

REACH 2.0 Scholar FAQs

Program Year 2027–2028 | Updated — October 2026

Scholar Frequently Asked Questions

What is the REACH 2.0 program?

The REACH 2.0 program is a SAMHSA-funded, immersive training experience in evidence-based addiction health care practices for medical students, residents, and fellows training in Addiction Medicine and Addiction Psychiatry who serve individuals with substance use disorder (SUD). REACH 2.0 provides mentorship and leadership development through collaboration, specialized training, and national networking, so that Scholars and Near Peers gain the skills and support needed to deliver responsive, patient-centered care.

REACH 2.0 develops the next generation of addiction leaders through immersive training and mentorship, equipping the REACH community to improve the care of individuals facing the greatest barriers. Funded through the SAMHSA Minority Fellowship Program (MFP) for a total of five years, REACH 2.0 provides training and mentorship to 20 Scholars and 20 Near Peers each year. Each group of participants is referred to as a cohort.

What is ACAAM?

[ACAAM](#) is the American College of Academic Addiction Medicine (formerly known as the American Board of Addiction Medicine), the sponsoring organization of REACH 2.0. Our mission is to promote academic excellence and inspire leadership in addiction medicine.

ACAAM is dedicated to training and supporting the next generation of academic addiction medicine leaders needed to meet the ubiquitous health challenges from substance use. Central to this mission is committed action to improve diversity, equity, and inclusion of the academic addiction medicine workforce.

What is the SAMHSA MFP?

SAMHSA's Minority Fellowship Program (MFP) aims to improve behavioral health care outcomes for all by providing professional development and training opportunities for the behavioral health workforce. For more information, please visit the [SAMHSA website](#).

What is the REACH 2.0 Scholar Program?

REACH 2.0 Scholars are medical students, residents, or fellows from backgrounds that represent the various patients they serve who are interested in becoming leaders in Addiction Medicine (AM) or Addiction Psychiatry (AP). Each year, selected participants form a new cohort, creating a shared experience among peers navigating similar stages of career development.

As part of REACH 2.0, Scholars are matched with two mentors: a REACH 2.0 Senior Mentor (a leader in AM or AP with many years of experience in the field) and a Near Peer Mentor (a physician who has previously participated in the REACH Program or a similar mentorship program and is slightly further along in their academic or professional journey).

Both mentors provide guidance, support, coaching, sponsorship, and mentorship, each bringing their unique experiences. Near Peer Mentors offer a relatable perspective, having more recently navigated

similar challenges. These relationships foster collaboration, shared learning, and mutual encouragement, creating an environment that is both accessible and inspiring for the Scholar.

Program Information

What does the REACH 2.0 Scholar Program consist of?

REACH 2.0 programming builds off the successes of the original REACH program (2019–2025) with some exciting adaptations and innovations. The program is a comprehensive 12-month experience, July 2027 through June 2028, that begins with the mandatory 4-day in-person Welcome Intensive Workshop. Throughout the year, Scholars:

- Attend and actively participate in 2 virtual webinars per month
- Meet with their Near Peer and Senior Mentor at least once every 3 months
- Attend at least one professional conference related to SUD
- Complete and present a year-long Scholarly Project
- Attend Health and Wellness sessions that model the importance of well-being and self-care in the care and treatment of individuals with SUD

How does mentorship work in REACH 2.0?

Scholars are paired with both a REACH 2.0 Senior Mentor and a Near Peer Mentor. Senior Mentors bring many years of experience in Addiction Medicine or Addiction Psychiatry and play a conventional mentorship role. Near Peers are physicians who have previously participated in the REACH Program or a similar mentorship program and are slightly further along in their journey than the Scholar. Scholars meet with each mentor at least once every 3 months (4 times a year each). Together, this mentorship triad fosters collaboration, shared learning, and mutual encouragement.

When does the Welcome Workshop occur?

The 4-day in-person Welcome Intensive Workshop is expected in **July 2027**. The location and exact dates are to be determined. Attendance is required, and travel stipends are provided for Scholars to attend.

How many slots are available this year?

We will accept **20 Scholars** and **20 Near Peers** for the 2027–2028 cohort.

What is the stipend amount for Scholars?

The REACH 2.0 program provides up to **\$40,000 annually per Scholar**, plus travel reimbursement for approved travel. Stipends are provided through a SAMHSA grant to eligible participants. Funds are disbursed on a quarterly basis based on participation and completion of requirements, and they may be used to support participation, attend additional career and development activities, and complete the required Scholarly Project.

Is a Scholarly Project required during the Program?

Yes. All Scholars are required to complete a year-long Scholarly Project and present on it. **Applicants must submit a one-page Description of Intended Scholarly Project as part of the application.** Projects may be research, educational intervention, or quality improvement (QI) focused, must be completed within the program year (July 2027–June 2028), and should be grounded in one or more of the REACH 2.0 program goals.

How can Fellowship funding from REACH 2.0 be used?

The REACH 2.0 program provides up to \$40,000 annually per Scholar to support participation in the REACH 2.0 program, related training opportunities (including at least one professional conference related to SUD), completion of the Scholarly Project, and other activities related to the Scholar's growth and development. Travel reimbursement is provided for approved travel.

Does the Scholar or their institution receive the stipend?

The funds are paid directly to the Scholar.

Is the Stipend taxable?

Yes, the stipend is taxable. ACAAM recommends that you consult with a financial expert to understand how this could affect you.

If I am a federal employee or work at a Veterans Administration (VA) facility, can I still receive a stipend or travel reimbursement?

Federal employees should consult with their ethics officer or human resources department regarding receiving stipends.

What are the program expectations?

Scholars are expected to:

- Attend and actively participate in 2 virtual webinars per month
- Attend the 4-day in-person Welcome Intensive Workshop in July 2027 (travel stipend provided)
- Attend at least one professional conference related to substance use disorder (SUD) during the program year (funding provided via stipend)
- Meet with your assigned Near Peer and Senior Mentor at least once every 3 months (4 times a year each)
- Attend all Health and Wellness sessions
- Submit quarterly reports on program/project activities
- Participate in program evaluation activities (including pre- and post-training surveys, mid-year/exit surveys, and qualitative interviews). All responses are confidential, used only for program improvement and dissemination, and reported in aggregate.
- Complete a Scholarly Project and present on the project

Program Eligibility & Requirements

Who should apply to the REACH 2.0 Scholar Program?

Medical students, residents, and fellows who are committed to improving care access and retention for populations facing the greatest barriers to treatment. Applicants should want to specialize in Addiction Medicine or Addiction Psychiatry, or have a declared interest in training and treating individuals with substance use disorder (SUD), and be interested in becoming leaders in the field.

What are the eligibility requirements to apply to the REACH 2.0 Scholar Program?

All applicants interested in the REACH 2.0 Scholar Program must meet the following criteria:

- Committed to improving care access and retention for populations facing the greatest barriers to treatment
- An in-training medical student, resident, or fellow as of July 1, 2027, and enrolled through June 2028
- A U.S. Citizen or Permanent Resident
- **Willing to commit to the following:**
 - Attend and actively participate in 2 virtual webinars per month
 - Attend the 4-day in-person Welcome Intensive Workshop in July 2027 (travel stipend provided)
 - Attend at least one professional conference related to SUD during the program year (funding provided via stipend)
 - Meet with your assigned Near Peer and Senior Mentor at least once every 3 months
 - Submit quarterly reports on program/project activities
 - Participate in program evaluation activities
 - Complete a Scholarly Project and present on the project

Application Information & Requirements

What are the required materials to attach to the application?

The following materials must be complete and attached to your application:

- CV or Biosketch
- Two Letters of Recommendation
- Statement of Participation (or a signed placeholder statement if you do not yet know your placement; see below)
- Description of Intended Scholarly Project (maximum 1 page)

Title all uploaded documents using the format Last Name_First Name_Document Title (for example: Johnson_Keisha_Statement of Participation).

What is a Statement of Participation?

The Statement of Participation must be submitted by your Program Director, Fellowship Director, or Dean of Students at the institution with which you will be affiliated as of the program's start date, July 1, 2027. It confirms permission for the applicant to fully participate in all program components, including the Welcome Intensive Workshop, check-in meetings, health and wellness sessions, monthly webinars, and evaluations.

What if I don't know where I will be training on July 1, 2027?

If you won't know your placement by the November 13 deadline, you can submit a placeholder statement instead of a Statement of Participation. Copy and paste the text below, add your name and the programs you've applied to, then sign and date it. Upload it in the application portal in place of the Statement of Participation.

I, [Full Name], understand that a Statement of Participation from my Program Director, Fellowship Director, or Dean of Students is required for full acceptance into the REACH 2.0

Program as a Scholar. If I am selected, my acceptance will be provisional until the REACH 2.0 Program receives my Statement of Participation.

Programs I have applied to:

Signature: _____ Date: _____

What happens if I submit a placeholder statement and am selected?

If you are selected, you will receive a full acknowledgment form to sign that includes the deadline for submitting your Statement of Participation. Once your placement is confirmed, request the Statement of Participation from the Program Director, Fellowship Director, or Dean of Students at your new program.

Who can write a Letter of Recommendation, and what should it include?

Two Letters of Recommendation are required from a current or recent supervisor, peer collaborator, or interdisciplinary team member. Letters must speak to the applicant's clinical skills, commitment to serving vulnerable groups, and/or experience providing substance use disorder (SUD) services. Letters must be on official letterhead. Please ensure that each letter is signed by the recommender and that you provide their email address with the application. We may reach out to your recommender via email to verify the letter of recommendation or ask additional questions.

How can I share or demonstrate my experience and commitment to working with individuals with Substance Use Disorders (SUDs) and driving change within healthcare systems?

You can demonstrate your commitment in several ways. **In your essays, include one or more of the following:**

- Volunteer, community, or work experiences related to SUD care.
- Personal or lived experience with SUDs.
- Clearly articulated understanding of the challenges faced by individuals with SUDs.
- Clinical involvement in caring for patients with SUDs.

Letters of recommendation can highlight your interest, skills, and commitment to improving care for individuals with SUDs and contributing to positive changes within healthcare systems.

On your CV or biosketch, include relevant academic coursework, publications, clinical experiences, awards, or other accomplishments that demonstrate your engagement with SUD care and system-level improvements.

What should I include in my one-page Scholarly Project proposal?

Your proposal should present a focused, well-considered Scholarly Project concept aimed at improving care for individuals with substance use disorders (SUDs), grounded in one or more of the following REACH 2.0 program goals:

1. To develop participants' knowledge and skills in the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of individuals affected by substance use and learn to navigate the complex systemic barriers patients encounter to care access and retention.

2. To increase the overall number of addiction specialists equipped to deliver patient-centered care across various communities, care settings, and patterns of healthcare engagement.
3. To improve the quality, consistency, and effectiveness of substance use prevention, diagnosis, and treatment through demonstrated changes in clinical practice.

Your proposal should address:

Component	What to Address
Project Aim	What issue or challenge are you addressing? Why does this problem matter for patients with SUD? What is the gap in care, knowledge, or practice you are targeting?
Target Population	Who will benefit from your project? Describe the population, community, or clinical context, and the barriers to care this population faces.
Anticipated Impact	What change or outcome do you hope to achieve? How does your project connect to improving care quality, access, or consistency for individuals with SUD — and what are the broader implications for healthcare systems and the field of addiction medicine?
Preliminary Methodology	What data will you collect, or what intervention will you design? Your project may be research, educational intervention, or quality improvement (QI) focused. What resources, partners, or settings will you need? What are your early thoughts on feasibility and potential challenges?

Projects should be completed within one year, from July 2027 to June 2028. We strongly recommend that you have a mentor or a professor review your proposal before submission to ensure its clarity and alignment with your goals.

Who should I contact if I have additional questions?

For further information, please contact the REACH team at reach2program@acaam.org or visit reach2program.org.

What does the Scholar application consist of?

The Scholar application includes several sections designed to help us learn more about you, your academic background, and your goals, plus four essay questions (3,000 characters or less each):

- How has your personal experience informed your decision to pursue a career in addiction medicine or addiction psychiatry?
- Describe your interest in becoming a REACH 2.0 Scholar and what you hope to achieve by participating in the program.
- Describe your experience providing substance use disorder diagnosis, treatment, or prevention services for patients from vulnerable populations. If you do not have experience at this level of training, explain what you hope to learn.
- Describe your career goals and how they align with the REACH 2.0 program's goals.

Applications are due **November 13, 2026, at 5:00 PM CST**. Scholar selections will be announced between January 29 and February 9, 2027.

Before you apply, we encourage you to review the Application Guide and attend the live Information Session on October 6, 2026, at 7:00 PM EST (a recording will be posted on our website afterward). You may also review a PDF outline of the application, which lists all the questions you'll be asked so you can prepare your responses in advance.

You may complete your application across multiple sessions. If you need to stop, click "Save & Return Later" and write down the unique Return Code that appears on screen — you will need it, along with the survey link emailed to you, to resume. If you lose your code, do not start a new application; contact reach2program@acaam.org to retrieve it.