



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 launch a new call for applications for its Community Fellowship Program, 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 will continue offering reciprocal learning opportunities through webinars and a series of programs leading to certification in Indigenous health research.

The Community Fellowship program is open to Feast Centre team members who wish to nurture, support, and sponsor upcoming Indigenous and allied community-based researchers who may already be connected to an existing STBBI research project that is 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 that knowledge and skills that make an effective researcher are grounded in experience, in 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.

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 courses), or for research expenses. 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.

Funding amount for each award: \$25,000

Number of awards: Up to 2

Important dates:

- **Call for applications: February 3rd, 2025**
- **Deadline to submit Letter of Intent (LOI): February 17th, 2025 @ 5 pm EST**
- **Deadline to submit full application: March 10, 2025 @ 5 pm EST**
- **Feedback from iterative review: March 31, 2025**
- **Deadline to resubmit (final submission) with feedback from iterative review: April 14, 2025 @ 5 pm EST**
- **Reviews and scoring from reviewers: April 14, 2025 – May 5, 2025**
- **Notice of decision: May 5, 2025**
- **Signing of transfer agreements: May 5 - June 2, 2025**
- **Project start / end: June 2, 2025 – June 1, 2026**

The Feast Centre will provide an iterative review process of the Community Fellowship applications. Applicants will have the opportunity to ask for advice and support during application development and also once the applications are submitted. Applicants are encouraged to seek advice and support from Feast Centre team members while developing their application. Once all applications are received, initial feedback will be provided to applicants prior to review by the committee. This iterative process will ensure that applications are complete and there are no questions by the reviewers due to a lack of clarity in the application. Thus, the initial review may result in questions being framed by the initial review, with the applicant having an opportunity to address those questions.

About the Feast Centre

The Feast Centre for Indigenous STBBI Research is a partnership between:

- McMaster University
- 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 the following:

- meaningful community-involved approaches
- Indigenous methods and approaches, and relevant explorations that will advance knowledge in the areas of STBBI

- the learning opportunities will be reciprocal, as the Centre benefits from the strengths and knowledge of participants, their home organizations, and their communities
- ongoing support by their sponsor and by their institute, by the CBO (if applicable) and by the Feast Centre
- Budget must adhere to Tri-Agency Guide on Financial Administration guidelines https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/InterAgency-Interorganismes/TAFA-AFTO/guide-guide_eng.asp

What kind of research does the Centre support?

The Feast Centre gives priority to community-based fellowships that create meaningful and engaged community relationships and are working with a 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 reflect intergenerational knowledge and is grounded in cultural protocols.

Who can apply?

Feast Centre team members are eligible to apply to sponsor Community Fellows. These sponsorships are for Indigenous and allied individuals and Indigenous community-based organizations who are committed to contributing to Indigenous STBBI research.

A strong application to this opportunity will show a strong connection between community, researcher, and a focus on STBBI that uses Indigenous knowledges.

In addition to supervising the fellowship, the Feast Centre team member should be able to show that they can offer in-kind support, such as office space, office equipment, technological support, or additional training.

Individual Indigenous or allied Community Fellow applicants do not have to have a post-secondary degree, but they must be connected to an academic institution or an Indigenous community-based organization with the capacity to support the fellowship.

Please note that as a **requirement**, every application must identify an individual affiliated with an academic institution who will request an ethics review and secure ethics approval for the project, if the application is successful and the project requires an ethics certificate. The full name of this individual and their academic affiliation should be included in the application.

Applying as an Indigenous or allied individual

If an individual applicant is not connected to an academic institution or to an Indigenous community-based organization (CBO), the Feast Centre can help facilitate a pairing process, and pair the individual to a Feast Centre team member's institute or CBO.

Individuals applying for a Community Fellowship should be able to demonstrate ways in which they will achieve their goal for the fellowship. In addition, we welcome indications that the applicant is willing to build new skills in community-based research and 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;
- Has nurtured relationships with Elders who would provide cultural knowledge to support the goal of the fellowship;
- Has familiarity with Indigenous ways of knowing;
- Has nurtured good working relationships with community-based organizations or academic institutions that could support them as a Community Fellow;
- Has an interest in making a difference to the field of STBBI in Indigenous communities.

Deliverables

Successful applicants must send the following to the Feast Centre by the end of their project period:

- A financial statement reporting how the funding was spent.
- A one-page report that highlights successes, challenges, outcomes in carrying out the community fellowship.
- An abstract of the work that was undertaken as a basis for making a presentation at events like the Communities, Alliances & Networks' Wise Practices conference or the International Indigenous Pre-Conference on HIV & AIDS.
- A report on learnings that were shared with others both within and outside of the community; Applicants are encouraged to submit an article for possible publication in the *Journal of Indigenous HIV Research* or other journals.
- At the end of their fellowship, applicants are encouraged to share the outcomes of their project in innovative ways, i.e., willingness to co-develop a podcast or a webinar with the Feast Centre.

How to apply

Please, email your **Letter of Intent (LOI)** by **February 17th, 2025 at 5 pm EST** to feastapp@mcmaster.ca.

In your LOI please include the following information:

1. Project title (or working title);
2. Health research area(s)/pillar(s), e.g. clinical, basic science, epidemiology, social science, your project will be focusing on;
3. Team;
4. Indigenous community your project will be engaging with.

The full application is to be completed and submitted by the sponsoring Feast Centre team member by **March 10, 2025 @ 5 pm EST**. It might also be a good opportunity to work together with your Community Fellow applicant in putting together your proposal.

As part of the Community Fellowship application package, all Feast team members are being provided with a fillable PDF Application Form along with this application guideline document. For those who are not Feast team members, we will provide you with the application upon request, please email the Feast Centre at feastapp@mcmaster.ca.

How applications will be evaluated:

Community-based organizations or academic institutions should be able to show 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 should provide 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.
- There is at least one team member who is affiliated with an academic institution and will request an ethics review and acquire ethics approval for the project, if needed. As a reminder, any project involving human participants (e.g. gathering information from or about people through interviews, surveys and other direct interactions; observing behaviors where privacy expectations exist; collecting private, identifiable information about individuals), sensitive data (e.g. health records, personal identifiers, or private information), or activities that could impact individuals or communities (e.g. physical, psychological, social, or economic risks), and in particular Indigenous communities

(considering Indigenous-led ethical protocols, such as OCAP) generally requires an ethics certificate.

- Evidence of capacity to carry out the work.
- Indication of willingness to work within an interdisciplinary research team

Please note, funds will be released as follows: Assuming the total amount requested is \$25,000, an initial \$5,000 (or 20%) will be released immediately upon acceptance of the award, and the remaining \$20,000 will be released upon obtaining an ethics certificate, if the project requires ethics approval. For smaller requests, the equivalent to 20% of the total will be released immediately and the remaining 80% upon obtaining an ethics certificate.

Please **note**, applicants who have previously received funding through the Feast Centre's Community Fellowship or Research Development Award (i.e., \$25,000 or more in funding) are welcome to apply; however, priority will be given to those who have not received prior funding or to those who have only received smaller awards (e.g. KTE or Conference Award). Members of the current cohort of Community Fellows are not eligible to apply to a new Fellowship, unless they have completed their projects and submitted all the reporting documentation by the application deadline.

Questions and support

If you have questions or need support in applying, please reach out to feastapp@mcmaster.ca.

We look forward to hearing from you!