

## CALL FOR LETTERS OF INTEREST (Due November 10, 2025)

### Build your skills in transforming care with LHS training & mentorship

#### What is the Washington LHS E-STAR Center?

The Washington Learning Health System Embedded Scientist Training and Research (LHS E-STAR) Center provides an **exciting opportunity for early-career scientists to receive training and mentorship** to build their skills and experience in transforming primary care. Visit us online at [act-center.org/lhs-e-star](https://act-center.org/lhs-e-star).

Early-career scientists who become Washington LHS E-STAR scholars will receive multidisciplinary, didactic, and experiential training in LHS core competencies. They will also have a mentoring team who will provide guidance and support, share knowledge and experiences to build new LHS research skills, and connect scholars with professional networks.

The Washington LHS E-STAR Center is a collaborative effort by the University of Washington (UW), the Veterans Affairs Puget Sound Health Care System, Kaiser Permanente Washington Health Research Institute (KPWHRI), and diverse primary care organizations (PCOs) across Washington state. These organizations are working together to **train the next generation of independent scientists** to help integrated health systems and community health centers meet the challenges of providing equitable, high-quality primary care.

Our goal is to build long-term partnerships to sustain and advance LHS research while supporting Washington LHS E-STAR scholars as they conduct research projects that serve the priorities of our partner PCOs and their patients. Specifically, the Center will:

- **Train and mentor a diverse group of early-career scientists** to conduct LHS research in partnership with primary care leaders and clinical teams.
- **Build infrastructure to support ongoing research-health care partnerships** that help PCOs become learning health systems.

#### Who is eligible to apply?

You are eligible to apply to be a Washington LHS E-STAR scholar if you hold a primary faculty position or are a postdoctoral scholar eligible for external research funding at UW or KPWHRI as of March 31, 2026. People in acting faculty positions are also eligible.

**In a learning health system (LHS)**, researchers and health care organizations work in partnership to continually improve care and health across diverse populations in real-world care settings.

The Washington LHS E-STAR Center is **1 of 16 LHS research training centers nationwide** supported by the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Trust Fund.

Led by faculty with expertise in LHS research and training, the Center **brings together researchers and primary care organizations to conduct LHS research** focused on rapidly developing and implementing evidence to improve care and equity.

**If you have questions** about the LHS E-STAR Center or this call for letters of interest, please email Monica Fujii at [monica.m.fujii@kp.org](mailto:monica.m.fujii@kp.org).

## What are the timeline and funding expectations?

- Cohort 3 scholars will start their projects in April 2026. Projects will last 2 years, which includes a 6-month planning phase and a 1.5-year execution phase.
- Each project will receive an annual budget of \$75,000 in direct costs, for a total of \$150,000 in direct costs over the life of the project. The budget is intended to support the LHS scholar at approximately 25% FTE, a project manager at approximately 15% FTE, and other support needed to conduct the research project (e.g., participant incentives, survey administration). Minor staffing plan adjustments can be made within the \$150,000 total project budget to account for the variety of projects expected.
- In addition, the E-STAR Center will provide a modest amount of FTE for collaborative scientists at KPWHRI to support the project's quantitative and qualitative methods needs.

## Get to know our partner organizations

The **Community Health Association of Spokane (CHAS)** is a federally qualified health center providing high-quality medical, dental, pharmacy, and behavioral health services to individuals and families of all ages, regardless of insurance status. CHAS serves more than 122,000 patients across 20+ clinics in the Spokane area and Lewis-Clark Valley. Its patient population is diverse, with many speaking languages such as Spanish, Russian, Ukrainian, Marshallese, and Vietnamese. Nearly 38% of CHAS patients live below the federal poverty level, and many face social challenges including transportation, housing, and food insecurity.

To better identify patients with complex needs, CHAS has developed a risk stratification model that incorporates both clinical and pharmacy complexity as well as social risk factors that influence access and outcomes. The organization now seeks to validate this model by assessing how effectively it identifies patients with higher costs, greater clinical complexity, and increased utilization, and by comparing it with existing risk tools such as comorbidity indices and high-cost prediction models. Using patient-level data from its Athenahealth EHR system, CHAS aims to select the most effective risk stratification approach to guide the design of a care model focused on delivering wraparound services to the highest-need patients and those with specific drivers of complexity.

**HealthPoint** is a federally qualified health center serving over 110,000 patients at 19+ locations in King County. Committed to breaking down barriers and providing accessible, expert, whole-person care, HealthPoint offers medical, dental, behavioral health, pharmacy, and additional services to a diverse community speaking 70+ languages. No one is turned away for inability to pay. The organization employs more than 1,200 staff and annually trains 200+ future healthcare professionals, ensuring care teams reflect the communities they serve.

HealthPoint is interested in exploring the following three topics:

- **Identifying factors contributing to unengaged patients.** Many Medicaid patients that are assigned to HealthPoint as their primary source of care, never seek care. HealthPoint would like to better understand the factors that might be contributing to low engagement (such as, geographic barriers, transportation, language barriers, lack of trust in the system, or lack of a clear pathway to access care) and how to sustain engagement through qualitative research with different patient groups.

- **Improving breast cancer screening rates.** HealthPoint currently offers two options for patients for patients seeking mammograms: a) mobile mammography at HealthPoint clinic sites, and b) referral to external providers. Given new screening recommendations that expands the number of eligible people, they would like to increase availability to breast cancer screening and would like more information about patient and provider preferences, regional capacity, and alternative modalities for increasing access. This could include qualitative, observational and cost-effectiveness research methods.
- **Low rates of flu and rotavirus vaccination in patients under 2 years of age.** HealthPoint is interested in using both quantitative and qualitative methods to learn more about which populations have the lowest rates of flu and rotavirus vaccinations, as well as barriers and facilitators to immunizations at the patient, provider and clinic levels.

## How to apply

Early-career scientists interested in becoming a Washington LHS E-STAR scholar should **complete an [online form](#) and send the following 2 documents by email to [LHS-ESTAR@kp.org](mailto:LHS-ESTAR@kp.org) by 5 p.m. PST on November 10, 2025:**

### 1. Curriculum vitae (CV)

### 2. Letter of interest

In no more than 2 single-spaced pages, describe the following:

- Your interest in one or both PCOs and their identified research priorities. Please refer to “Get to know our partner organizations” above. Please select the research priorities you feel are the strongest match for your interests and skills. You must address at least one of these research priorities for your letter to be responsive.
- Your proposed contribution to the research-health care partnership with the PCO
- How the project, training, and mentoring will advance your research and career goals. Include which [LHS competencies](#) you are interested in training.
- How your research, teaching, and/or service activities reflect Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) principles, and/or how you plan to advance excellence in DEI through your future research, teaching, and/or service. To the extent you feel comfortable, you may also discuss how your personal identities and lived experiences have shaped your approach to DEI in these areas.
- Your current responsibilities, including clinical, teaching, research, and other duties you will continue during your time as a scholar.

## E-STAR commitment to health equity

The Washington LHS E-STAR Center is committed to improving health equity in primary care and diversifying the LHS research workforce. We strongly encourage **scholars with identities and lived experiences**. Some examples of underrepresented populations include people:

### Key dates

#### Informational webinar

October 16, 2025

#### Letter of intent deadline

November 10, 2025

#### Notice of invitation to apply

By December 19, 2025

#### Application deadline

February 20, 2026

#### Awardees notified

March 31, 2026

#### Project timeline

April 2026-March 2028

- from racial and ethnic groups underrepresented in health-related sciences, including Hispanic or Latino, Black or African American, and American Indian and Alaska Native;
- with disabilities;
- who have experienced homelessness;
- who were in the foster care system;
- who were eligible for the Federal Free and Reduced Lunch Program;
- who have no parents/guardians who completed a bachelor's degree;
- who were eligible for Federal Pell grants;
- who received support from the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) either as a parent or as a child;
- who grew up in a U.S. rural area or a CMS-designated low-income or health professional shortage area.

### Scholar selection process

The E-STAR Center will collaborate with HealthPoint and Community Health Association of Spokane to select LHS scholars interested in conducting projects addressing their research priorities. Based on submitted letters of interest, we will select a group of candidates to move forward in the application process. Selected candidates will be notified **by December 19, 2025**.

Next, these candidates will meet with HealthPoint and Community Health Association of Spokane quality leaders to inform the content and scope of a full proposal, which will be **due on February 20, 2026**. Full applications will require documentation of institutional and mentor support, verification of program eligibility, and a description of research plans.

The Washington LHS E-STAR Center Steering Committee (which includes community members and representatives from our partner PCOs) will review the full proposals and select 2 scholars to invite into the program. Formal notification of acceptance will go out to selected scholars **on March 31, 2026 — with a project start date shortly thereafter**.

### Three cohorts of E-STAR scholars

The WA LHS E-STAR Center will select seven scholars over a five-year period. In the initial cohort, two scholars were chosen to collaborate with Community Health of Central Washington and Neighborcare. For the second cohort, two scholars were selected to work with Kaiser Permanente Washington, along with one VA-affiliated scholar who will partner with VA Puget Sound.

We are currently seeking two scholars to work with HealthPoint and Community Health Association of Spokane.

### Informational webinar

Please [register for an informational webinar](#) on October 16, 2025 at noon. A recording will be available online 1-3 business days after the webinar online, [act-center.org/lhs-e-star/apply](https://act-center.org/lhs-e-star/apply).

### Who to contact with questions

For more information about this opportunity, please contact Monica Fujii at [monica.m.fujii@kp.org](mailto:monica.m.fujii@kp.org).