

# REACH 2.0 Near Peer Program

## Frequently Asked Question

Updated: March 27, 2025

**Please check back regularly, as this FAQ will be updated regularly** with more information about the application process. To be added to our mailing list, please send an email to [REACH2.0@acaam.org](mailto:REACH2.0@acaam.org).

For more information about the SAMHSA Minority Fellowship Program (MFP) please visit the [SAMHSA website](#).

### **Tip of the Week:**

Read this document as well as the Application Guide and Instructions in order to prepare your entire submission prior to starting your application.

### **Q: What is the REACH 2.0 Program?**

**A:** REACH 2.0 is an immersive training experience for medical students, residents, and fellows from backgrounds that represent the various patients they serve and are interested in becoming leaders in addiction medicine and addiction psychiatry or serving individuals with substance use disorder (SUD). The year-long program provides education in evidenced-based culturally informed addiction health care practices. Funded through the [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration \(SAMHSA\) Minority Fellowship Program \(MFP\) for a total of five years](#), REACH 2.0 provides training and mentorship to **20 Scholars and 20 Near Peers every year. Each year is known as a separate cohort.**

Scholars in yearly cohorts are paired with both a traditional REACH 2.0 mentor and a Near Peer Mentor. The traditional mentor, with many years of experience in Addiction Medicine (AM) or Addiction Psychiatry (AP), plays a conventional mentorship role. The Near Peer Mentor is a physician who has previously participated in and is an Alumni of the REACH Program or a similar mentorship program within the last five years and is slightly further along in their academic or professional journey than the more nascent REACH 2.0 Scholar.

Both the Near Peer and traditional mentor 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 and experiences. This dynamic triad fosters collaboration, shared learning, and mutual encouragement creating an environment that is both accessible and inspiring for the scholar.

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS | NEAR PEER PROGRAM**

### **Q: What are Near Peers?**

**A:** The Near Peer mentor is a physician who has previously participated in the REACH Program or a similar mentorship program and is further along in their academic or professional journey than the scholar themselves.

In conjunction with the traditional REACH 2.0 mentor, the Near Peer will provide guidance, support, and mentorship to Scholars more nascent in their addiction career. Near Peer mentors offer a relatable perspective, having more recently navigated similar challenges and experiences. This dynamic triad fosters collaboration, shared learning, and mutual encouragement creating an environment that is both accessible and inspiring for the scholar.

### **Program Information:**

#### **Q: What does a Near Peer do during the one-year program?**

**A:** REACH 2.0 builds off the successes of the original [REACH program](#) with exciting adaptations and innovations. The Near Peer program is a comprehensive 12-month experience that begins with a mandatory 2-day mentor training. Near Peers are matched with a scholar and expected to meet with them at least four times virtually. Near Peers receive ongoing support through mentorship, education webinars and training designed to advance their career goals and assist them in completing a scholarly project. Stipends and travel expenses are provided for approved activities.

#### **Q: Are mentorship and resources available to Near Peers?**

**A:** Each Near Peer is matched with a professional mentor for career guidance and a Scholar to mentor. The Scholar, Near Peer, and professional mentor will meet virtually at least four times over the year. Near Peers are offered educational webinars and stipends and travel expenses that support their participation and scholarly project.

#### **Q: When does Near Peer training occur?**

**A:** Annually, the Near Peer training occurs in Spring. For 2025, the training will be held in Denver, Colorado on April 24-25. If selected, all cohort members must be able to travel to the training. Travel stipends are provided.

**Q: How many slots are dedicated to support trainees versus Fellows this year?**

**A:** We will accept 20 Scholars and **20 Near Peers** for 2025-2026 cohort.

**Q: How can stipends from REACH 2.0 be used?**

**A:** The REACH 2.0 program has allocated up to a maximum of \$17,000 per Near Peer to support their participation in the REACH 2.0 program, related training opportunities, and the other activities related to the program.

**Q: What are the program expectations?**

**A:** Near Peers are expected to attend monthly activities, events, and meetings to complete the program. Details are as follows:

- Actively engage with matched Scholar
- Participate in monthly virtual webinars (training, networking, and panel discussions)
- Attendance at the Near Peer Training on April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2025 is required (Travel stipends are provided.)
- Create video and content describing experience (Optional)

## **Eligibility & Requirements:**

**Q: Who should apply to the REACH 2.0 Near Peer Program?**

**A:** Current Fellows or individuals who have recently completed their fellowship program within the last five years are encouraged to apply. Near Peers are expected to come from a variety of backgrounds and represent the patients they serve or vulnerable populations. Applicants must want to specialize in Addiction Medicine, Addiction Psychiatry, or have experience in treating individuals with substance use disorder. Applicants must be an Alumni of the REACH Program or completed a similar mentoring program.

**Q: What are the eligibility requirements and criteria?**

**A:** To be eligible for the REACH Program, applicants must be:

- Individuals from diverse backgrounds, especially those who have faced historical challenges or underrepresentation. Eligibility is defined by the NIH definition of

underrepresented in medicine to include American Indians or Alaska Native, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, or Latino or Hispanic.

- Completed the REACH Program as a Scholar or similar mentoring program within the last five years
- A U.S. Citizen or Permanent Resident
- Submit a completed application on or before the deadline

### **Application Information**

#### **Q: What are the required materials to attach to the application?**

**A:** The following **materials are required:**

- 1) Completed application
- 2) CV/Biosketch
- 3) Letter of Recommendation

#### **Q: Are Letters of Recommendations required by applicants?**

**A:** A Letter of Recommendation is **required** upon submission of the application 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. Please ensure that the letter is signed by your recommender and that the letters must have an official letterhead and a signature.

#### **Q: When must all Letters of Recommendation and Statement of Participation be submitted?**

**A: All Letters of Recommendation and Statement of Participation must be attached to the application for a complete status.** Please note that if your recommender sends the letters to our email address, they will not be attached to the application. Please coordinate with your recommender to obtain the letters and Statement of Participation so that you can attach them to your application for completion.

#### **Q: Who should I contact if I have additional questions?**

**A:** For further information, please contact Denisha Brown, Program Manager, at [REACH2.0@acaam.org](mailto:REACH2.0@acaam.org).