

Early-Career Scientist Opportunity – Thriving Hearts Mentorship Program

Request for Applications

Deadline extended to 7/15/2024

Program Goals:

There is a critical need to support innovative research to change social and structural factors that will generate maternal health equity. However, disparities also exist when considering *who* has been able to lead scientific research and *how* that research gets designed and financially supported to address maternal health outcomes. Research scientists from historically oppressed racial and ethnic groups have been underrepresented due to barriers to developing sustainable careers, including racial macro- and microaggressions that may diminish success or cause premature exits from research careers. The principles of cultural tailoring, which can promote patient well-being and success in maternity care, can also be applied to promote well-being and success among early-stage investigators who are dedicated to transforming maternal health and health care. *Healthy and supported scientists have greater potential to be creative and innovative, and thus to solve the pervasive problems related to maternal outcomes.* If scientists who are dedicated to resolving the social and structural determinants of maternal morbidity and mortality receive professional development support that is tailored to their needs, they will be better equipped to resolve the health and healthcare system-related challenges that have created and perpetuated unjust disparities.

The Thriving Hearts Mentorship program’s overarching goal is to support the holistic career development and success of mentored researchers who demonstrate a sustained commitment to address and resolve disparities in maternal health through developing an impactful, scalable, and sustainable community-engaged maternal health research that results in system change and improved population health outcomes.

Early-Career Research Mentee Selection Criteria:

We will surround, support, and uplift an early-career investigator Mentee who has aptitude for and interest in conducting community-partnered maternal health research. Mentee eligibility is conferred to early-career researchers with a faculty appointment at one of the Thriving Hearts partnering academic institutions (UNC-Chapel Hill, North Carolina Central University, Duke University, North Carolina A & T State University, Wake Forest University). Applicants must have a doctoral degree and a current faculty position that does not exceed the junior faculty /junior scientist level. Applicants must not have a history of funding support as PI on a PCORI award and meet NIH definition). Mentees must have demonstrated a sustained commitment to engaging in work to address and reduce maternal health disparities. Individuals who are first-generation college graduates, from rural backgrounds, from health care

professions shortage areas, or low-income designations are particularly encouraged to consider the Mentorship Program.

Description of the Mentored Research Experience:

Just as it “takes a village to raise a child,” it “takes a committee to raise a researcher,” and we propose that the Mentee will be guided by a Development Committee that consists of multiple mentors whose combined perspectives and support are greater than the sum of their parts. The **Thriving Hearts Mentee Development Committee** will be composed of:

- *Committee Chair and Development Coach:* An academic with experience using holistic development approaches to strengthen early-career investigator capacity to thrive in maternal health research. They will lead the Development Committee and recommend specific holistic professional development programming for structured and/or self-directed training.
- *Research Mentor:* A senior researcher involved in Thriving Hearts, preferably with experience in intervention studies and strong track record of mentoring junior investigators. They will provide advice and connections to develop or enhance the mentee’s developing research program
- *Community Engagement Mentor:* A senior community partner involved in Thriving Hearts who will provide advice and connections to develop or enhance community-engaged research
- *Clinical Mentor:* If applicable to the mentee’s faculty appointment, this clinician-scientist will guide the Mentee in strategies for balancing clinical care and research.
- *Domain Mentor(s):* Provide advice relevant to the Mentee’s research program development or other interests.

A Unique Focus on Personal Growth and the Development of Professional Skills Necessary to Thrive:

The Mentee will work with a Development Coach to complete reflection, goal-setting, and assessment activities. Using these inputs, they will co-create a Mentorship Agreement and an individual development plan that maps out professional and personal growth goals and activities. The completed Mentorship Agreement will offer the Mentee a path to theoretical grounding, self-awareness, and growth strategies, subject matter expertise, and career development opportunities.

The Mentee and Development Committee will work together to identify a plan for engaging in relevant seminars, workshops, and professional development activities. These activities will include guest speakers, senior-level experts, and topics to equip the mentee with knowledge and skills to help them address factors related to the demanding work of their chosen field, strategies to prevent burnout, and contextual factors to overcome potential and unique challenges related to being historically underrepresented in research and academic careers.

Thriving Hearts Mentorship Program Salary Support:

Salary Support: Funding will cover a percentage of the scholar's full-time workload at the equivalent FTE of up to \$20,000 per year for up to five years to pursue mentored professional development and research focused on reducing maternal health inequities.

Key Dates:

Thriving Hearts Mentorship Program Application Due Date: 07/15/2024

Thriving Hearts Mentorship Program Projected Semi-Finalist Notification Date: 07/30/2024

Thriving Hearts Mentorship Program Semi-Finalist Interviews: 07/30/24 through 08/19/24

Thriving Hearts Mentorship Program Projected Award Notification Date: 08/31/2024

Thriving Hearts Mentorship Program Earliest Projected Start Date: 04/01/2025 (with up to five years of support)

Early-Career Scientist Opportunity – Thriving Hearts Mentorship Program Application

Applications must be submitted to ThrivingHeartsMentorship@med.unc.edu no later than 07/15/2024, by 11:59pm ET. Please note that once you have submitted your application, it cannot be modified. Please note the application instructions regarding page limit and formatting requirements. If you have any questions, please feel welcome to contact us at ThrivingHeartsMentorship@med.unc.edu.

Thank you for your interest in the Thriving Hearts Mentorship Program!

Application Components:

1. **Applicant's Biographical Information:** Legal name, professional title, demographic profile
2. **Personal Statement:** Statement describing the following:
 - a. **Applicant's Story:** including but not limited to information about the career path, inspiration to pursue research, and motivation to pursue a research career to reduce maternal health inequities.
 - b. **Research Vision:** Description of the applicant's proposed program of research and evidence to support the significance and potential impact of this focus.

c. Sustained Commitment to Addressing Maternal Health Inequities:

Description of previous coursework, research engagement, clinical practice experiences, or other professional development experiences specifically focused on addressing maternal health inequities.

3. **Dean, Department Chair, or Supervisor's Letter of Support:** Letter from the applicant's Dean, Department Chair, or Supervisor indicating the applicant's current role (or role during the mentoring program), fit of the program with their role, and commitment to protecting the time of the applicant to engage successfully in the mentorship program.
 4. **Additional Letter:** Letter from a former or current mentor or professional supervising or senior colleague who is familiar with the work of the applicant. This additional letter should address the personal and professional characteristics of the applicant and potential to be successful as an independent researcher, clinical scholar, and future health equity leader.
 5. **Biosketch:** Five-page NIH biosketch of the applicant.
 6. **CV:** Complete CV of the applicant (no page limit).
 7. **Writing Sample:** Published journal article, editorial, dissertation, or research thesis.
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1. Applicant's Biographical Information: Legal name, professional title, demographic profile

Full legal name:

Professional Credentials:

Professional Title:

Educational Institutions and Degrees:

Are you a first-generation college graduate:

What is the zip code of your hometown where you spent the majority of your childhood:

- 2. Personal Statement:** Provide a description of your story, including but not limited to information about the career path, inspiration to pursue research, and motivation to pursue a research career to reduce maternal health inequities.

2 pages maximum, 12 pt font, Arial, 1" margins, single space.

- 3. Research Vision:** Describe your proposed program of research and evidence to support the significance and potential impact of this focus.

2 pages maximum, 12 pt font, Arial, 1" margins, single space.

- 4. Sustained Commitment to Addressing Maternal Health Inequities:** Please provide a description of your previous coursework, research engagement, clinical practice experiences, or other professional development experiences specifically focused on addressing maternal health inequities.

1 page maximum, 12 pt font, Arial, 1" margins, single space.

- 5. Dean, Department Chair, or Supervisor's Letter of Support:** Please upload a letter from your Dean, Department Chair, or Supervisor confirming your current role (or role during your proposed time in the mentorship program), fit of the program with their role, and commitment to protecting the time of the applicant to engage successfully in the mentorship program.

2 pages maximum, 12 pt font, Arial, 1" margins, single space.

- 6. Additional Letter:** Please upload a letter from a former or current mentor or professional supervising or senior colleague who is familiar with your work. This additional letter should address your personal characteristics and potential to be successful as an independent researcher, clinical scholar, and future health equity leader.

2 pages maximum, 12 pt font, Arial, 1" margins, single space.

- 7. Biosketch:** Please upload a five-page NIH biosketch.

- 8. CV:** Please upload a complete CV (no page limit).

- 9. Writing Sample:** Please upload a published journal article, editorial, dissertation, or research thesis.
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