

2022 Students Participating as Ambassadors for Research in Kentucky (SPARK) Program

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

For additional questions please contact Ariel Arthur at ariel.arthur@uky.edu

1. **Q: What is the purpose of the SPARK Program?**

A: The purpose of SPARK is to recruit and train a diverse cohort of undergraduate students from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds and communities at the University of Kentucky and Kentucky State University to conduct impactful research to improve health disparities, led by UK's Center for Health Equity Transformation (CHET) and the Center for Clinical & Translational Sciences (CCTS) with support from other units.

2. **Q: What is the Center for Health Equity Transformation (CHET)?**

A: Join the CHET Student and Trainee Listserv: <http://bit.ly/joinchet>
Also, you can find information about CHET here: <https://www.chet.med.uky.edu/>.

3. **Q: What is the Center for Clinical and Translational Sciences (CCTS)?**

A: You can find information about CCTS here: <https://www.ccts.uky.edu/>. The CCTS also organizes an annual conference in the spring. You will be expected to present your research at the conference.

4. **Q: What is the definition of “underrepresented” and “disadvantaged background”?**

A: The SPARK Program uses definitions from the National Institutes of Health, which can be found here:

<https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-20-031.html>

5. **Q: Do I have to be from Kentucky in order to participate in SPARK?**

A: No.

6. **Q: Do I have to live in Lexington to participate?**

A: No, but you must actively participate in, and contribute to, all of the training workshops and weekly research meetings. You must also respond to all email communication promptly, preferable within the day messages are received.

7. **Q: What is the stipend and when would I receive it?**

A: You will receive a stipend of \$5,000 over the summer, paid as an hourly wage over the 12 working summer weeks of the program, conditional on your fulfilling the requirements of the SPARK Program (attending workshops and professional development session, meeting research milestones, maintaining regular communication, etc.). If you are not meeting the expectations or milestones of the SPARK program, your appointment may be terminated.

The stipend will be provided May-August 2023.

8. **Q: Given the continued flexibility of modality resulting from COVID-19, should I plan for**

this program be in person or virtual?

A: The program will primarily take place in person at the University of Kentucky. As needed, meetings and training sessions will also be scheduled virtually.

9. **Q: What is the time commitment? Can I participate if I have a job during the semesters, intersession, or summer?**

A: Learning how to do impactful research to improve health disparities requires developing a variety of new skills as well as a deep understanding of previous research. For these reasons, students should expect to devote 2-3 hours per week to their project during each semester.

During the summer, students are required to dedicate 25 hours per week to their research project. Given the demands of our program, it may be difficult to maintain another job along with the SPARK program. However, if you are able to do both of your jobs, you may participate in the SPARK Program. We anticipate the Summer Research Intensive to begin May 9th, 2023 and a completion date of August 12th, 2023 (14 weeks, with 2 weeks off, for a total of 12 working weeks). During this Summer Research Intensive timeframe, we expect students to commit 25 hours per week for 12 weeks. It is expected that students will respond to any and all communication (email, calls, etc.), complete all assignments, and provide information promptly and professionally for the duration of the program.

10. **Q: I plan to be on vacation during Thanksgiving, Intersession and/ or for part of the Summer. Can I still participate?**

A: As long as you are able to attend all workshops and meet all of the other expectations of the program (communication, meetings and completing your research project), you may participate in SPARK if selected. It is critical that you accurately describe your schedule/availability. It is also essential that you discuss changes to your schedule with SPARK leadership as soon as changes arise.

11. **Q: How long is the SPARK Program?**

A: Yes. The SPARK program is a 16-month program. During Spring 2023 semester, you will be expected to participate in workshops and regular check-in sessions with our staff and your mentorship team. During the Summer of 2023 you will receive a \$5,000 stipend to implement your research project. During the Fall 2023 semester, you will work on data analysis and developing presentations and articles for publications. During the Spring 2024 semester, you will present your findings at the annual CCTS conference (see below). Finally, you are expected to participate in all SPARK promotional events. Previous students have devoted several hours of work per week during the academic year to SPARK. The program culminates with participants presenting at the UK Center for Clinical Translational Sciences Spring Conference and officially ends May 1st, 2024.

12. **Q: Is U.S. citizenship required for participation?**

A: No.