



The Samuel Centre for Social Connectedness
Social Connectedness Fellowship Application
Research Project #10 - The Stop Community Food Centre

The Social Connectedness Fellowship provides students and recent graduates with the opportunity to carry out research, writing, analysis, and outreach related to overcoming social isolation and building social connectedness. Fellows are paired with partner organizations that work to build belonging and social inclusion across a variety of thematic areas—climate change, disability and older people’s rights, refugee integration, inclusive education, placemaking and urban design, and much more.

Project Details:

Partner: [The Stop Community Food Centre](#) (The Stop) is a Toronto-based community hub where neighbours participate in a broad range of programs that provide healthy food, foster social connections, build food skills, and promote civic engagement. The Stop believes that nutritious, sustainable, and culturally appropriate food is a human right for all.

Location of Fellow: Remote, with a preference for someone in or from Toronto

Project Description:

Are you interested in conducting research at the intersection of food security, social connectedness, and equity?

Reducing social isolation and increasing good food access has always been at the centre of The Stop’s urban agriculture programs. Positive health outcomes arise from in-person participation across their growing spaces, which provide direct



access to healthy, local food, plants, and fertile land, and most importantly access to one another.

Since March 2020, The Stop has not been able to deliver community building programs. Since then, the pandemic has deepened the social isolation of marginalized populations, and has laid bare the social and health inequities of the most vulnerable.

This period of revisioning opens critical opportunities for The Stop. With the help of a Fellow, The Stop aims to examine challenges to meeting the goals around increasing social connection using The Stop's growing spaces both during, and emerging from, the pandemic. A Fellow will conduct research on how the spatial environment can better foster social connectedness and on best practices in community engagement. The Fellow will also have an opportunity to do remote consulting with members of the communities The Stop works with to learn about the barriers they face to community engagement and what they envision for The Stop's public gardens and spaces.

This research will support the development of a new theory of social connection that leverages urban agriculture spaces and programming to ameliorate the negative mental health outcomes of prolonged social isolation and food insecurity.

Key Deliverables:

- 2 blog articles for the SCSC website to be cross-posted with The Stop's Blog Newsletter
- A policy brief for advocacy purposes
- A podcast based on key informant interviews with community members experiencing social isolation summary of outreach
- Final report (20-25 pp.) with qualitative data that outlines the particular needs of community members around connection at this time, and that



supports the development of a new theory, or framework, of social connection

Key Skills/Competencies Required:

- Academic background in arts & science, humanities, social work, public health, Indigenous studies, etc., or equivalent work/life experiences.
- Strong research and writing skills.
- Empathic interviewing skills.
- Interest/experience in any of the following: urban agriculture, food security, urban Indigenous issues, urban planning, health equity, social determinants of health, critical race theory, public spaces, social isolation, and public health policy.
- Since the research focus is the Toronto-St. Paul and Davenport neighbourhoods in West Toronto, a preference will be given to someone currently residing in the greater Toronto area or who is very familiar with the city.

How to Apply:

All applicants must fill out the [Google Form application](#) by March 7, 2021 at 11:59 pm EST. Applicants can apply for 1 or 2 projects. In addition to answering the standardized questions, applicants must also answer a specific question for each project that they are interested in. Specific question for Research Project #10 - The Stop:

1. Toronto-St. Paul is an affluent neighbourhood with many community assets and public spaces to connect with each other. It is also home to a population that is mostly “hidden” from view in these public spaces – i.e., residents of geared-to-income/community housing buildings, seniors, immigrant caregivers, Indigenous, and people of colour. The Stop want to use their growing spaces in this neighborhood to connect community members affected by social isolation, and food insecurity. How would you ensure that throughout the Fellowship research - **from conducting the**



literature review, to identifying and interviewing residents, to writing the final report - you capture the voices and diverse experiences of those affected by social isolation, and the impact this has on their experience of social connectedness and belonging in this neighborhood? (Max 250 words)