



## *Science & Treatment College 2015* Program Overview & Frequently Asked Questions



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## Program Overview

### **Introduction to the African American HIV University Science and Treatment College (AAHU STC)**

Aimed at strengthening organizational and individual capacity to address the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Black communities, the African American HIV University (AAHU) is a comprehensive training fellowship and scholarship program. The program is designed to decrease stigma and misperception and increase the engagement of the Black community in HIV prevention and treatment services. This is achieved through leadership development and information transfer among key stakeholders.

AAHU consists of two separate colleges: the Science and Treatment College (STC) and the Community Mobilization College (CMC). Both Colleges are founded on the principle that, by building the capacity of individuals and organizations, Black people are collectively empowered to end the HIV/AIDS epidemic in their communities.

The STC curriculum prepares community-based and AIDS service organizations (CBOs/ASOs) to serve as liaisons between people living with HIV/AIDS. STC focuses on HIV and its relationship to human biology, virology, pharmacokinetics, epidemiology, and treatment strategies. By the end of AAHU STC, organizations and their Fellows will be stewards of a living, breathing Black Treatment Advocates Network (BTAN).

### **Program Objectives**

Participating organizations will leave AAHU STC with:

- Increased basic knowledge on HIV/AIDS pathology and physiology in the Black community
- Increased understanding of critical treatment as prevention strategies and interventions
- Increased ability to mobilize Black communities through traditional Black institutions by utilizing the latest and most effective mobilization strategies for Black communities
- Access to capacity building through a multi-faceted approach of training, technical assistance and direct material support
- Participation in a national network of ASO's, CBO's, and traditional Black institutions who are committed to HIV prevention mobilization and ready to collaborate on innovative prevention efforts
- Participation and management of a local coalition of local ASO's, CBO's and TBI's who are committed to the programmatic goals of the Black Treatment Advocates Network (BTAN).
- Increased numbers of people in their community and organization who have access to the latest HIV prevention and science information that can easily be applied to the work they do and in mobilizing Black communities
- Highlighted leadership of the Fellow (See the Frequently Asked Questions for the definition of a Fellow and consequently the sponsoring organization, in media, academia, and the HIV field propagated by the Institute.

### **Program Structure**

AAHU STC consists of the following programmatic elements:

- **Four Training Modules (approximately 50 Days total):** Fellows participate in four science and treatment trainings. Trainings are divided as follows:

Training 1: Science Academy (30 Days)

Training 2: Program Planning, Implementation, & Evaluation (7 Days)

Training 3: Community Mobilization (7 Days)

Training 4: Advanced Science and Presentation Skills (7 days)

- **Four Internships:** Structured 60-90 day internships allow Fellows to apply the skills and knowledge gained during trainings. Internships allow Fellows to demonstrate proficiency in executing key

components of each training, that *establishes* a (or contributes to an existing) Black Treatment Advocates Network (BTAN). Fellows have specific assignments during internships such as conducting face-to-face meetings with local ASOs, CBOs, health department staff, research institutions, and other potential BTAN partners. Fellows will also developing a local resource list, conducting a community assessment, implementing prevention interventions, forging strategic action plans, and evaluating and monitoring their progress. Fellows and their organizations should expect to spend a minimum of fifteen hours a week implementing their action plan, submitting monthly activity reports, online blogging, and participating in webinars and trainings. Fellows and organizations are provided technical assistance from AAHU faculty and Institute staff in completing their internships.

- **Long Distance Learning:** between 8-12 weeks prior to in-class trainings, Fellows will participate in webinars and review reading materials to prepare for upcoming in-class trainings. All webinars, readings, and assignments are to be completed prior to in class trainings. Additionally, Fellows participate in monthly webinar trainings that supplement skills developed during in-class trainings. The internet-based program, *AAHUonline*, is used to facilitate distance learning and communication among Fellows, faculty and staff during internships.
- **Science and Treatment Symposium & Commencement: (Two Days).** Fellows come to Los Angeles to present their experiences, key findings, and best practices to peers, Institute staff, and representatives of community partner organizations. A commencement ceremony is held on the final day of the symposium to celebrate the accomplishments of the Fellows.

### **AAHU Science and Treatment Curriculum**

#### **SCIENCE ACADEMY**

A 30 day long training, where Fellows learn and increase understanding of HIV science, biomedical and behavior interventions, effective communication, epidemiology, and leadership. Fellow will identify available resources and assess the needs of the community.

#### **PROGRAM PLANNING, IMPLEMENTATION, & EVALUATION**

Fellows learn core competencies of public health programming. Each Fellow will advance their knowledge of HIV and their ability to plan, develop, and implement a BTAN chapter that aligns with effective community based HIV prevention interventions. Fellows review science and treatment, health behavior theories, group level interventions, and the role of community organizing. Fellows will increase ability to deliver prevention and treatment messages to those who are high risk of or living with HIV/AIDS.

#### **COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION**

Fellows conduct needs a community needs assessment and learn to understand characteristics of the epidemic in their local area. Building on findings from the community assessment, Fellows learn strategies to influence mobilization through strategic partnerships and coalitions and strategic action planning. National and local HIV/AIDS policies and mobilization efforts are reviewed. Fellows will implement, monitor, and evaluate strategies to engage the community in HIV treatment education.

#### **ADVANCED SCIENCE & PRESENTATION SKILLS**

AAHU Fellows learn by doing. Fellows will increase their understanding of HIV related research and advancements and patho-physiology and treatment leading to viral suppression of HIV/AIDS.

Training modules are taught by faculty experts, on-site at the Institute's Los Angeles facility.

## **Programmatic Support**

AAHU STC Fellowships are not easy and it takes the dedication of the Fellow, support from their organization, and support from AAHU staff and faculty to ensure organizations benefit from the program. Organizations and their Fellows are supported in the following ways:

- **Fellowship Pods.** At least two organizations are chosen from each city to ensure coalition-building as well as a garnering of local support for the work Fellows will do in their communities. When more than one organization in a city is participating in AAHU they gain more ground in accomplishing a successful and sustainable BTAN.
- **Site visits and trainings.** AAHU staff makes visits to each organization during the fellowship. AAHU staff meets with organizational staff to support their needs during the fellowship as well as provide on-site technical assistance as needed. Additionally, staff conducts trainings for the organization and their coalition members to support and enhance their work.
- **Long Distance Learning.** Fellows participate in monthly training webinars that support the work they do in their internships. Fellows prepare for the training modules by participating in webinars and complete assigned readings the month before they are to come to Los Angeles.
- **AAHUonline.** During internships Fellow's participate in an internet-based distance learning community consisting of their cohort, faculty, and AAHU staff. Though Fellows meet in person with their cohort 4 times within the Fellowship, through AAHUonline they are able to continually build relationships with their cohort. Fellows also submit monthly reports and deliverables through the web portal.
- **Staff and Faculty.** AAHU staff and faculty are dedicated to supporting Fellows in their work during AAHU. Staff and faculty are seasoned in community mobilization and science and treatment strategies and use their experience to guide Fellows during their internships via phone, email, and in-person contact.

## **Application Process**

Any organization serving the Black community in the United States can apply to AAHU STC. AAHU STC is a capacity building service provided to organizations, rather than a course for individuals. Priority will be given to the following organizations:

1. Directly CDC-funded CBOs/ASOs serving Black communities at high risk
2. Indirectly CDC-funded CBOs/ASOs serving Black communities at high risk
3. Organizations whose mission aligns with that of the Institute and the goals of AAHU

Organizations considering AAHU STC should: thoroughly read the program overview and clarify any questions with Institute staff before applying; ensure they have the financial ability and time to support the work of their Fellow; and select a representative who will participate as an AAHU Science and Treatment Fellow in the program. Both the organization and the representative must complete their respective portions of the application, memorandum of agreement and attach the various documents listed in the application (letters of support, organizational representative resume and bio, organization staffing chart, etc). The application will be used to assess the needs of the organization and to ensure that there is a match between the expected goals of the organization and AAHU STC.

**Complete applications must be emailed to [programs@blackaids.org](mailto:programs@blackaids.org)  
or received via postal mail by April 30, 2015.**

Once applications are received they will be processed and notification of receipt will be sent via email. A selection committee consisting of AAHU staff, faculty, former AAHU Fellows and community members will review applications.

Applicants with the highest application scores will receive a pre-decisional site visit conducted by staff from the Institute. Organizations will be notified via email if they are selected for a site visit and the date of their scheduled site visit between May 4- 29, 2015. During the site visit AAHU staff will conduct a mini-needs assessment of the organization and meet with staff and the prospective Fellow to ensure the applicant is a good fit in the program. AAHU staff evaluates how the Institute could provide the best capacity building assistance to organizations if they are accepted into the AAHU program. Not all organizations who receive a pre-decisional site visit will be accepted into the program.

### **Selection Process**

Applications will be scored in the following manner:

#### **Section I (Organizational Information): 40 points**

Organizations receiving the highest amount of points will clearly articulate why they want to participate in AAHU STC, will make a strong case for having the interest in and ability to support their selected representative and have an organizational history and mission that supports the purpose and goals of AAHU STC.

#### **Section II (Organizational Representative Information): 30 points**

Organizations receiving the highest amount of points will clearly articulate why their selected representative should participate in AAHU STC, including:

- How their work relates to the program
- Their level of involvement with traditional Black institutions
- Make a strong case for how they will use the information learned from AAHU STC
- Demonstrate a strong grasp of the issues facing the Black community

#### **Section III (Short Essay by Organizational Representative): 20 points**

The highest amount of points will be given to prospective Fellows who best respond to the essay question.

#### **Section IV (Letters of Support): 20 points**

Organizations with the strongest letters of support and who submit letters of support from organizations who are also applying to AAHU STC 2015 will receive the highest amount of points.

#### **Section V (Letters of Recommendation): 20 points**

Prospective Fellows with the strongest letters of recommendation and who submit letters of recommendation from community members who are agreeing to join their coalition will receive the highest amount of points.

Community members include but are not limited to: Peer Advocates/Navigators, Volunteers, community members of Community Advisory Boards and/or Planning Groups.

#### **Section VI (Memorandum of Agreement's): 5 Points**

Applications that do not have Memorandum of Agreement's signed by all designated parties will not be accepted.

#### **Section VII (Staffing Chart, Organizational Representative bio, resume, and photo): 30 total points (10 points per item)**

The highest amount of points will be given to applicants who demonstrate the experience and capacity to fully benefit from AAHU STC.

The **AAHU Skills Assessment** needs to be completed online at

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/AAHUassessment>

The assessment is 10 points total. Scores above 80% will receive an additional 5 points.

### **Important Dates**

Applications are accepted on a rolling basis. Organizations are **encouraged** to submit their application as soon as possible. **Applications must be received via mail or email by the close of business, (Pacific Standard Time), April 30, 2015**, at the address below. No faxed, incomplete, unsigned or late applications will be accepted. Applicants should send their package in a way that ensures that it arrives by this date and provides you with a tracking number or return receipt (e.g. FedEx, Express Mail, etc.).

January 20, 2015	Applications will be available for submission
April 30, 2015	Deadline to submit applications; must be in our office by close of business
May 4 – 29, 2015	Applicants will be notified if they were selected for a pre-decisional site visit
May 4 – 29, 2015	Preliminary interviews
June 1, 2015	Selected candidates will be notified by this date
June 15, 2015	Candidates accept fellowship and terms of scholarship
July 31-August. 29	First training module in Los Angeles
Nov. 8-14, 2015	Second training module in Los Angeles
March 6-12, 2016	Third training module in Los Angeles
May 15-21, 2016	Fourth Training in Los Angeles
July 7-10, 2016	Symposium/Graduation

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **What is an AAHU STC Fellow?**

AAHU STC Fellows are their organization's representative in AAHU STC. Fellows are the main conduit of information transfer to their organization.

### **What is BTAN?**

The Black Treatment Advocates Network (BTAN) is the only collaboration of its kind that links Black Americans with HIV into care and treatment, strengthens local and national leadership, connects influential peers, raises HIV science and treatment literacy in Black communities and advocates for policy change and research priorities.

BTAN is part of a commitment by the Black AIDS Institute (the "Institute") to help raise HIV science and literacy in Black communities. BTAN is guided by the premise that when people understand the science of HIV/AIDS they are:

- less likely to participate in stigmatizing behavior;
- more likely to access treatment;
- better able to adhere to their regimens; and
- better positioned to influence HIV/AIDS policy

The mission of BTAN is to produce and support a nationwide network of highly trained Black treatment advocates who will (1) serve as educators and opinion leaders in their communities; (2) provide a pipeline of trained Black Americans for community advisory boards; (3) facilitate expanded Black participation in clinical trials; (4) increase early utilization of appropriate treatment; and (5) improve treatment adherence in Black communities.

In 2010, BTAN began working in three cities: Houston, Texas; Jackson, Mississippi; and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. In 2011, networks were expanded to Atlanta, Georgia; Chicago, Illinois; and Los Angeles, California. In 2012, BTAN was excited to expand into Baton Rouge, New Orleans, Oakland, San Francisco, Fort Lauderdale, and Miami. BTAN's intensive HIV science and advocacy trainings consist of two three-day sessions covering a wide range of HIV/AIDS topics including testing resources, treatment strategies, linkage to care and community mobilization, among others.

With strong advocates, a recognized brand and proven reach and impact, BTAN is uniquely positioned to influence and change the impact of HIV in Black communities. 2015 programming will focus on increased programming within the National Network and developing infrastructure for local Networks that leads to increased impact and outcomes while increasing BTAN membership nationally.

### **What will be my role in BTAN?**

As an AAHU fellow you will be required to serve on the executive team of your local BTAN.

### **Do I have to develop a BTAN or contribute to an existing BTAN to apply to AAHU?**

Yes. All fellows will be required to develop a BTAN if there isn't an existing BTAN in the local area or become a member of an existing BTAN. Fellows of new BTAN chapters will be required to host a BTAN training, develop and implement a recruitment plan, launch new BTAN chapter and develop required BTAN projects. Fellows of existing BTANs will be required to contribute to BTAN trainings, and project implementation.

### **As an applying organization what should I consider when choosing an organizational representative (prospective Fellow) to participate?**

When selecting representatives, organizations should consider the following:

- Long-standing relationship with the organization
- Demonstrated leadership potential

- Comfort in interaction with client populations and partner organizations
- Ability to engage community leaders, including making presentations
- Interest in learning about HIV, science, treatment, care, and community mobilization.
- Experience working with traditional Black institutions, AIDS-service organizations and community based organizations
- Computer and web proficiency
- A minimum of some college education
- Your willingness and ability to provide financial support of travel
- Organizational support and assistance with training workload, for example conducting a needs assessment and additional mobilization project components
- Whether their current job responsibilities allow them to spend a minimum of 15 hours a week on their fellowship activities
- Exemplary follow-through
- Good work ethics

#### **What role does the Fellow's organizational supervisor play?**

Organizational supervisors play a critical role in ensuring the organization's staff support and understand the Fellow's work. The Fellow's organizational supervisor stays in constant contact with AAHU staff regarding the Fellow's performance in AAHU STC, how the Fellowship is affecting the work of the organization as a whole, and further technical assistance the organization may need. Organizational supervisors should expect to meet with Fellows weekly regarding their Fellowship activities.

#### **How can the organization's staff support the Fellow and AAHU STC?**

Organizational staff should play a support role to their Fellow as they create their community needs assessment, build their coalition, create strategic action plans, form their mobilization campaign, implement their first mobilization event, and evaluate the work they have done in AAHU STC. Fellows present a synopsis of the information they learn in each training module to their organization so staff can support the work of their Fellow as well as implement AAHU techniques into their own work. AAHU STC is designed to be an organizational capacity building program therefore staff involvement and support is a critical component to its success.

#### **Is it possible for an organization to be accepted to AAHU STC but the organizational representative not be selected for AAHU STC?**

Yes. It is possible that the selection committee will deem that an organization is a good fit for AAHU STC but the selected organizational representative would not be a good fit as a Fellow. In this case, AAHU STC staff would work with the organization to pick a more suitable Fellow.

#### **What are the expectations of applying organizations?**

Organizations applying to AAHU STC are expected to:

- Complete a Memorandum of Agreement (attached in application)
- Get a letter of support from another organization in the applicant organizations city that will be applying to AAHU STC 2015 (preferred) or will be a part of the prospective Fellow's coalition for AAHU STC
- Allow their organizational representative time to participate in trainings
- Fund travel to training sites (approximately \$2,200 during the fellowship depending on the cost of flights and how far in advance the flights are booked by the organization)
- Work with their chosen representative to complete an action plan of activities
- Participate fully in all internship activities
- Fully support their chosen representative in fulfilling training and internship requirements
- Allow their Fellow to spend a minimum of 15 hours a week within their normal work hours on internship activities
- Provide supervision and support

#### **Will this be easy?**

No. The AAHU Science and Treatment program is a very intensive and demanding program. Staff, faculty and

Fellows are expected to work together to achieve success. Fellows devote time to studying, completing assignments, conducting internship activities and developing the skills necessary to strengthen their organization's capacity. During the trainings, classes will be conducted Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. There will be some nightly study groups, daily quizzes, weekly exams, and regular homework assignments.

Though we are committed to the success of every capacity building assistance (CBA) recipient organization, the realities of life change. Unsatisfactory performance and sometimes unrealistic expectations may prevent some from completing the program. CBA recipient organizations will get out of the program whatever it is they put in.

**How much does AAHU cost?** AAHU Costs approximately \$17,000 a year for each Fellow. The Black AIDS Institute provides scholarship as form of tuition, educational materials, training, housing, meals and limited travel costs for selected Fellows who are accepted to the program and apply for scholarships. All Fellows who are accepted to the program must have their sponsoring organization provide ground and air transportation to each training and the graduation. Fellows must also have access to a laptop during on-site training modules.

- The Black AIDS Institute **does not** provide funds to cover Fellows' travel to or from any trainings nor ground transportation. It is the responsibility of the Fellow's organization to pay for travel and ground transportation.

#### **Where will AAHU Fellows live while attending the trainings?**

Fellows are provided AAHU-arranged housing and share double rooms with another Fellow. This is part of the team building and network development process that encourage and enhance partnerships and collaborative work within and outside of the program. AAHU is a smoke-free environment. All rooms (sleeping and training rooms) are non-smoking. Each Fellow will be assigned a room and a roommate. Upon acceptance Fellows will complete a roommate questionnaire for room assignments and compatibility. Fellows are not allowed to bring pets, children, or spouses to the trainings.

#### **When will AAHU STC begin?**

The first long-distance training will begin with an orientation on July 31, 2015. The first in-class training takes place in Los Angeles on the campus of UCLA from August 1-29, 2015.

#### **How will I know if I have been accepted?**

Selected candidates will be notified via email by July 3, 2015

