



Solicitation for HIV Prevention Trials Network (HPTN) Prevention Scholars 2013-2014

Overview Information

The HIV Prevention Trials Network (HPTN) is an 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 is intended to encourage young U.S. minority investigators who wish to collaborate with the HPTN in the development and implementation of its research agenda by becoming mentored **HPTN Prevention Scholars**.

The HPTN invites applications from individuals who wish to engage the HPTN through either: (1) a Clinical Research Site (CRS) currently conducting HPTN prevention studies (see www.hptn.org for a list of participating sites); or (2) one of three central supportive bodies for the HPTN: the Coordinating and Operations Center at FHI 360 and at Vanderbilt University, the Network Laboratory at Johns Hopkins University, or the Statistics and Data Management Center, "SCHARP" at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center and the University of Washington. Scholars are not required to be co-located in the same city as the CRS or central resource with which they work, but this is preferred. Scholars will work closely with a mentor from their CRS or central resource. For additional considerations about mentors, see the "Scholarship Applications" section below.

Background

The HPTN Scholars Program has been 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 a supplement to the HPTN Coordinating and Operations Center at Family Health International, support will be provided from May 2013 through April 2014 for up to five HPTN scholars, who will be selected on a competitive basis. Applicants for the new scholar positions are expected to submit projects that would utilize the data sets from either a completed HPTN Study or a currently ongoing HPTN Study. Additional considerations regarding the selection of data sets are provided in the "Scholarship Applications" section below.

Scholarship Criteria

HPTN Scholars should:

- Be members 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 does not predefine racial/ethnic minority communities, but rather gives this definition:
 - "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."



- Have experience and/or substantial potential in 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, including ethical and community participation.
- Demonstrate plans to work with and be mentored by an investigator actively involved in HPTN research, based at an HPTN Clinical Trials Unit (CTU) or CRS, or a scientist at one of the central resources of the network who is actively involved in HPTN prevention research.
- Have the support of their host academic institutions that would allow them the time to participate in the mentored research program, traveling to the research venue and key HPTN meetings.

While applicants from any racial/ethnic minority are eligible for the mentorship program, researchers who are individuals of color (e.g., Black and Latino/a) and with 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 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).

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 abilities to further their careers as independent investigators in HIV science;
2. The scholars develop a research project, to be approved through the HPTN ancillary study processes that will make use of data the scholars will identify from completed or ongoing HPTN studies (identified above). Further, that the scholars, working with their mentors and other HPTN resources, will complete the approved projects within the program year, present the findings of their projects at a scientific meeting at the end of the scholarship year, and submit a manuscript based on the given project (typically with the scholar as the lead author) by the end of the program year; and
3. Through the experience of the program, the scholars become knowledgeable of the processes of doing research in NIH-funded HIV networks, and thereby have the opportunity to continue their careers in the HPTN after conclusion of the scholarship as members of a protocol team or through proposing new science funded by the HPTN.

The HPTN Prevention Scholars program is designed to provide partial salary support to complement other support that the investigators receive from their home institution.

Scholarship Program Offerings

The HPTN Domestic Scholars program will offer the following:

1. An orientation to be held with the selected scholars before project initiation in conjunction with the HPTN Annual Meeting.



2. In-residence experience at a Clinical Research Site or at one of the HPTN Central Resources, during which the scholars will be encouraged, to the degree possible, to participate in study design, conduct, analysis, writing, and community engagement.
3. 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.
4. Travel to the partnering Clinical Trials Site for an 8-16 week period (or several times per year), when the mentor and mentee are not located in the same city.
5. Travel to two HPTN meetings during the scholarship year, and to one national or international scientific meeting (note that international travel is approvable only if affordable and if a Scholar is presenting HPTN work).
6. Participation in a series of group activities designed for further career development of the Scholars, 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.
7. Travel to and participation in a mid-year networking and skills-building meeting coordinated by the program.
8. Proposed 10 to 30% scholar salary support.

Scholarship Applications

Application forms (single spaced, 11 font Arial type) must be completed in full and include:

1. All contact and demographic information, including birth month, day, year, sex, and ethnic/racial self-identification;
2. Education and employment history, unless covered in NIH biosketch;
3. A letter of support from a Domestic HPTN CTU or CRS investigator, or investigator of one of the HPTN central resources, offering to provide the scholar their mentorship. Scholars are encouraged to identify a suitable HPTN-based mentor on their own (information about HPTN CTUs and CRSs staff, as well as central resource personnel, is provided on HPTN.org). However, interested applicants may also contact Ms. Sarah Artis for assistance in identifying a mentor (see contact information below). Persons who already have a mentor outside of the HPTN are also encouraged to apply for the program, as a co-mentoring relationship may be possible involving their current mentor and an HPTN investigator. The co-mentorship arrangement will need to be evaluated before the applicant is approved for the HPTN Scholars program;
4. A letter of support from the researcher's immediate supervisor, clarifying that the time will be made free to engage fully the opportunities of the HPTN Scholar program;
5. One additional professional letter of support;

6. A maximum 1000 word statement of intent describing how the mentored experience would nurture the research career of the applicant, including the intended in-residence commitment, if planned, at the research site;
7. A project proposal, not to exceed 600 words, describing the research the scholar wishes to accomplish in 2013-2014. Applicants must propose a project using ongoing or completed HPTN Study datasets (see http://hptn.org/research_studies.asp for a study list). Applicants should take into consideration that working with data from ongoing studies may provide rich opportunities for interaction with participants and study staff, and learning about the challenges of study implementation. However access to data from ongoing studies may be delayed and publication of scholars' papers may need to be postponed until the study's primary paper has been published. Scholars working from data sets of already-completed studies will have prompt access to complete data sets, but may miss out on experiences that working on an ongoing study can provide, as noted above. Scholars should not choose a study that is still in the developmental stages as the study may not gain funding or provide timely data. All prospective applicants are encouraged to contact Ms. Artis (see contacts below) to explore options.
8. A PHS 398 proposal to include the following forms: signed face page, detailed budget (form page 4), biosketch form, checklist form, other support, and institutional Negotiated Indirect Cost Recovery Agreement (NICRA). A template form set will be available from Ms. Artis to facilitate completion. NOTE: Scholars must be able to receive NIH funds from the HPTN through a supporting institution via an agreement with FHI360. 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 inquiries and arrangements.
9. A budget similar in format to the example provided in Appendix 1, but customized for the applicant's specific situation, encompassing:
 - Salary support of 10% to 30% of the 2013-2014 annual salary
 - Fringe benefits as per the scholar's institution of origin
 - Travel to the CRS (local or out-of-town, depending on the location of the site and the home of the scholar) and to HPTN meetings
 - Travel to mid-year networking and skills-building training
 - 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.
 - Including indirect costs, the total costs per Scholar will not exceed \$68,000 per year.
10. The deadline for submission is January 31, 2013, 5PM EST, via email to sartis@fhi360.org. Incomplete, non-responsive, or late submissions will not be considered. Selected 2013-2014 HPTN Scholars will be informed by mid-March, 2013. HPTN Scholarship Leadership will reopen the application process if no suitable applications are identified through the original submission process.



Review Criteria and Selection Process

Applicants will be evaluated by a team assembled by the Scholarship Leadership, per the review criteria stated 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 home supervisor;
- Appropriate budget package that follows the guidelines of the instructions above

The HPTN Prevention Scholars Program is a one-year commitment. If funds are available to the network for continuation of the program, scholars may re-apply for a second year. Program participants are encouraged to use their time as scholars to become integrated into the network in other ways, for example, as co-investigators on new studies, members of scientific committees or as manuscript collaborators so that they may continue their career with the network even after the conclusion of their participation in the program.

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

Principal Contacts

Sarah Artis, sartis@fhi360.org, (919)544-7040x11548

Sam Griffith, MAT, sgriffith@fhi360.org, (919) 544-7040 x 11571

Additional Contacts

Darrell Wheeler, PhD, MPH, dwheeler@luc.edu, (312) 915-7024

Sten H. Vermund, MD, PhD, sten.vermund@vanderbilt.edu, (615) 322-9014

Applications must be received by 30 January, 2013 to Ms. Artis via email. Please send your attachments as an Adobe Acrobat™ .pdf file or as a MS Word™ .doc file.