

**Bridging the Word Gap Emerging Scholar Program**

***The Bridging the Word Gap (BWG) Research Network is currently seeking applicants for the Bridging the Word Gap Emerging Scholar Program. Four successful applicants will be given the opportunity to participate in the cutting-edge work of the Network advancing the science of intervention around reducing the gap in language exposure commonly experienced by young children from underserved groups. BWG encourages applications from persons of color and other traditionally under-represented groups.***

**Purpose:**The BWG Emerging Scholars Program is a mentorship program designed to improve the ability of emerging scholars to launch productive careers focused on research that will contribute to understanding the word gap and developing interventions to reduce the gap by promoting children’s language development and enriching their language learning environments

**What is the Bridging the Word Gap Research Network?** The Bridging the Word Gap (BWG) Research Network is a national collaboration of research experts, policymakers, early educators, civic leaders, program directors and funders supported by the Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA)/Maternal and Child Health Bureau to identify effective intervention practices for promoting children’s language development and improving outcomes for children from underserved groups.  **An important aim of the BWG Research Network is providing mentorship for promising early career researchers who are interested in developing a program of research to address the word gap.**

The BWG Research Network aims to advance research in Seven Priority Areas. The BWG Scholars Program seeks to assist early career researchers and advanced doctoral students in engaging in in one of these areas.

 The current BWG Research Network Priority Areas are:

1. Designing and testing language-promoting practices that can be implemented by parents and other family members.

2. Designing and testing practices that early childhood teachers, home visitors, and early interventionists can use to foster young children’s language development.

3. Developing practices that can be used with pediatric/public health sectors for engaging caregivers in language promoting strategies.

4. Designing language-promoting interventions that incorporate home language(s) and or culture for children who speak languages other than English or language varieties other than standardized American English.

5. Identifying/implementing strategies for community organization for use across multiple sectors for teaching caregiving adults about ways to promote children’s language

6. Developing public awareness campaigns (e.g., mass media campaigns) for engaging families in language promotion activities with their young children.

7. Examining factors (risks and strengths) that influence families’ engagement in strategies for promoting children’s language.

**How the BWG Emerging Scholars Program Works:**

* Applicants will propose a research study or research synthesis related to one of the seven BWG Priority Areas described above. We are particularly interested in short term studies or research syntheses (e.g., products that can be completed within 18 months) recognizing that external resources may be needed to conduct the research.
* Each applicant will identify a member of the BWG Leadership Team to serve as a BWG Mentor from January of 2022 to June of 2023. A listing of BWG Leadership Team members, their research and scholarly interests connected to BWG can be found at <https://bwg.ku.edu/leadership-team/>. .
* Emerging Scholars will receive guidance from the BWG Mentor and from the BWG Leadership team in the final design of their proposed study or research synthesis, its implementation, and preparation for publication or dissemination.
* BWG Mentors will provide support regarding: the Emerging Scholar’s specific research project; challenges related to carrying out research (e.g., applying for grant funding, working with IRBs, etc.) and other guidance about becoming a successful researcher.
* Scholars will have opportunities to become members of BWG Collaborative Research Entities (CREs) and participate in CRE activities such as designing and implementing intervention studies, developing new measures, or completing research syntheses. The focus for these products is peer-reviewed publications as well as practice and policy briefs disseminated by the BWG research network.

**Benefits of Becoming a BWG Research Scholar:**

* Scholars will be invited to present an initial version of their BWG research proposal at the BWG Research Summit in February 2022 prior to the Conference for Research Innovation in Early Intervention in San Diego.
* Scholars will receive a $3000 stipend to support research and travel related to their bridging the word gap research and dissemination.
* Scholars will receive mentorship by a leader in BWG research.
* Scholars will have opportunities to participate in network of BWG Emerging Scholars and mentors to support each other’s work,
* Scholars will receive recognition as one of four BWG Research Scholars on the BWG Research Network website.

**Qualifications:**

1. Applicants must be one of the following: (a) currently enrolled in a doctoral program and have completed master’s degree or its equivalent, (b) a Post-Doctoral Fellow, or (c) an Assistant Professor, Assistant Research faculty member, or researcher who is no more than 2 years at the rank of Assistant Professor/Assistant Research faculty or equivalent.
2. No more than 2 years past completion of a doctoral at the time the application submission to the BWG emerging scholar program.

**Application Requirements:**

* All applicants will submit an application form and the following additional materials:
1. Biosketch in NIH or IES format (4-page limit)
2. Personal Statement describing how they expect to contribute to the research, practice and/or policy related to interventions to reduce the word gap in the next 5 years, and how their experience and training has positioned them for applying to become a BWG scholar. (1-page limit)
3. Abstract of a proposed study or research synthesis (3-page limit)
4. A letter of commitment from a BWG Research Network member agreeing to serve as the applicant’s BWG Mentor should be included with the application.
5. A letter of recommendation from a current or former research advisor can describing the applicant’s ability to carry out rigorous research project or synthesis related to addressing the word gap. The letter of recommendation may be from the same researcher who will serve as the BWG Mentor. Letters of recommendation should be sent directly to the BWG Project Coordinator, Alana Schnitz, Ph.D. at aschnitz@ku.edu.
6. Assistance in identifying a BWG Research Network member to serve as a mentor is available by emailing the BWG Project Coordinator, Alana Schnitz, Ph.D. at aschnitz@ku.edu.

**How to Apply:**

1. Applications are available online at [www.bwg.ku.edu](http://www.bwgresnet.ku.edu)
2. Assistance in identifying a BWG Research Network member to serve as a mentor is available by emailing the BWG Project Coordinator, Alana Schnitz, Ph.D. at aschnitz@ku.edu.
3. Application materials including letters of commitment and reference are due by December 17, 2021 via email to the BWG Project Coordinator, Alana Schnitz, Ph.D. at aschnitz@ku.edu.

Any questions regarding the BWG Emerging Scholar Program or Application can be directed to Alana Schnitz, Project Coordinator, at aschnitz@ku.edu.

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