



The Feast Centre for Indigenous STBBI Research in Partnership with the CIHR Centre for REACH and CANFAR Indigenous COVID-19 STBBI Award

Introduction

The Feast Centre for Indigenous STBBI Research, the CIHR Centre for REACH and CANFAR have collaborated to create the Feast Centre REACH CANFAR Indigenous COVID-19 STBBI Research Award to support research related to Indigenous peoples (First Nations, Inuit and Métis) living with or affected by Sexually Transmitted Blood Borne Infections (STBBI) and affected in a significant way by COVID-19. We will fund research in the four pillars of health science (clinical, epidemiology, basic science and social science).

Funding amount: \$25,000

Number of available awards: Four

Application deadline: January 21, 2022 (late submissions not accepted)

Notice of decision: March 25, 2022

A Collaborative Approach

The Feast Centre for Indigenous STBBI Research is a partnership between McMaster University and Communities, Alliances & Networks (CAAN) and has representation from Indigenous and allied scholars, community organizations, and diverse and traditional knowledge holders. Through the Feast Centre, Indigenous and allied scholars are working in collaboration with Indigenous communities to develop culturally relevant and scientifically rigorous research, training and knowledge exchange opportunities to inform health programs and policy in reducing the incidence and increasing the quality of life for Indigenous people living with or affected by STBBI.

The Feast Centre privileges the use of Indigenous knowledges and/or a decolonizing orientation to shape methodological approaches. We are particularly focusing on the use of culturally relevant data collection (e.g., storytelling, etc.) and analytic procedures that create relationships, and support Indigenous autonomy to respond to STBBI in ways consistent with their diverse cultures, knowledges and ways of being. This includes supporting research that is strengths- and assets-based to reduce vulnerability through positive action: understanding cultural sources of resilience, a focus on social determinants of health, and exploring other facets of experiential knowing (e.g., multigenerational Indigenous knowledges, cultural protocols, etc.) that contribute to what makes Indigenous communities healthy. Towards this end, the Feast Centre emphasizes

the four pillars of health research (basic, clinical, epidemiology and social science) to maximize the effectiveness of our activities.

The CIHR Centre for REACH in HIV (REACH 3.0) established in 2009 and refunded in 2014 and more recently in 2019 for the next 5 years. REACH is a highly effective national collaborative leadership network of over 125 researchers, front-line community agencies, people with lived experience of HIV, service providers, public health practitioners and policy makers that is committed to making a real difference in Canada's epidemic. The mission of REACH 3.0 is to build upon this vibrant network and further develop a highly connected and coordinated applied implementation science research centre that conducts highly relevant research, trains and educates the next generations of scientists, and moves research evidence into action to have a measurable impact on the health and wellbeing of people living with and at risk for HIV, HCV and STIs. The vision for REACH 3.0 is to be a major national network and partnership broker of pragmatic solutions to end the HIV epidemic in Canada in the next 5 years, and in so doing, influence the course and solutions to the HCV and STI epidemics.

The Canadian Foundation for AIDS Research (CANFAR) has been a trailblazer in its mission to eradicate HIV/AIDS in Canada since its inception in 1987. Thanks to the generous and dedicated support received to date, CANFAR has invested more than \$22 million in close to 500 research projects across Canada. We have had many successes to date – HIV is now a widely treatable infection and people with HIV are living long and healthy lives. However, unlike other G7 countries where HIV is on the wane, the number of new cases continues to increase year over year in Canada. Addressing this reality is now central to CANFAR's strategy and focus. The time is now to establish a bold vision to make new infections a rare event, and to put an end to HIV in Canada by 2025.

COVID-19 STBBI Response Research Grants

The purpose of this call is to solicit project proposals that focus on keeping Indigenous people who are living with or affected by STBBI healthy by building on Indigenous knowledges and community experiences to maintain and strengthen Indigenous wellbeing in the context of COVID-19 pandemic. Stigma, discrimination, social isolation, colonization, experiences of residential schooling, structural inequities, community bonds, strengths, traditions and deep resilience have all impacted how Indigenous people have experienced STBBI and how many people and communities are experiencing COVID-19. As such, communities of Indigenous people living with HIV, Hep C or other STBBI have teachings that are relevant to our understanding of the impact of COVID-19 within Indigenous communities.

Four project proposals will be supported, with an emphasis on representation from across the four pillars of health research (clinical, basic science, epidemiology, and social science). Based on the pool and quality of incoming applications and on agreement with our partnering institutions, the Feast Centre may be prepared to fund additional projects that are projected to have a significant community impact. Of the four grants, **at least one will be designated to projects dealing with stigma, access to care, and testing**. The grant is valued up to \$25,000 to support research activities and the dissemination of knowledge that addresses Indigenous communities' varied and distinct experiences of STBBI in relation to COVID-19.

FAQ and Application Workshop

It is encouraged that prior to beginning the submission process, applicants should review the Frequently Asked Questions document and view a virtual workshop provided by the Feast Centre that details step-by-step instructions on how to complete the application. The FAQ sheet and workshop can be accessed here:

<https://feastcentre.mcmaster.ca/research-training-opportunities>

The link also provides a community memorandum of understanding template that could be used if needed.

Potential Project Ideas

This grant is open to a broad range of research projects that deal with STBBI in Indigenous communities in the context of COVID-19 and that can demonstrate a measurable impact. The following list of examples is meant to demonstrate the breadth of options but not, in any way, to suggest what projects will be funded:

Social Determinants of Health

- Mental wellness - effects of COVID-19 crisis/isolation/changes to or withdrawal of services on mental wellness, including restricted access to ceremony
- Wellness strategies for people living with HIV and other STBBI during COVID-19 crisis
- How does HIV stigma intersect with COVID-19?

Policy Implications

- Policy implications i.e. ODSP or equivalent and how it needs to change (or not) to address COVID.
- Challenges of delivering frontline services to people living with HIV, ie, food banks, drop-ins, other programming that people depend on, in these challenging times in the context of COVID-19
- Interactions with/acceptability of HIV treatments with COVID-19 treatments and vaccines?
- How has access to HIV or STBBI testing and care been affected by COVID-19 in Indigenous communities?

Clinical Implications

- How has COVID-19 impacted those using opioid substitution therapy or those living with substance use disorders?
- How has COVID-19 impacted HIV care – has your care gone virtual, how has that experience been?

- Has the COVID-19 pandemic and its required management been well explained and how could this be improved?
- Indigenous participation and acceptability in vaccine development and clinical trials.

Basic Science Implications

- How are Indigenous individuals living with HIV and STBBI affected by COVID-19 in terms of:
 - Resilience to infection; or
 - Duration of disease; or
 - Viral load during infection;
- Assessing past exposure by correlations of SARS-CoV-2 antibody and lived experience (living density, access to health care, etc)

Culture

- What is the role of culture, ceremony and Indigenous knowledge in understanding and managing COVID-19 risk? Particularly as it relates to HIV and STBBI?
- How can culture and ceremony, including land-based activities, mitigate the risk of contracting COVID-19?
- How are older Indigenous people living with HIV and other STBBI managing in the COVID-19 crisis, and what are the considerations for prevention, testing, diagnosis, treatment and care?
- What does culturally safe care look like during a pandemic? How do we ensure that Indigenous people living with HIV and STBBI have access to culturally safe care in all settings? What needs to give, and what needs to be reinforced under these conditions?

Eligibility

Applicants should have experience with community-based research and demonstrate a relationship with an Indigenous community, collective or organization. Grants can be held by academic institutions or community-based organizations. Although REACH 3.0 is a partner in this grant, REACH partner organizations are welcome and eligible to apply. If applicants have acquired research funds for this project through other grants, these funds must be reported prior to funds being awarded.

The team members should include at least:

- One person who has a PhD, is a clinical researcher, and/or is a community member with a minimum of five years of research experience. This person should have a publication and presentation record, including community reports, and be able to demonstrate how their work made a measurable community impact;
- One person who has demonstrated experience and/or knowledge of COVID-19;
- One Indigenous person with lived experience of STBBI and/or a representative from an Indigenous community organization that works in the area of STBBI.

Team members should collectively be able to demonstrate their previous experience with community-based research by providing examples of current and/or past work such as

community reports, conference presentations, publications, articles, arts-based dissemination strategies, etc.

Application Process

All applications are to be submitted electronically using the instructions below.

- Submit the fully completed application (including all signatures) as one file in PDF and send it to feastapp@mcmaster.ca. Include in the subject heading of the email, “COVID-19 Research Award”
- Your Email subject line should list: your full name and Feast COVID-19 Research Award”

Late or incomplete proposals will not be considered. It is the applicant’s responsibility to ensure that applications are complete, and that all information is accurate.

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated according to the following criteria (more information in FAQ sheet and application workshop mentioned above):

- Research impact: 40%
- Methodological rigour: 30%
- Team composition: 20%
- Gender considerations: 10%

How to Submit

A complete application includes the following document. Instructions for attachments A and D can be found below.

- Attachment A: Application form and checklist. See form below
- Attachment B: Project proposal that outlines the proposed research and answers key questions attached (maximum of four pages single-spaced)
- Attachment C: Detailed curriculum vitae (CV) for the principal applicant highlighting research experience, education and training, relevant publications, conference or meeting presentations, past research activity, and knowledge translation activity, etc.). Bios should be included for team members with significant experience
- Attachment D: Detailed budget proposal with justification. If the research is already partially funded, this funding must be disclosed.
- Attachment E: Letters of support from Indigenous community, collective or organization specifying how community has been asked to be meaningfully involved from their perspective, including a commitment to formalizing an agreement such as a memorandum of understanding guiding community/campus partnership
- Attachment F: Team biographies

Reporting Requirements

- Financial statement reporting how money was spent;
- A short one-page narrative report highlighting successes and challenges in implementing the grant proposal, including an evaluation of project impact;
- Required to submit an abstract to present research findings at, but not limited to, the Communities, Alliances & Network's Wise Practices conference or the International Indigenous Working Group on HIV/AIDS' Indigenous Pre-Conference;
- Required to submit an article for publication consideration to, but not limited to, the Journal of Indigenous HIV Research

Attachment A: Application Form

Applicant Information

Principal Applicant: The Principal Applicant must be based in Canada and acts as the primary contact for the proposed research team. AIDS Service Organization (ASO) staff, staff at community-based organizations, graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, research associates and technical support staff are eligible to be a Principal Applicant.		
Name:		
Position/role:		
Agency/Affiliation (as applicable):		
Phone:	Fax:	E-Mail:
Mailing Address (building, street, city, postal code): 		
Applicant Signature:		

1. Additional Applicant contact information	
Provide the following:	
Team member names, addresses and affiliations, signature and a brief (100 word) bio of up to three (3) Team Members included in the proposal.	
Team Members must provide a signature (electronic signatures are acceptable) to acknowledge that they are aware of and agree to contribute to the completion of this research project.	
Name:	
Position/role:	

Agency/Affiliation (as applicable):		
Phone:	Fax:	E-Mail:
Applicant Signature:		

2. Additional Applicant contact information (attach a list on an additional page if there are more than 3 additional applicants)		
Name:		
Position/role:		
Agency/Affiliation (as applicable):		
Phone:	Fax:	E-Mail:
Applicant Signature:		

3. Additional Applicant contact information (attach a list on an additional page if there are more than 3 additional applicants)		
Name:		
Position/role:		
Agency/Affiliation (as applicable):		
Phone:	Fax:	E-Mail:
Applicant Signature:		

Project Information

Project Title:	
Community where proposed project is being undertaken:	
Total Funding Requested:	
Amount of anticipated in-kind support (if any):	
Total requested cost of project:	
Anticipated Project Start Date:	
Anticipated Project Completion Date:	

Attachment B: Project Proposal

Please submit a 4-page project proposal answering all relevant questions listed below.

“Why” is the project needed at this time? What is the main issue the project will address? What is the critical health issue or challenge to health system that is being addressed? How does the challenge affect Indigenous STBBI population? What is the proposed goal(s) and objectives of your project?

“How” are you going to answer your research question? What methodology / methods will you use to achieve your goal? How are you using Indigenous methods and ways of knowing in every aspect of your research project? What is your plan for analysis? Please outline the activities that will help you achieve your objectives.

“How” are you demonstrating a commitment to gender analysis into your work? How has this understanding of gender shaped your project proposal? How has the meaningful participation and decision-making of differently gendered subjects been integrated into the study?

“What” is the expected “real-life” impact of your Indigenous STBBI COVID-19 project? How will this project impact Indigenous STBBI populations? What are the expected outcomes of your project? What does success look like? How do you plan on giving your findings back to the community? Who do you plan on bringing the findings to? What is the potential impact of your project? How will you measure and evaluate success?

“Who” are the people involved – The leaders, partners, collaborators and actors who will be involved? What are your team’s community engagement strategies? How will you meaningfully engage and involve Elders, the Indigenous community in question and persons with lived experience? How will your team be managed and supported? Does the team have the resources necessary to complete the project? Are all partners and collaborators committed to the project? Do you plan on expanding the list of team members as the project develops? Who do you wish to further involve in this project?

“Deliverables” What is the plan for knowledge translation? What are some projected outputs or products from this project? What are the communication and knowledge/intervention dissemination plans? How will the affected community partners benefit from the product/project?

“Time” What is the projected timeline? What are plans for project updates? Please include a tentative plan to complete major milestones for the project.

“Ethics” Please include a description of ethical considerations that you will be taking into account.

Attachment D: Budget Proposal Instructions

This document should include:

1. **Budget Summary indicating the breakdown of all requested funds** (rounded to the nearest dollar) and
2. **Budget Justification detailing the budget, with a description of all items requested as supplies, expenses and salaries** (See budget justification example below). Please disclose if funds have also been requested through other sources and how those funds would be allocated if attained.

Allowable expenses under this funding opportunity:

1. **Supplies and Expenses:** Include expenses for materials (for example: cultural resources, photocopying and printing, teleconference costs, or catering) and research and/or meeting travel expenses.

Please note: Expenses will not be paid for rent, telephone, Internet, the purchase of computers or laptops, computer software (other than for data analysis), etc.

2. **Salaries and Wages:** List all positions that will be supported by this fund. Give details regarding the duties and proposed salaries or stipends. If an individual is to be supported on a part-time basis, indicate the amount of time to be spent on this work.
 - a. Anyone is eligible to receive salary/wage support as long as they are not listed as team members (if you are listed as a team member, you cannot receive wage support from the grant).
 - b. Additionally, the following are not eligible to receive salary/ wage support:
 - i. Principal Applicants (academic or community)
 - ii. Any person holding an academic rank equivalent to Lecturer (who is drawing a salary from the Institution), Assistant Professor, or higher who is already drawing a salary, but who is considered to be a professional assistant, advisor or research associate,
 - iii. Employees of the federal or provincial governments and investigators based outside of Canada

3. **Total Amount Requested:** Please indicate the total dollar (\$) amount requested.

Name of Financial Officer: Provide the name and address of the financial officer who will be responsible for the administration of this research grant and to whom all correspondence about the accounting should be sent.

Sample Budget Summary:

Expenses	Total Cost
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Supplies	\$XX.XX
Salaries and Wages	\$XX.XX
Total Amount Requested	\$XX.XX

Sample Budget Justification:

Supplies

Item Required	Total Cost
Item #1	\$XX.XX
Brief Description of item 1	
Item #2	\$XX.XX
Brief Description of item 2	
Item #3	\$XX.XX
Brief Description of item 3	

Extend list if necessary

Salaries and Wages

Salaries	Total Cost
Position #1:	\$XX.XX
Please include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Position title ● Major responsibilities ● Rate of pay and number of hours worked per week ● Degrees or experiences required for the position 	

Position #2:	\$XX.XX
Brief Description of item 2	
Position #3:	\$XX.XX
Brief Description of item 3	

Extend list if necessary