I am writing to express my interest in participating in the NBER Mentoring Program on Aging and Health Economics Research. I have recently completed my second year as a PhD student in Economics with interests in health economics, aging, and household responses to health and social policy. Specifically, I am interested in how public policies and health shocks affect informal caregiving, labor supply, and short- and long-run economic and health outcomes. Having completed core coursework, I am actively working to identify and develop potential dissertation research ideas within these broad areas, and hope to use the next year to narrow these interests into a focused, feasible research portfolio.

A key motivation for attending the mentoring program is to receive expert guidance on which emerging themes and research questions are most promising, and how to refine them into empirically tractable projects. This guidance is especially important to me because my department has limited faculty specialization in aging and health economics, which means I have limited exposure to the range of perspectives, data expertise, and ongoing conversations that help doctoral students identify and refine promising research directions. This is consequential at my current stage of training, when the research questions and habits I develop can shape my career trajectory. The program would provide me with the opportunity to learn from and engage with researchers and fellow mentees working in my areas of interest.

Specifically, the support that would be most helpful falls into three areas. The first and most pressing is guidance in assessing which of the ideas I am exploring are well-positioned relative to the frontier of the field and are worth pursuing further. Second, I would welcome practical orientation to the major health and aging datasets, as understanding the possibilities and limitations of available data is important for developing feasible research projects at this stage. Third, I look forward to connecting with other doctoral students working on closely related empirical and methodological questions, including potential co-authors and peers facing similar research challenges, which would provide valuable opportunities for ongoing intellectual exchange when generating and testing ideas.

Overall, I hope to develop a dissertation focused on policy questions that are relevant for vulnerable households and aging populations. I believe this program would provide both the intellectual guidance and the research community that are currently inaccessible to me, and would have a lasting impact on my work as a researcher in health economics. I also plan to remain in Cambridge for the meetings on long-term care and caregiving, as these topics directly align with my research interests.

# Victoria O. Popoola

Department of Economics · Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas

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## Research Interests

Applied Microeconomics; Health Economics; Labor Economics; Aging and Long-Term Care.

## Education

*2024 – present* **Ph.D. in Economics**
*Kansas State University*
*Dissertation Committee: In progress*

*2024 – 2026* **M.A. in Economics (en route)**
*Kansas State University*

*2016 – 2020* **B.Sc. in Economics, *Summa Cum Laude***
*University of Lagos, Nigeria*

## PhD Coursework Completed

### Core Theory

- ECON 940: Advanced Microeconomic Theory I — *Philip Gayle* (Spring 2025)
- ECON 945: Advanced Microeconomic Theory II — *Yang Ming Chang* (Fall 2025)
- ECON 805: Macroeconomic Theory I — *Steve Cassou* (Spring 2025)
- ECON 905: Macroeconomic Theory II — *William Blankenau* (Fall 2025)
- ECON 720: Microeconomic Theory — *Philip Gayle* (Fall 2024)

### Econometrics and Methods

- ECON 830: Econometrics I — *Yoonjin Lee* (Fall 2025)
- ECON 930: Econometrics II — *Lance Bachmeier* (Spring 2026)
- ECON 938: Microeconometrics — *Rubaiyat Alam* (Spring 2026)
- ECON 730: Applied Econometrics — *Yoonjin Lee* (Fall 2024)
- ECON 735: Mathematical Economics — *Yang Ming Chang* (Fall 2024)

### Field Courses

- ECON 832: Public Sector Analysis — *Amanda Gaulke* (Spring 2026)
- ECON 890: Energy Market Forecasting — *Lance Bachmeier* (Spring 2025)

## Research in Progress

### "Not All Legalization Is Equal: Cannabis Fiscal Policy Design and Opioid Mortality Across U.S. States"

Estimates the effect of cannabis fiscal policy intensity on opioid mortality using the Mallinson et al. (2024) Cannabis Policy Bundles dataset linked to NVSS state-year mortality data (1994–2023). Two-way fixed effects and staggered difference-in-differences models find that greater fiscal intensity is associated with significantly lower opioid mortality, consistent with fiscal architecture proxying for legal market maturity.

## Teaching Experience

*Spring 2026* **ECON 940: Advanced Micro Theory I**
*Kansas State University – Teaching Assistant; Instructor: Prof. Philip Gayle*

*Fall 2025* **ECON 730: Applied Econometrics**
*Kansas State University – Teaching Assistant; Instructor: Prof. Yoonjin Lee*

*Spring 2025* **ECON 120: Principles of Microeconomics**
*Kansas State University – Teaching Assistant; Instructor: Prof. Philip Gayle*

## Fellowships, Awards & Funding

*Spring 2026* **Carrole B. Greene Memorial Scholarship**
*Department of Economics, Kansas State University*
Awarded to a female graduate student in recognition of academic excellence and potential for future achievement.

## Skills & Training

**Statistical / Computational:** Stata, R