

REACH 2.0 Near Peer FAQs

Program Year 2027–2028 | Updated — September 2026

General Program 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. 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 are Near Peers?

The Near Peer is a physician who has previously participated in the REACH Program or has similar mentorship experience and is further along in their professional journey than the Scholars themselves.

The Near Peer Model is an innovative mentorship approach that bridges the gap between experienced mentors and mentees. In conjunction with a REACH 2.0 Mentor, the Near Peer provides guidance, support, and mentorship to Scholars earlier in their addiction careers. Near Peers share recent, relatable experiences, having more recently navigated similar challenges. This dynamic triad fosters collaboration, shared learning, and mutual encouragement, creating an environment that is both accessible and inspiring for the Scholar.

Program Information

What does a Near Peer do during the program?

The Near Peer program runs from April 2027 through May 2028 and begins with a mandatory 2-day in-person Near Peer Training, April 4–5, 2027, in Minneapolis, MN, held in conjunction with ASAM. Key milestones:

- April 4–5, 2027: Near Peer Training (in person, Minneapolis, MN)
- May 2027: Monthly webinars begin
- July 2027: Near Peers are matched with a Scholar and begin regular meetings

Near Peers meet with their Scholar virtually at least once per quarter and serve as the Scholar's first line of support on their scholarly project. They also participate in monthly virtual Near Peer cohort meetings and educational webinars. Stipends and travel support are provided for approved activities.

How does mentorship work in REACH 2.0?

Scholars are paired with both a traditional mentor and a Near Peer mentor. Traditional Mentors bring years of experience in Addiction Medicine or Addiction Psychiatry, providing conventional guidance and sponsorship. Near Peers are alumni of REACH or have had similar experience with mentorship within the last five years and offer a relatable perspective, having recently navigated similar challenges. Near Peers serve as the Scholar's first line of support on their scholarly project — helping them think through timeline, milestones, and the local resources or connections they may need. Together, this mentorship triad fosters collaboration, shared learning, and mutual encouragement.

What additional support and resources are available to Near Peers?

Near Peers are connected with their peers within the cohort through monthly virtual Near Peer cohort meetings to foster mutual support and partnership. They build mentoring and leadership skills, network with practitioners from around the U.S. caring for individuals with SUD, and receive guidance from the program's directors. Near Peers also participate in health and wellness sessions and monthly educational webinars that serve as valuable resources for professional growth and strategies to improve patient care.

When does the Near Peer training occur?

The 2-day in-person Near Peer Training will be held **April 4–5, 2027, in Minneapolis, MN**, in conjunction with ASAM. Attendance is required. If selected, cohort members must be able to travel to the training domestically. Travel stipends are provided.

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 Near Peers?

The REACH 2.0 program provides up to **\$17,000 annually per Near Peer**, plus travel reimbursement for the Near Peer Training, to support participation in the REACH 2.0 program, related training opportunities, and other program activities. Stipends are provided through a SAMHSA grant to eligible participants.

Does the Near Peer or their institution receive the stipend?

The funds are paid directly to the Near Peer.

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.

What are the program expectations?

Near Peers are expected to take part in program activities, events, and meetings throughout the program year. **Details are as follows:**

- Attend the 2-day Near Peer Training, April 4–5, 2027, in Minneapolis, MN, in conjunction with ASAM (travel stipends are provided)
- Meet with your matched Scholar virtually at least once per quarter
- Serve as the Scholar's first line of support on their scholarly project — helping them think through timeline, milestones, and what local resources or connections might be needed
- Participate in monthly virtual Near Peer cohort meetings
- Submit quarterly reports on program-related 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 reported in aggregate.

Program Eligibility & Requirements

Who should apply to the REACH 2.0 Near Peer Program?

Current fellows or individuals who have completed their fellowship within the last five years are encouraged to apply. Near Peers are expected to be innovative and bring unique perspectives. Applicants should be subspecializing or practicing in Addiction Medicine or Addiction Psychiatry, or working primarily with populations with substance use disorders (SUD). Additionally, applicants must be alumni of the REACH Program or a similar mentoring program within the last five years.

What are the eligibility requirements and criteria?

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

- Medical degree (MD or DO)
- Subspecialty training or practice in Addiction Medicine, Addiction Psychiatry, or working primarily with populations with SUD
- Alumni of the REACH Program or a similar mentoring program within the last 5 years
- **Willing to commit to the following:**
 - Attend the 2-day Near Peer Training, April 4–5, 2027, in Minneapolis, MN (travel stipends are provided)
 - Meet with your matched Scholar virtually at least once per quarter
 - Serve as the Scholar's first line of support on their scholarly project
 - Participate in monthly virtual Near Peer cohort meetings
 - Submit quarterly reports on program-related activities
 - Participate in program evaluation activities

Application Information & Requirements

What are the required materials to attach to the application?

The following materials are required:

- Completed application, including two essay responses (3,000 characters or less each)
- CV or Biosketch
- Letter of Recommendation

Title all uploaded documents using the format Last Name_First Name_Document Title (for example: Johnson_Keisha_Letter of Recommendation 1).

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

A brief **Letter of Recommendation is required** from a current or recent supervisor, peer collaborator, or interdisciplinary team member. The recommender should describe your skills and experiences that will support your success as a Near Peer Mentor. Letters must be on official letterhead. Please ensure that the letter is signed by your recommender and that you provide their email address in the application. The recommender will receive a confirmation email from the REACH team to validate their recommendation.

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 Near Peer application consist of?

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

- Please share with us why you want to be a Near Peer.
- What is your view or philosophy on mentorship? Please discuss what you believe a good mentor possesses or describe a meaningful mentorship relationship you have had and what made it great.

Applications are due **November 13, 2026, at 5:00 PM CST**. Near Peer 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 13, 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.