

**NATIONAL CENTER FOR HEALTH STATISTICS/ACADEMYHEALTH
2018 HEALTH POLICY SCHOLARS PROGRAM
APPLICATION GUIDELINES
September 28, 2018**

Thank you for your interest in the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS)/AcademyHealth Health Policy Scholars Program! This program will recruit one (1) scholar (pre- or post-doctoral training) from the field of health services and policy research to conduct research at their home institution and access restricted data file(s) free-of-charge through the NCHS Research Data Center (RDC), and potentially other Federal Statistical Research Data Centers (FSRDC).

****Before you begin to complete this application**, please review important pre-application information such as eligibility, anticipated timeline, and process at the Frequently Asked Questions webpage located at: <https://www.academyhealth.org/nchs>.

The application cycle opens Monday October 8, 2018 and closes at 5:00 pm ET on Tuesday January 1, 2019, to include all application materials and letters of recommendation. No extensions will be given.

The complete application consists of the following three parts:

1. Part One: NCHS/AcademyHealth online application to be completed via the AcademyHealth application web portal;
2. Part Two: Letters of recommendation to be uploaded via the AcademyHealth application web portal; and
3. Part Three: NCHS Research Data Center (RDC) application to be emailed to nchs-ah@cdc.gov.

All three components listed above must be submitted by 5 pm ET on Tuesday, January 1, 2019.

This application packet contains:

- I. General Application Guidelines for the online application (Part One)
 - A. Application Checklist
 - B. Format
 - C. Review Criteria
 - D. Application Items and Detailed Instructions
 - E. Submission Instructions
- II. Letter of Recommendation Instructions (Part Two)
- III. NCHS RDC application links (Part Three)

As a first step, please visit www.academyhealth.org/nchs to complete a mandatory Intent to Apply form. You will receive a link to the full application in the confirmation email.

Please email nchs@academyhealth.org with any questions about Parts One or Two in this application packet. If you have any questions about Part Three, please send an email to nchs-ah@cdc.gov – do not contact AcademyHealth or the NCHS RDC directly. All application materials for Parts 1 and 2 must be submitted online through the AcademyHealth web portal; the document for Part Three must be submitted via email to nchs-ah@cdc.gov.

I. GENERAL APPLICATION GUIDELINES

A. Application Checklist. To apply to the 2018 NCHS/AcademyHealth Health Policy Scholars Program, the following items must be completed:

- i. Intent to Apply:** As a first step, please visit www.academyhealth.org/nchs to complete a mandatory Intent to Apply form. You will receive a link to the full application form in the confirmation note and confirmation email.
- ii. Full Application (Part One):** Using the link in the confirmation email, complete the full application form. The applicant must submit the following application items via the online application form:
 1. Applicant and project information,
 2. Research proposal,
 3. Curriculum vitae or resume,
 4. A statement of qualifications and career plans, and
 5. Letters of Recommendation written by references listed below (Part Two).

All materials are due by 5 pm ET on Tuesday, January 1, 2019.

iii. References: Applicants must list the names of two references as part of the full application form (item ii. above) who will write your letter of recommendation. Upon submitting names of the references, each person will receive a link to upload their letter of recommendation.

1. Doctoral student and post-doctoral applicants:

- a. One letter of recommendation must be from the home institution advisor
- b. One additional letter of recommendation

2. Faculty and senior-investigator applicants:

- a. Two letters of recommendation

ALL letters of recommendation must be submitted through the online portal by 5 pm ET on Tuesday, January 1, 2019. Please encourage your references to submit their letters of recommendation as soon as possible.

B. Format. The application must adhere to the following format:

- Double-spaced text with 1” margins;
- Typed using Arial or Times New Roman fonts no smaller than 11 points;
- Single-sided; and
- Inclusion of the applicant's name on each of the individual items.

C. Review Criteria. Candidates are reminded that each application will be reviewed with respect to the following:

- Relevance and potential contribution of the proposed study to address important health-policy or health services research-related questions and/or the usefulness of the project's findings for future health policy discussions;
- Strength of the proposal's research design and methodology;
- Feasibility of conducting the research under the proposed timeframe, and the appropriateness of the selected NCHS data system(s) for the investigation;

- Applicant’s qualifications for and commitment to health services research and health policy;
- Quality of applicant’s past research (for post-doctoral and faculty applicants) or planned dissertation research (for doctoral applicants); and
- Applicant’s written and oral communication skills, interpersonal skills, and ability to collaborate with peers.

D. Application Items and Detailed Instructions. Applicants must submit:

Item 1 Online Application Form: Applicant and Project Information summary

Item 2 Research Proposal. (10 pages double-spaced, single-sided) The research proposal should include the following:

- 1. Title of the proposed research project.**
- 2. Purpose and Context of the Research Project.** Describe the purpose and context of the proposed study, including the specific health services research and health policy questions and issues to be explored, and the objectives of the proposed research.
- 3. Research Design and Methods.** Describe the particular research methods and procedures, types and sources of data, and methods of data analysis to be used to accomplish the project's objectives.
- 4. Applicants should submit proposals that demonstrate knowledge of the NCHS data systems selected for study and their appropriateness for the proposed investigation. Proposals should be sufficiently specific to show that the applicant has adequate understanding of the surveys in relation to the research question and that the project can be completed within the proposed time frame.**
- 5. Key Activities.** Provide a summary of the key activities to be undertaken.
- 6. Expected Contributions of the Proposed Research.** Discuss the relevance and potential contribution of the proposed study to address important health-policy or health services research related questions. Attention should be given to the relevance of the findings to policymakers and clinicians/practitioners.

Item 3 Curriculum Vitae/Resume. Include publications and major presentations; previous fellowships, scholarships, honors and awards; and previous and current grant funding of the applicant. **Please include link(s) to published articles or reports as part of the Curriculum Vitae/Resume. (10 pages)**

Item 4 Personal Statement of Qualifications and Career Plans. (2 pages) Limit the statement to two pages and include the following:

- a) Professional training, background and major accomplishments;
- b) Career plans and objectives, including how selection as a NCHS/AcademyHealth Scholar would contribute to your career development;
- c) Any special circumstances or experiences that would demonstrate your particular qualifications for or commitment to this program; and
- d) Any special circumstances that you wish to address with respect to the eligibility criteria.

Item 5 Letters of Recommendation (Two required). All applicants need to ask two references to each submit one letter of recommendation. Each of these letters must

come from qualified individuals familiar with the applicant's research capabilities. Doctoral student applicants should include a letter from his/her home institution advisor and one additional letter of recommendation, preferably from a researcher familiar with the student's research capacity and analytic skills. See the attached letter of Recommendation instructions.

To ensure confidentiality, the letter of reference must be submitted by the reference through the online application system by 5:00 pm ET Tuesday, January 1, 2019.

E. Submission Instructions. The deadline for the receipt of applications is Tuesday, January 1, 2019 at 5:00 P.M. ET. Applicants must submit all required application materials online for Parts 1 and 2. The NCHS RDC application (Part 3) must be emailed to nchs-ah@cdc.gov. (NOTE: References who are writing letters of recommendation will receive a link to upload their letters directly to the online application system. Letters of recommendation must be submitted online by 5 PM Tuesday, January 1, 2019).

NOTE: INCOMPLETE APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED.

II. LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION INSTRUCTIONS (Part Two)

A. THE PROGRAM

The National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS)/AcademyHealth Scholar program is intended to encourage the use of NCHS data systems and programs by the health services research community in response to current health policy questions, and provide a basis for future health policy.

Applicants must demonstrate training or experience in health services research in disciplines such as public health, public administration, health care administration, sociology, health economics, health statistics, anthropology, and behavioral sciences, or clinical care, including medicine, nursing, dentistry, and pharmacology.

Applicants may be at any stage in their career from doctoral students (who must have completed course work and be at the dissertation phase of their program) to senior investigators. NCHS will select one applicant. The duration of this Scholar appointment is approximately 12 months.

B. INSTRUCTIONS FOR LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

Two letters of recommendation are required. Each of the two letters of recommendation must come from qualified individuals familiar with the applicant's research capabilities.

Doctoral and post-doctoral applicants: one letter of recommendation should come from the home institution advisor. Please see Section C on the next page for more information.

In submitting a letter of recommendation, please include the following information:

1. Indicate the period of time you have known the applicant and in what capacity.
2. Comment on the applicant's qualifications and accomplishments, specifically in the health services research field.
3. Describe what you would see as the applicant's strengths or skills that could be (further) developed in the area of health services research.
4. Evaluate the caliber of the applicant's work and potential for productive research in and contribution to health services research and health care policy.
5. Assess the value of the NCHS/AcademyHealth Scholar experience to the candidate or the contributions the scholar program will make on the applicant's career development. Explain how this program will be a productive experience for the applicant.
6. Comment on the applicant's communication and interpersonal skills, and ability to collaborate with peers on research projects.
7. Explain any particular qualifications, experiences or reasons why the applicant should be selected.

To ensure confidentiality, the letter of reference must be submitted electronically through the application portal by the reference by 5:00 PM ET on Tuesday, January 1, 2019.

C. HOME INSTITUTION ADVISOR'S STATEMENT

For doctoral student and post-doctoral applicants, one letter of recommendation should be from the home institution advisor. **The letter of recommendation must be submitted electronically through the application portal by the advisor by 5:00 PM ET on Tuesday, January 1, 2019.**

PLEASE NOTE: IT IS ALLOWABLE TO BE AN ADVISOR FOR MORE THAN ONE APPLICANT IN A GIVEN APPLICATION CYCLE.

Please include the following in the letter of reference:

- Name of Home Institution Advisor
- Title
- Department
- Institution
- Address
- Applicant Name

Please address the following questions when writing the letter of recommendation:

1. How long have you known the applicant and in what capacity?
2. Please comment on the qualifications and (professional) accomplishments, and research and statistical capabilities of the applicant. What are the applicant's strengths and skills that could be (further) developed in the area of health services research?
3. Please comment on the applicant's communication and interpersonal skills, and ability to collaborate with peers on research projects.
4. Please comment on the applicant's proposed research project, its feasibility, and potential to generate findings that will advance health services research and/or health policy or practice?
5. (For doctoral student applicants only.) What would be the nature of your involvement with the applicant in serving as his/her home institution advisor in this program, and in supervising any component of the project to be conducted in the home institution? Will the student have statistical support?
6. Please feel free to provide, in an attached letter, any other information you believe would help us evaluate the applicant's qualifications for this scholar award, the potential value of the applicant's research in the field of health services research and health policy, and the potential value of the NCHS/AcademyHealth Scholar program to his/her career development.

III. NATIONAL CENTER FOR HEALTH STATISTICS (NCHS) RESEARCH DATA CENTER (RDC) APPLICATION (Part Three):

Applicants must download and complete the NCHS RDC application located at https://www.cdc.gov/rdc/Data/B3/proposal_Format_0716.docx. A sample proposal is located at <https://www.cdc.gov/rdc/Data/B3/SampleProposal.pdf> for reference. When you complete the NCHS RDC application, ignore the response option “Remote Access (ANDRE)” under “Mode of Access”, and ignore the fields marked “Funding Source” and “Billing Address” (all on page 1).

The NCHS RDC application must be submitted via email to nchs-ah@cdc.gov by 5 PM on Tuesday January 1, 2019. Do not upload the NCHS RDC application to the AcademyHealth application portal. The NCHS RDC application will undergo a different review process than what is outlined on the NCHS RDC website.

If you have any questions about the NCHS RDC application (Part Three) or review process, please send an email to nchs-ah@cdc.gov. Do not contact AcademyHealth or the NCHS RDC directly.