



# Big Data Health Science Center

University of South Carolina

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## Health GIS Scholars Program

The Big Data Health Science Center's Geospatial Core is pleased to announce the inaugural Health Geographic Information Science (GIS) Scholars Program. This program is being launched to recognize and support two outstanding undergraduate or graduate students who have demonstrated interest, potential, and/or experience in GIS and health research. GIS and health research is broadly defined, and includes, but is not limited to, using GIS to evaluate the social determinants of health, health behaviors, health outcomes, access to health care and social services, utilization of health services, environmental exposures, built environment, and other health-related factors through mapping and spatial analysis. The goals of this program are to:

- 1) Enhance students' research and professional development in the area of GIS and health research
- 2) Cultivate students' interest in GIS and spatial applications to health research
- 3) Build the technical and writing skills of students to pursue scholarly publications and reports
- 4) Develop scholars in health GIS who go on to make important contributions to the academic, public health, health care, and non-profit sectors

Two student scholars will be awarded \$2,500 each, which can be used toward professional development activities and expenses including resources and supplies for data collection and analysis, travel and registration at national or international conferences where research is presented on this topic, for professional workshops, or for other continuing education/training opportunities of importance to GIS and health research. Up to \$2,000 can be requested for stipend and fringe for the applicant. These funds are not expected to take the place of resources available through existing graduate research or teaching assistantships, but are rather intended as supplements.

Scholars will be expected to engage in research and professional development activities with the Big Data Health Science Center during the award period as well as present preliminary findings at one or more research events/conferences (e.g., Big Data Health Science Center Seminar Series, Discover UofSC, and/or the James Clyburn Health Disparities Lecture) and will be strongly encouraged to submit the full findings from their study within a year. The award funds must be used within 9 months of receipt and all expenses must be pre-approved by the Director or Co-Director of the BDHSC Geospatial Core.

**Student finalists will be selected based on a review of the following materials:**

- Curriculum Vitae.
- Research Statement (no more than 1500 words not including references) that includes the following: 1) outlines the applicant's experience and interest in GIS and spatial analysis for health-related research and/or practice, and 2) describes 1-2 key research objectives, as well as brief background, proposed data sources, methods, and deliverables. The GIS Scholar's project may be topically and methodologically aligned with the Scholar's mentor's research program, but the proposed objectives must be developed by the student and distinct from the mentor's work.
- Proposed budget and budget justification for how the award would support the applicant's research plan
- A signed letter of support from a UofSC system faculty member in support of the student's application and indicating their agreement to serve as the student's mentor/supervisor for the proposed project and noting the distinction between the student's proposed project and the mentor's ongoing research

**Eligibility Requirements:**

- Enrolled at the masters or doctoral level at the University of South Carolina (Columbia or regional campuses) with an anticipated graduation date of December 2021 or later OR be an undergraduate student in their junior year who has completed at least one college course in GIS (e.g., GEOG 341 or GEOG 363)
- Be in good academic standing (average 3.0 GPA or higher)

**Application Deadline:**

November 20, 2020 by 5 PM EST

**Please direct any questions and submit your application to:**

Whitney Zahnd, PhD

Research Assistant Professor, Rural & Minority Health Research Center

Co-Director, Big Data Health Science Center Geospatial Core

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