by the program (in Seattle, Washington)
4. Regular meetings, in person, with the Scholar's mentor - if the mentor and mentee are not located in the same geographical area, these meetings may happen via conference call
5. Travel to one national or international scientific meeting, with aims of presenting project data
6. Participation in a series of group activities designed for further career development, including monthly conference calls of the group 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
8. Up to 30% Scholar salary support

#### ***Identification of Projects and Mentors***

Applicants must propose a project using completed or nearly completed HPTN Study datasets. The following studies are available for Scholars to use: HPTN 037, HPTN 039, HPTN 043, HPTN 052, HPTN 058, HPTN 063, HPTN 061, HPTN 064, HPTN 065, HPTN 066, HPTN 067, HPTN 068, HPTN 069, HPTN 071, HPTN 073, HPTN 074, HPTN 075, HPTN 077, HPTN 078 and HPTN 082. See <https://www.hptn.org/research/studies> for links to each study's web page, where a copy of the study's protocol can be found.

Each Scholar must work with an HPTN mentor to participate in the program. The mentor should be affiliated with the HPTN study upon which the Scholar's proposed project will be based. The initial task of a prospective applicant, therefore, is to identify both a dataset (study) that will allow her/him/they to develop a project that she/he/they is interested in, and a mentor from that study who is willing to work with the Scholar. **Mentors must be contacted by 10 April 2020 at the latest**, 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 must also submit their project proposal for a pre-screening of appropriateness to Sherri Johnson by 08 May 2020.**

Scholars cannot propose to work on an ongoing, but nearly completed study if there is doubt about whether the needed data will be available by the time the Scholar's project is approved. HPTN studies that are still in the developmental stages or early implementation stages will not be made available to Scholars, since such studies may not gain funding or provide timely data.

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 mentors whom to support or whether to support a particular Scholar.

#### *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 at [sjohnson@fhi360.org](mailto:sjohnson@fhi360.org).

#### **Scholarship Application Materials**

1. Applications (single spaced, 11 font Arial type) must be completed in full. The following is contained within the official application:
  - a. **Contact and demographic information**, including birth month/day/year and self-identified gender
  - b. **Education and employment history**, unless covered in NIH biosketch
  - c. **A letter of support from an HPTN investigator** offering to provide the scholar their mentorship
  - d. **A letter of support from the applicant's immediate supervisor**, clarifying that the time will be made free to engage fully the opportunities of the HPTN Scholar program
  - e. **One additional professional letter of support**
  - f. A maximum 1,000 word **statement of intent** describing how the mentored experience would nurture the research career of the applicant
  - g. A **project proposal**, not to exceed 750 words, describing the research the Scholar wishes to accomplish in 2021-2022. (In submission, **please include an additional copy of the project proposal in MS Word format**, so that text can be inserted as the scope of work in the subagreement, if awarded.)

All application attachments should be provided in .pdf format, except for the project proposal, which should be provided as a separate .doc file. **Applications not submitted as requested (with documents submitted in .pdf with a copy of the project proposal in Word format, using document titles listed above) will not be considered.**



2. A **PHS 398 proposal** (a proposal package used by the U.S. NIH for new grants), including the following forms:
  - **Signed Face Page**
  - Detailed budget
    - This consists of Form Page 4 – two total detailed budgets, one for the first eleven months (Year 1 – 01 January 2021 through 30 November 2021) and one for the following seven months (Year 2 – 1 December 2021 through 30 June 2022).
  - 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 (2).
  - 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)

**Note:** The PHS 398 can be found here:

<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/phs398.html>. However, 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 398 located on the Scholars’ webpage.

3. A **budget** that must be customized for the applicant’s situation and encompass:
  - Salary support up to 30%
  - Fringe benefits as per the Scholar’s institution of origin (if applicable)
  - Travel to the mentor’s location for meetings throughout the 18 months (Note that, for travel to a mentor’s institution which constitutes international travel, this in-residence experience is limited to two weeks.)
  - Travel to two HPTN Annual Meetings in 2021 and 2022 (dates TBA, mandatory)
  - Travel to a networking/skills-building workshop in Seattle, Washington in January 2021 (mandatory)
  - Travel to one other professional/scientific meeting
  - Scholar-related expenses that may include books, software, communication, photocopying, and/or a computer or related hardware
4. Additional information:
  - A copy of your institution’s financial audit for a pre-award review
  - Verification of current human subjects protection (HSP) and good clinical practice (GCP) training

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 recipient 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, in order to be reimbursed after their institutional invoice is paid by FHI 360.

Selected Scholars will also need to determine if IRB or Ethics approvals at their institution will delay the execution of a subagreement.

### ***Submission of Application Materials***

**The deadlines for submission are 08 May 2020 (proposal only) and 12 June 2020 (full application), 5PM ET, via email to Ms. Sherri Johnson at [sjohnson@fhi360.org](mailto:sjohnson@fhi360.org). 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 MS Word format, using titles listed below) will not be considered.**

Please use the following document titles in submission:

- Lastname\_Application ISP C6 (in .pdf)
- Lastname\_Project Proposal ISP C6 (in .doc)
- lastname\_PHS 398 ISP C6 (in .pdf)
- lastname\_Attachment 1 ISP C6 (in .pdf)
- lastname\_Fin Audit ISP C6 (in .pdf)
- lastname\_HSP ISP C6 (in .pdf)
- lastname\_GCP ISP C6 (in .pdf)
- Letters of support must be sent separately, directly to Sherri Johnson from the author.

Selected Cohort 6 International Scholars will be informed early August 2020.

### ***Review Criteria and Selection Process***

Applicants will be evaluated by a team assembled by the Scholarship 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 scoping of work



**Contacts:** We encourage your inquiries concerning this funding opportunity and welcome the opportunity to answer questions from potential applicants.

**Principal Contacts**

**Sherri Johnson, MPH**, [sjohnson@fhi360.org](mailto:sjohnson@fhi360.org), (202) 884-8000 ext. 18677

**Tanette Headen**, [theaden@fhi360.org](mailto:theaden@fhi360.org), (919) 544-7040 ext. 11297

**Gabriela Salinas-Jimenez**, [gsalinas-jimenez@fhi360.org](mailto:gsalinas-jimenez@fhi360.org), (919) 544-7040 ext. 11232

**Additional Contacts**

**David Serwadda, MD, MPH**, [dserwada@infocom.co.ug](mailto:dserwada@infocom.co.ug)

**Quarraisha Adbool-Karim, PhD**, [quarraisha.abdoolkarim@caprisa.org](mailto:quarraisha.abdoolkarim@caprisa.org)

**Sten H. Vermund, MD, PhD**, [sten.vermund@yale.edu](mailto:sten.vermund@yale.edu)