



## 2024 George R. Seage, III Early Career Investigator Awards

**About George R. Seage, III:** George was a beloved Professor of Epidemiology at the Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health and one of the founding members of the Pediatric HIV/AIDS Cohort Study (PHACS) network. George was a passionate advocate for research on HIV prevention and treatment using novel epidemiologic methods and was a deeply committed mentor to many Early Career Investigators, in PHACS and beyond. The PHACS Early Career Investigator Award was dedicated to George's memory in the Spring of 2021. To read more about George, his accomplishments, and his legacy, please see the PHACS In Memoriam Page at: <https://phacsstudy.org/About-Us/Memoriam>.

**Goal:** This year, PHACS plans to give one award to an Early Career Investigator who is interested in maternal/child, adolescent, or young adult HIV research.

All applicants must collaborate with a PHACS-affiliated mentor to propose scientific research that is aligned with the aims of at least one of the PHACS Working Groups or Task Forces (<https://phacsstudy.org/Our-Research/Areas-of-Focus>) and the PHACS mission (<https://phacsstudy.org/About-Us/PHACS-Mission>). Proposals which leverage existing PHACS data, repository samples, or genetic sequencing information (see next page) are highly encouraged. The following are high priority areas for funding:

- Evaluating short and long-term effects of antiretroviral and HIV exposures
- Understanding biological mechanisms of antiretroviral therapy and its adverse outcomes
- The impact of social and structural determinants of disparities and/or inequities on the health of PHACS participants and their families
- Studies that result in actionable findings with the potential for an immediate impact on the community of people living with or affected by HIV



## Eligibility Criteria:

All applicants must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Be based at a US institution
- Be within 10 years of completing advanced training (with a terminal degree or residency/fellowship training). Examples include a postdoctoral fellow, research associate/scientist, instructor/lecturer, assistant professor, or equivalent at their institution. Those at the rank of associate professor or higher are not eligible.
- Not have been or currently serve as Principal Investigator on a research grant or a mentored research award (NIH R01, R21, K-level award, or equivalent)

Applicants for the Early Career Investigator award are encouraged from under-represented minorities in health research (African American, Latinx, Native American, Alaska Native, Pacific Islander, and/or non-US citizen who is member of the diaspora from Africa, Latin America, or the Caribbean). People who are underrepresented due to sexual orientation and/or gender identity or expression (SOGIE) are also encouraged to apply.

**Funding:** Support will be provided a twelve-month period that aligns with the PHACS fiscal year (Aug 1- July 31). The 12-month award will be for a total cost (direct + indirect) of up to \$77,500. Effort allocation for the mentor is permissible but may not exceed 5% (and a maximum of \$7,500 total). In addition to the 12-month period, PHACS will fund an initial 3-month start-up phase from May 1 - July 31. The start-up time should be used to plan and set up the project and the budget should include no more than 10% effort for the Investigator and not exceed \$10,000 (with a maximum of \$2,500 for the mentor). Therefore, the funding period for this award will be a total of 15 months (one 3-month and one 12-month award). A final progress report is required at the end of the funding period. The progress report will be due 9/30/25.

Funding may be used to cover salary support for the Early Career Investigator, their mentor, and/or other project expenses (e.g., specimen testing, data collection). Awardees are expected to attend the in-person 2024 and 2025 PHACS Network Meetings in Bethesda, MD and budget accordingly for these meetings. Awardees are also encouraged to present their research at HIV-related or other relevant research conferences. ECI funding will be provided for one such conference to support the presentation of awardee research. Upon funding of the proposal, the PHACS Data Resources Core (DRC) will provide data management support and will assign an epidemiologist or statistician to provide input on methods, perform data analyses, and collaborate on and support manuscript preparation.

Applicants are encouraged to make use of the existing whole-genome sequencing data available for 379 youth participants who were perinatally exposed to HIV and diagnosed as living with perinatal HIV (PHIV) at birth, and 183 youth participants who were living with perinatal HIV exposure but uninfected (PHEU) from the AMP Up Series study (<https://phacsstudy.org/Our-Research/AMP-Up-Series>). With a letter of support, proposals may also utilize data or samples from other studies in addition to PHACS, e.g., by proposing analysis of data and/or testing of samples from both PHACS and another study (e.g., data from the NICHD Data and Specimen Hub (DASH, <https://dash.nichd.nih.gov/>)).

For inquiries and requests for PHACS protocol documents, email [PHACS@hsph.harvard.edu](mailto:PHACS@hsph.harvard.edu).

**Key Dates:**

- Non-binding (but encouraged) Intent to Submit (name and affiliation of Investigator and proposed title of research project): Friday, December 1, 2023 (5:00 PM Eastern Time)
- Proposal Submission Due Date: Tuesday, January 16, 2024 (5:00 PM Eastern Time)
- Award Notification Date: Friday, March 8, 2024
- Anticipated Funding Start Date: Wednesday, May 1, 2024

**Application Format:** The application should utilize NIH proposal formats of margins no less than 0.5 inches and Arial 11-point font. Applications must have the following sections:

**I. Section A. Title Page:**

- Proposal title
- Applicant and Mentor information, including names and contact information (Institution, address, telephone, e-mail)
- Co-investigators if applicable
- A statement on how the proposed research is addressing PHACS priority areas as listed above
- Brief description of the proposal in lay terms (maximum 100 words) for public use if funded

**II. Section B. Research Proposal** (maximum 6 single-spaced pages):

Please include the following information:

- Significance, including background literature
- Study objectives
- Study population and data required (and, if applicable, whether new data collection is being proposed)
- Brief description of study design
- Exposure and outcome measures and potential confounders (if necessary for study design)
- Brief analysis plan
- Feasibility assessment (i.e., provide estimated sample size for the analysis and available participant population, however formal power calculations are not required). To access currently available data, please see Annual Administrative Reports please: <https://phacsstudy.org/Our-Research/Annual-Administrative-Reports>
- Impact statement on public health. Specifically, how the proposed research will have impact or potential impact on science, clinical guidelines, and/or patient care, as well as on the greater community of people living with or affected by HIV

**III. Section C. Mentoring Plan** (no more than 1000 words): Include timeline and measurable outcomes.**IV. Section D. Appendices:** The following items should be included.

- Appendix 1: References
- Appendix 2: Applicant's and Mentor's NIH Biosketches
- Appendix 3: Figures (if applicable)
- Appendix 4: Letters of Support (up to 2 total, including one from mentor)
- Appendix 5: Budget and Justification: Please provide a budget and justification for each individual project period: start-up: 5/1/24 – 7/31/24, main award: 8/1/24 – 7/31/25. Cost for the



3-month start-up phase should not exceed \$10,000 total costs. Cost for main award should not exceed total costs = \$77,500. The maximum total annual dollar amounts should include any applicable fringe and indirect costs in accordance with the applicant's institutional approved rate agreements. Please note any outside resources that are available to the Early Career Investigator that may contribute to the success of their project; e.g., institutional support, grant or foundation support. If the application is selected for funding, additional institutional budget and administrative documents will be required.

- Appendix 6 (if applicable): If the applicant is a team leader or member of an already approved PHACS capsule or concept, please describe how the Investigator's time will be divided between the two projects and provide anticipated timelines for each.

### **Review Criteria:**

The following criteria will be utilized in the review of applications:

- Potential of candidate for a successful career in HIV research
- Importance of proposed research
- Potential for impact on science, clinical guidelines, patient care, or the greater community of people living with or affected by HIV
- Alignment with the overall aims of at least one of the PHACS Working Groups or Task Forces: <https://phacsstudy.org/Our-Research/Areas-of-Focus> and overall PHACS mission: <https://phacsstudy.org/About-Us/PHACS-Mission>. Addressing PHACS priority areas as stated above
- Feasibility
- Clarity of presentation
- Strength of the mentor and mentoring plan
- Likelihood of success in the funding period (i.e. delivery of manuscript or other stated end product)

**Submission of Proposals:** Intent to Submit (name and affiliation of Investigator and proposed title of research project) should be submitted to [PHACS@hsph.harvard.edu](mailto:PHACS@hsph.harvard.edu) by **5pm ET on Friday, December 1, 2023.**

Proposals must be submitted to [PHACS@hsph.harvard.edu](mailto:PHACS@hsph.harvard.edu) no later than **5pm ET on Tuesday, January 16, 2024**, with the subject line heading of "PHACS Early Career Investigator Award."

Please contact [PHACS@hsph.harvard.edu](mailto:PHACS@hsph.harvard.edu) with any questions about eligibility or for further information.