



Feast Centre for  
Indigenous STBBI Research

# CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

Application Guidelines for  
Community Fellowship  
Program

## **Are you a Feast Centre team member who would like to have a role in expanding Feast Centre's Indigenous STBBI research impact?**

The Feast Centre is pleased to renew the Community Fellowship Program for 2023, meant to support new and emerging Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, Inuit) and allied researchers who are interested in building on community knowledges and using Indigenous methods to conduct sexually transmitted blood borne infections (STBBI) research. The Community Fellowship program offers reciprocal learning opportunities through the Feast Centre network.

The Community Fellowship program is open to Feast Centre team members who wish to mentor, support, and sponsor upcoming and early-career Indigenous and allied community-based researchers, who may already be connected to an existing STBBI research project responding to Indigenous health at your institute OR who are committed to collaboratively developing innovative Indigenous methods in STBBI research at the community level within your community-based organization (CBO).

The Feast Centre recognizes the knowledge and skills that make an effective researcher are grounded in experience, culture, knowledge, and connections that go beyond academic institutions. The Community Fellowship program supports both scholars who may not have significant academic research experience, and community-based researchers with lived experience of STBBI and community knowledges whose aim is to improve the quality of life for Indigenous people who live with, or are affected by, STBBI. Team members step into the role of mentor for their sponsored Community Fellow, supported by the Feast Centre.

**Funding amount for each award: \$25,000**

**Number of awards: Up to 4**

**Iterative Application deadline: October 30th, 2023**

### **About the Feast Centre**

The Feast Centre for Indigenous STBBI Research is a partnership between McMaster University and CAAN Communities, Alliances & Networks. The Feast Centre includes Indigenous and allied scholars, community organizations, traditional knowledge holders and community members with lived experience. Through the Feast Centre, Indigenous and allied scholars work with Indigenous communities to collaboratively develop culturally relevant and scientifically rigorous research. Through training and knowledge exchange, they inform health programs and policy. Their aim is to reduce sexually transmitted blood borne infections and increase the quality of life for Indigenous people who are living with illness or at risk for STBBI.

### **About the Community Fellowship Program**

The Feast Centre recognizes that there are a growing number of community researchers who are involved in innovative STBBI scholarship. The Feast Centre is committed to growing the capacity of community and academic researchers to share their knowledge through the Community Fellowship Sponsorship program.

The Feast Centre recognizes the importance of building reciprocal relationships into community spaces, and as such, are encouraging a two-fold learning opportunity process for Community Fellows; with the Feast Centre and the applying institute/community-based organization working together to support successful applicants for this program. Community Fellows will be provided with learning opportunities and ongoing support towards their scholarly development that will include:

- meaningful community-involved approaches;
- Indigenous methods and approaches, and relevant explorations that will advance knowledge in the areas of STBBI;
- Reciprocal learning opportunities, as the Feast Centre benefits from the strengths and knowledge of participants, their home organizations, and their communities; and
- ongoing support by their sponsor and by their institute, by the CBO (if applicable) and by the Feast Centre.

### **What kind of research does the Feast Centre support?**

The Feast Centre gives priority to community-based fellowships that create meaningful and engaged community relationships and are working with a Feast Centre scholar. We believe this will lead to research that supports Indigenous people's autonomy to respond to STBBI in ways consistent with their diverse cultures. We encourage scholarship that draws on Indigenous knowledges and has a decolonizing orientation. We support strengths-based scholarship. By that we mean scholarship that:

- reduces vulnerability through positive action;
- understands cultural sources of resilience;
- reflects a deep understanding of equity; and
- explores ways of knowing that reflects intergenerational knowledge and is grounded in cultural protocols.

### **Who can apply?**

#### **Applying as a Feast Centre Team member**

Feast Centre team members are eligible to apply to sponsor and supervise Community Fellows applicants. These sponsorships are for Inuit, First Nations, and Métis and allied individuals in FNIM community-based organizations who are committed to contributing to Indigenous STBBI research. Ideal applications for this opportunity will reflect a strong connection between community and researcher, and a focus on STBBI that uses Indigenous knowledges.

In addition to supervising the fellowship, the Feast Centre team member will be committed to co-develop a mentorship relationship with the Community Fellow and should be able to show

that they can offer in-kind support, such as office space, office equipment, technological support, or additional training.

### **Applying as an Inuit, First Nations or Métis or allied individual researcher**

Individual applicants are encouraged to apply in connection with a Feast Centre team member or in collaboration with an academic institution or community-based organization. If an individual applicant is not connected to an academic institution or to an Indigenous CBO, the Feast Centre can assist in facilitate a pairing process with a Feast Centre team member and their academic institute or CBO. Individuals applying for a Community Fellowship should be able to discuss ways in which they plan to achieve their goals for the Fellowship in their application.

Individual Inuit, First Nations or Métis or allied Community Fellow applicants do not have to have a post-secondary degree, and they must be connected to an academic institution or an Indigenous CBO with the capacity to support the fellowship. In addition, we welcome indications that the applicant is willing to build new skills in community-based research, is willing to have an enriched learning experience as a Feast Centre Community Fellow and take part in select Feast Centre learning opportunities. A strong application will show that the individual has:

- nurtured community connections that embrace the development of scholarship, including research in the area of STBBI;
- cultivated relationships with Elders who would provide cultural knowledge to support the goal of the fellowship;
- familiarity with Indigenous ways of knowing;
- fostered good working relationships with community-based organizations or academic institutions that could support them as a Community Fellow; and
- interest in making a difference to the field of STBBI in Indigenous communities.

### **Applying as a Community-based organization or academic institution**

Community-based organizations or academic institutions should demonstrate the following in their application:

- They have experience with community-based research. This experience does not have to be direct involvement in coordinating research. It could be involvement as an advisory board member, as an Elder advising a project, etc.;
- They could provide or link to examples of current and past work, such as community reports, conference presentations, published articles, or arts-based strategies for sharing knowledge;
- Their work has community impact;
- They have a proven ability to assemble a team that is knowledgeable about community-based scholarship in relation to STBBI;

- There is at least one team member who is Indigenous, who is living with HIV, HCV, or TB, or who has worked in STBBI prevention or research with a community-based organization;
- Evidence of capacity to carry out the work; and
- Indication of willingness to work within an interdisciplinary research team.

A Community-based organization should be prepared to offer supports to the Community Fellow throughout the duration of the research project:

- in-kind support such as offering dedicated time for the community fellow to engage in the proposed research, fellowship and training opportunities, events and meetings;
- contribute towards the goals of the research proposal, including KTE linking research to action in community contexts;
- support the development of the research proposal that works to fulfill the needs and goals of the CBO;
- assist the proposed research with resources such as tools, templates, or reference materials;
- assist the Community Fellow to establish and maintain community engagement and partnerships community Elders and stakeholders in a participatory approach;
- contribute to developing partnership agreements for the proposed research,
- supporting the Community Fellow in identifying the necessary resources to conduct the proposed research, determining or evaluating what success will look like and the impact of the research, packaging, disseminating, or translating research findings appropriate to community needs, or following cultural protocols.

### **Budgeting for the Community Fellowship proposed research**

Fellowship funds can be used to provide stipends to the fellow, pay for the Fellow's learning, (including the costs of participating in ceremonies, writing retreats or professional development), or for research expenses. Professional development (PD) includes continuing education and skills-based training opportunities to expand or refine professional knowledge or skills. These opportunities could be in areas such as technology or computer software, arts-based skills, writing, leadership or communication, research skills, Indigenous research methodologies, or other opportunities. It is suggested that a maximum of 10% may be used for PD.

Feast Centre led learning activities will be paid for by the Feast Centre and do not need to be calculated into the estimated budget. It is suggested that up to a maximum of 15% may be used for administrative support.

## **Community Fellowship Reporting Requirements**

Successful applicants to the Community Fellowship program must submit a financial statement to the Feast Centre at the end of their research period, as well as a 1-2 page narrative report highlighting successes, challenges, and outcomes in carrying out the community fellowship. Research budgets must adhere to Tri-Agency Guide on Financial Administration guidelines ([https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/InterAgency-Interorganismes/TAFA-AFTO/guide-guide\\_eng.asp](https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/InterAgency-Interorganismes/TAFA-AFTO/guide-guide_eng.asp)). Narrative reports should include an abstract of the work that was undertaken, which Community Fellows will be encouraged to submit for presentation at events like the CAAN Communities, Alliances & Networks' Wise Practices conference or the International Indigenous Pre-Conference on HIV & AIDS.

Community Fellows are also encouraged to submit an article for publication consideration to, but not limited to, the Journal of Indigenous HIV Research. At the end of their fellowship, Community Fellows are encouraged to share the outcomes of their project in innovative ways, e.g., co-develop a podcast or a webinar with the Feast Centre.

## **How to apply**

The application must be completed by the sponsoring Feast Centre team member. It may also be a good opportunity to work together with the Community Fellow applicant to develop the proposal.

All applications are to be submitted electronically. Submit the fully completed application (including all signatures) as one PDF file to [feastapp@mcmaster.ca](mailto:feastapp@mcmaster.ca). Include in the subject heading of the email, "Community Fellowship" and the name of the Team Member applicant. Late or incomplete proposals will not be considered. It is the sponsor and/or applicant's responsibility to ensure that applications are complete, and that all information is accurate.

As part of the Community Fellowship application package, all Feast team members are being provided with an application form along with this application guideline document. For those who are not Feast team members, we can provide you with the application form upon request, please email the Feast Centre at [feastapp@mcmaster.ca](mailto:feastapp@mcmaster.ca)

## **How applications will be evaluated: An iterative review process**

The Feast Centre will provide an iterative review process for the Community Fellowship applications. Applicants have the opportunity to ask for advice and support during application development and also after the applications are submitted for first round reviews. Applicants are encouraged to seek advice and support from Feast Centre team members while developing their application. After the first-round reviews, initial feedback will be provided to applicants prior to second-round review by the review committee. This iterative process will provide opportunity for submission of robust, clear, and rigorous research proposals. The first round of reviews may result in questions from the review committee and applicants will be offered opportunity to address those questions for the second round of reviews. The iterative review deadline is October 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

## **Crafting a rigorous application**

Rigour can be “defined as the quality or state of being very exact, careful, or with strict precision” (Merriam-Webster) or the “quality of being thorough and accurate” (OED). It is the “degree to which research methods are scrupulously and meticulously carried out in order to recognize important influences occurring in the process of conducting the research. It is a set of standards investigators use to evaluate the quality, trustworthiness, and value of research” (Liu). Addressing rigour in the research proposal could include outlining specific details or steps taken by the researcher to ensure and evaluate the quality, trustworthiness, and value of the research proposed. Some initial details that the research proposal can address to ensure rigour can include:

- Who is the specific target audience?
- What relationships have been built previous to this research proposal?
- What community engagement planning is proposed?
- If and how will relationships with community be maintained during and after the research project is concluded?

Consider where more precise details are necessary for the research proposal include the reasoning why the project might be conducted in a specific way and not another. For example, why are certain methodologies being proposed and not a different set of methods? Consider defining keywords precisely in the proposal and grounding the proposed work within relevant research literature, including the relevant citations.

Consider reviewing the Feast Centre resources page (on the Feast Centre website) for more information or referring to a credible online resource or journal article to inform and strengthen rigour in the research proposals. To inform a robust citational practice, reference a credible online citation guide such as Purdue Owl Online Writing Lab (<https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/>) and Indigenous informed citational practices particularly for the Indigenous knowledges that ground the research proposal.

## **The Role of Gender and Gender Analysis**

An essential part of a rigorous research proposal will include addressing and analysing gender and its role in the research project. Consider, how is gender and gender identity, considered in the research proposal? How might the proposal account for people of multiple genders, gender diverse, Two-Spirit or Trans individuals participating in the research? How might the research be interrogating different issues related to Indigenous STBBI using a gender lens? Consider bringing in some further research and resources to inform how gender is addressed in the research proposal.

Works Cited

Liu, Xun. "Rigor." The SAGE Encyclopedia of Communication Research Methods. Edited by Mike Allen. Vol. 3. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc, 2017, pp. 1512-14. SAGE Knowledge. 6 Dec 2022, doi: <https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781483381411.n530>.

"Rigor," Merriam -Webster Dictionary New Edition. Merriam-Webster, 2016.

"Rigour," Oxford English Dictionary, Oxford UP, 2013.

### **Questions and support**

If you have questions or need support in applying, please reach out to [bookerc@mcmaster.ca](mailto:bookerc@mcmaster.ca)

**We look forward to hearing from you!**