REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA)

2021 Pathways to Research Program (PReP)

Program Overview

● Seeking applicants enrolled at colleges and universities in Minnesota who are from an underrepresented population (see definition on page 4)

● Stipend of $600/week provided for full-time engagement (40-hours/week), 12 weeks between June 7 – August 27, 2021

● Up to ten students selected

● Funding for travel to present at a scientific conference for outstanding projects

● Applications due February 1, 2021 by 11:59 p.m.

1. NATURE AND PURPOSE OF THIS RFA

The Pathways to Research Program provides undergraduate students with knowledge, skills, and experience in translational science and health equity research through a structured core curriculum including a mentored research project, weekly training seminars, small group discussions, and a final poster to present research findings at the annual University of Minnesota CTSI Poster Session and Reception held in September, 2021. PReP provides an opportunity for students from populations underrepresented* in research to begin or advance their research career. Opportunities for travel funds to participate in national and international scientific meetings are awarded on a competitive basis.

The cornerstone of the research training program is the scholar’s participation in a research project under the direct supervision of a University of Minnesota faculty mentor. With input and oversight by the faculty mentor, scholars will work on a project related to the mentor’s ongoing research programs.

COVID-19 Update: The PReP Program will follow all University guidelines which could result in a virtual or hybrid virtual/in-person research experience. Leadership and staff will provide a robust and enriching experience online if the University remains closed to students on campus. For students applying to the program with a mentor, this award is contingent on your mentor’s ability to provide a project that can have a remote component, if necessary.

2. ELIGIBILITY

● Undergraduate students enrolled at the University of Minnesota or other colleges and universities in Minnesota or students with a strong Minnesota connection. Graduating seniors must be enrolled in a graduate program for the fall of 2021 (letter of acceptance is required).

● Ability to commit to a full-time research experience during the program. Scholars cannot concurrently take classes or hold UMN employment without prior approval from program
● Candidates must be from an underrepresented population (see definition on page 4)
● Candidates must be U.S. citizens, Green card holders or DACA recipients
● Candidates may apply with a faculty mentor they are currently working with whose research focuses on human health or work that can eventually translate to human health. One letter of support must come from this faculty mentor. If selected, the award is contingent on your mentor’s ability to provide a project that can have a remote component, if necessary.

3. SELECTION CRITERIA
● Interest in a career in human health, biomedical and/or translational research
● Quality and content of personal essay
● Letters of recommendation
● Academic credentials
● Candidate interview: Interviews will last approximately 15 minutes and will be conducted via video conference with program leadership and/or an experienced mentor

4. EXPECTATIONS OF SCHOLARS
● Commit to full-time (40 hours), on-site and/or virtual research training for 12 weeks during the 2021 summer
● Scholars cannot concurrently take classes or hold UMN employment without prior approval from program
● Attend weekly program seminars and program activities
● Complete all required training
● Complete baseline, weekly, and post evaluations
● Prepare a final research poster to present findings and translational component at the CTSI Poster Session and Reception in September, 2021

5. MENTORS
Scholars who are accepted to the 2021 PReP program will be placed with a University of Minnesota faculty mentor. Placement decisions by program leadership are final. Candidates are also permitted to apply to the program with a faculty mentor they are already working with.

6. EXPECTATIONS OF MENTORS
● Complete required training course by May 28, 2021 Course link: http://z.umn.edu/mentortrain
● Create a robust summer project for the Scholar
● Attend mentor orientation
● Complete a Mentor-Mentee Compact with the Scholar
● Hold regular, planned interactions with the Scholar
● Attend the program kick-off and mid-program event in July
● Attend and participate in the CTSI Poster Session and Reception in September, 2021
7. APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS AND TIMELINE

Complete and submit an online application and upload all required documents through the submission link on the CTSI PReP website by **11:59 p.m. on February 1, 2021**. The submission form will automatically close at 12:00 a.m. Late or partially completed applications will not be accepted, please plan accordingly.

PROGRAM TIMELINE

- December, 2020  RFA released
- February 1, 2021  Applications due (11:59 p.m.)
- March, 2021  Successful candidates contacted for interviews/Interviews conducted
- March, 2021  Successful candidates contacted, placed with mentor
- June 7, 2021  First Day Orientation
- June 7, 2021  First day working with mentor
- August 27, 2021  Program ends
- September, 2021  Scholars present at CTSI annual poster session

Complete applications should adhere to the guidelines below and must include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guideline</th>
<th>Format</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scholar Applicant Information</td>
<td>online form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Essay including:</td>
<td>up to 2 pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Your academic and career goals</td>
<td>single spaced, 12 pt font</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Your interest in human health research</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- How you will benefit from this program</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Research experience you have had (if applicable)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Personal challenges faced that have influenced your life/academic career</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resume or CV including:</td>
<td>up to 4 pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Paid work experiences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Unpaid work experiences (working in a family business, taking care of younger siblings/elderly adult, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Community service and volunteer activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Awards and achievements received</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All transcripts from undergraduate school (unofficial copy acceptable)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two letters of recommendation (professional recommendations, not personal friends or family members)</td>
<td>Letters must be submitted by the letter writer to: <a href="https://z.umn.edu/internship_LOR">https://z.umn.edu/internship_LOR</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
*Definition of Underrepresented/Disadvantaged background:*

Applicants **must** belong to one or more of the following groups:

A. Individuals from a diverse racial and ethnic group that is underrepresented in health-related sciences in the United States *(African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Native Americans, Alaska Natives, Hawaiian Natives and natives of the US Pacific Islands).*

B. Individuals with disabilities, who are defined as those with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, as described in the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended. See NSF data at, https://www.nsf.gov/statistics/2017/nsf17310/static/data/tab7-5.pdf.

C. Individuals who come from a family with annual income below established **low-income thresholds**.

D. Individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds, defined as those who meet **two or more** of the following criteria:
   
   E. Were or currently are homeless, as defined by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (Definition: https://nche.ed.gov/mckinney-vento/);
   
   F. Were or currently are in the foster care system, as defined by the Administration for Children and Families (Definition: https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/focus-areas/foster-care);
   
   G. Were eligible for the Federal Free and Reduced Lunch Program for two or more years (Definition: https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/income-eligibility-guidelines);
   
   H. Have/had no parents or legal guardians who completed a bachelor's degree (see https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2018/2018009.pdf);
   
   I. Were or currently are eligible for Federal Pell grants (Definition: https://www2.ed.gov/programs/fpg/eligibility.html);
   
   J. Received support from the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) as a parent or child (Definition: https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/wic-eligibility-requirements).
   
   K. Grew up in one of the following areas: a) a U.S. rural area, as designated by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Rural Health Grants Eligibility Analyzer (https://data.hrsa.gov/tools/rural-health), or b) a Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services-designated Low-Income and Health Professional Shortage Areas (qualifying zipcodes are included in the file). Only one of the two possibilities in #7 can be used as a criterion for the disadvantaged background definition.

L. Students from low socioeconomic (SES) status backgrounds have been shown to obtain bachelor’s and advanced degrees at significantly lower rates than students from middle and high SES groups (see https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_tva.asp), and are subsequently less likely to be represented in biomedical research. For background see Department of Education data at, https://nces.ed.gov; https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_tva.asp; https://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/research/pubs/advancing-diversity-inclusion.pdf.
M. Individuals who come from a social, cultural, or educational environment that recently directly inhibited the individual from obtaining the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to develop and participate in a research career.

If you believe you qualify under criterion 5 or have other questions about eligibility, please contact the program before applying at ctsieduc@umn.edu.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Nicole Bowman
CTSI-Ed Summer Programs Administrative Lead
csieduc@umn.edu

Angie Merrifield, MPA
CTSI-Ed Summer Programs Manager
csieduc@umn.edu

Visit us at http://z.umn.edu/ctsiprep

CTSI PReP Program shares its application with the Health Disparities and Cancer Research Summer Internship. Students may be considered for one or both of the programs by selecting their program choice(s) in the application. To find out more about the Health Disparities and Cancer Research Summer Internship go to https://z.umn.edu/mccphdr.