Minnesota Obesity Prevention Training (MnOPT)

The MnOPT fellowship program is dedicated to providing innovative interdisciplinary training for the next generation of biologic, behavioral, and clinical obesity prevention scientists. The program offers training to predoctoral (PhD), postdoctoral, and medical fellows. MnOPT is a NIH/NIDDK–Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Award, Institutional Research Training Grant.

**Current Fellowship Opening(s):** All positions are currently filled. Please check back for future openings.

## The Fellowship Experience

The program offers training for up to two predoctoral fellows who may be accepted in one of several University of Minnesota PhD programs, as well as up to three postdoctoral fellows with MD, PhD, or equivalent degrees.

The positions offer up to a 4-5 year appointment for predoctoral training or a 2-3 year appointment for postdoctoral training with a flexible start date, tuition benefits, an NIH stipend, and support for scientific meeting travel and other training experiences.

Trainees will engage in research that focuses on the biology of obesity, clinical research on human obesity, and applied studies of treatment and prevention in community settings.

Central to the MnOPT mission is having a strong mentoring environment for trainees organized around three training tracks:

● epidemiology/behavioral research

● basic sciences

● clinical studies

There will also be active efforts to facilitate transdisciplinary training between the three areas in order to broaden trainees’ disciplinary horizons.

Trainees will receive interdisciplinary training through a required core curse, a monthly obesity research group, and other regular seminars. They will participate actively in research. They will be mentored in communicating study findings in written publication formats and in oral presentations, grantsmanship, research ethics, and career development.

Training goals are accomplished by matching trainees with faculty mentors who guide trainees in the development of the technical expertise and skills they will need to be successful, independent researchers.

There are 31 potential faculty mentors in the program. See the end of this document.

[See information and policies](https://docs.google.com/a/umn.edu/file/d/0B4snm2Q3-ffQTkdiWUsxemhaVWc/edit?usp=drive_web)

### Application Process

[Download MnOPT Application](https://docs.google.com/a/umn.edu/file/d/0B4snm2Q3-ffQRUFKUGFyZlkwejA/edit?usp=drive_web)

If interested, an application should be submitted electronically as a single doc or pdf file to both the Program Director and the Program Coordinator as follows:

**Robert W. Jeffery, Ph.D., Program Director**

Minnesota Obesity Prevention Training Program

Division of Epidemiology & Community Health

University of Minnesota School of Public Health

1300 South 2nd Street, Suite 300

Minneapolis, Minnesota 55454-1015

Phone: (612) 626-8580

FAX: (612) 624-0315

Email: jefferyrw@gmail.com

**Kerrin Brelje, Program Coordinator**

Phone: (612) 626-8570

Email: kbrelje@umn.edu

**Eligibility**

Applicants must be US citizens, US noncitizen nationals, or permanent residents. (Individuals on temporary or student visas are not eligible for Kirschstein-NRSA support.)

Predoctoral trainees must be formally admitted into a PhD program at the University of Minnesota before the start of the training.

Postdoctoral trainees must have earned a doctoral degree (MD, PhD, etc.) in health sciences or related fields (laboratory, clinical, nutrition, and epidemiology). Demonstrated potential or experience in research is the primary criteria for appointments.

Criteria for selection of all trainees include academic performance and a career orientation toward independent research in an academic, clinical, or public health setting related to obesity prevention.

**Trainee Citizenship**

At the time of appointment to the training program, individuals selected for research training supported by NRSA institutional training grants must be citizens or noncitizen nationals of the United States, or must have been lawfully admitted to the United States for permanent residence, i.e., in possession of a currently valid Alien Registration Receipt Card I-551, or some other legal verification of legal admission as a permanent resident.

Noncitizen nationals are generally persons born in outlying possessions of the United States (e.g., American Samoa and Swains Island). Individuals on temporary or student visas are **not** eligible for Kirschstein-NRSA support. In addition, trainees must be able to commit full-time effort in the program at the time of appointment.

**Fellowship Positions—Availability**

There are two predoctoral and three postdoctoral fellowship positions with the program. Positions become available at irregular intervals.

Please contact the program director, Robert W. Jeffery (jefferyrw@gmail.com ), or the program coordinator, Kerrin Brelje by phone (612) 626-8570) or email (kbrelje@umn.edu), for further information.

### Stipend & Benefits

**Stipend**

Stipends are based on current NIH-approved levels and years of postdoctoral experience. For current stipend information, see the section on “***Kirschstein-NRSA Stipend Levels***” *(toward the bottom of the page)* at<http://grants.nih.gov/training/nrsa.htm>. Note that there is a potential payback requirement for postdoctoral fellows who take non-research positions prior to the end of two years.

**Tuition**

Full payment of tuition and required fees.

**Travel**

Reimbursement of pre-approved travel expenses to one professional meeting per grant year.

**Other Research-Related Expenses**

Reimbursement for textbooks and other required course materials, as well as certain other research-related expenses, on a pre-approval basis. Receipts are required for reimbursement.

**Health Insurance**

Predoctoral and postdoctoral fellows are encouraged and eligible to secure the Graduate Assistant Health Plan for single coverage through the University of Minnesota (trainees pay 5%):<http://www.shb.umn.edu/twincities/graduate-assistants.htm>.

If preferred, fellows can find their own health insurance provider and the program will reimburse them for an amount equivalent to the Graduate Assistant Health Plan single coverage rate—prior permission from the Program Director is required.

**Vacation/Sick/Parental Leave**

Trainees receive stipends during the normal periods of vacation and holidays observed at the University of Minnesota. The period between spring and fall semesters is an active time of research training and is not considered to be a vacation or holiday.

Trainees may receive stipends for up to 15 calendar days of vacation and/or sick leave per year. Sick leave may be used for the medical conditions related to pregnancy and childbirth. Up to 60 calendar days of parental leave per year is allowed for the adoption or birth of a child. Insurance is covered during this time.

**Program Faculty**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **TRACKS:** | **EPIDEMIOLOGY/ BEHAVIORAL** | **BASIC SCIENCE** | **CLINICAL** |
| **Leaders:**    **Faculty Mentors:** | *Robert Jeffery*    Ellen Demerath  Aaron Folsom  Simone French  Jayne Fulkerson  Lisa Harnack  Robert Jeffery  Melissa Laska  Beth Lewis  Jennifer Linde  Russell Luepker  Dianne Neumark-Sztainer  Mark Pereira  Alexander Rothman  Nancy Sherwood | *Catherine Kotz*    Alessandro Bartolomucci  David Bernlohr  Xiaoli Chen  Don Dengel  Daniel Gallaher  Do-Hyung Kim  Catherine Kotz  Mindy Kurzer  Allen Levine  Douglas Mashek  Chuan Feng Wang | *Charles Billington*    Tiffany Beckman  Charles Billington  Scott Crow  Carrie Earthman  Carol Peterson  Elizabeth Seaquist |

The Minnesota Obesity Training Program is supported by the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIH Grant 1T32DK083250–01A1;<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-10-036.html>).

*The University of Minnesota is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access and opportunity to its programs, facilities, and employment without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status or sexual orientation. In adherence to this policy, MnOPT advocates the use of recruiting and search processes to enhance participation of racial minorities, women, persons with a disability, and Vietnam era veterans in the training program.*