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. 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 low-income backgrounds. 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 enter into productive careers focused on carrying out research that will help understand the word gap and develop interventions to reduce the gap.

**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) to identify the most effective intervention practices that will promote child language development and improve outcomes for children who are living in poverty. One of our aims in advancing this work is providing mentorship and consultation to promising early career researchers who are focused on the design of studies addressing the word gap.

The BWG Research Network aims to advance research in the following six Focus Areas:

The BWG Research Network Focus Areas are:

1. Parent-implemented Interventions and practices that promote children’s language development

2. Language-promoting Interventions and practices implemented by child care providers, early educators, and other non-parental caregivers

3. Pediatric and public health care setting interventions to reduce the word gap

4. Understanding contextual factors such as risk variables affecting parent and caregiver engagement in language-promoting interventions

5. Interventions for promoting language outcomes in children who are Dual Language Learners (DLLs)
6. Community-level and population-level interventions and initiatives for promoting awareness of approaches for reducing the word gap

7. Advancing new measurement approaches, research designs and analytic strategies for new intervention research related to bridging the word gap.

How the BWG Emerging Scholars Program Works:

- Applicants will propose a research study or research synthesis related to one of the seven BWG Focus Areas described above. We are particularly interested in short term studies or reviews (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 Research Network who will serve as a BWG Mentor from January of 2017 to December of 2018. A listing of network members can be found at: http://www.bwgresnet.res.ku.edu/work-groups/. We will also assist applicants in identifying potential BWG members who share their research interests if needed.
- Emerging Scholars will receive guidance from the BWG Mentor in the final design of the study or research synthesis, its implementation, and preparation for publication.
- BWG Mentors will provide support about: 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.
- Each scholar will also work with a BWG workgroup on research syntheses and research projects related to the 7 focus areas.

Benefits of Becoming a BWG Research Scholar:

- Scholars will be invited to present their word gap research proposal at the BWG Research Summit in April, 2017 prior to the Society for Research in Child Development Conference in Austin, TX.
- Scholars will receive a $6000 stipend (3,000 a year) to support research and travel related to bridging the word gap.
- Scholars will receive mentorship by a leader in word gap research.
- Scholars will have opportunities to establish a peer network to support each other's work.
- Scholars will have opportunities to become members of BWG workgroups and participate in workgroup activities such as research syntheses; reviews of specific interventions or methodologies; and designing and implementing intervention studies. The focus for these products is peer-reviewed publications as well as practice and policy briefs.
- Scholars will receive recognition as one of 5 BWG Research Scholars on the BWG Research Network website.
Qualifications:
1. Applicants must be EITHER (a) Currently enrolled in a doctoral program and have a prior Master’s degree or master’s equivalent, (b) a Post-Doctoral Fellow, OR (c) an Assistant Professor or Assistant Research faculty member who is no more than 2 years at the rank of Assistant Professor/Assistant Research faculty.
2. No more than 2 years past completion of a doctoral degree as of application submission date.

Application Requirements:
- All applicants will submit an application form and the following additional materials:
  1. Biosketch (4-page limit)
  2. Personal Statement (1-page limit)
  3. Abstract of a proposed study (3-page limit)
  4. Letter of commitment (pdf) from a BWG Research Network member agreeing to serve as the applicant’s BWG Mentor.
  5. Applicants should also obtain one letter of recommendation (pdf) from a present or former research advisor who can describe the applicant’s capability of carrying out rigorous research related to addressing the word gap (letter of recommendation may be from the same person who will serve as the BWG Mentor). Letters of recommendation should be sent directly from the research advisor to the BWG Project Coordinator.

How to Apply:
- Applications are available online at www.bwgresnet.ku.edu
- All application materials are due by December 15, 2016 and can be submitted via email to the BWG Project Coordinator, Alana Schnitz at aschnitz@ku.edu.

Any questions regarding the BWG Emerging Scholar Program or Application can be directed to Alana Schnitz, Project Coordinator, at (913)735-2672 or aschnitz@ku.edu.

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