



The Belonging Forum

2026 Samuel Fellows in Belonging Program

Partner Organization:

Tamarack Institute for Community
Engagement



Project Title:

Communities Building Belonging

2026 Samuel Fellows in Belonging Program: Project Proposal

Partner Organization: Tamarack Institute for Community Engagement

The Tamarack Institute is a leading Canadian charity that catalyzes collective action to solve major community challenges. Our vision is to build a connected force for community change to end poverty, build youth futures, address climate change, and deepen belonging.

Since our founding, we have been dedicated to centering those with lived experience. Through our [Tamarack 2030 Plan](#), we are committed to interrupting the systemic roles of racism, colonization, and xenophobia in communities. We operate through two primary pillars:

- ✿ **Networks for Change:** We support [a movement](#) of over 400 municipalities and thousands of learners across four networks: *Communities Ending Poverty*, *Communities Building Youth Futures*, *Community Climate Transitions*, and *Communities Building Belonging*.
- ✿ **Skills for Change:** We transform community-developed knowledge into practical tools, supporting changemakers through five [interconnected practices](#) of community change.

Guided by [our principles](#), Tamarack provides a unique platform for Fellows to engage with deep community roots while influencing Canada-wide policy. We focus on the possible, leveraging hope and collective potential to drive measurable impact across Turtle Island.

Learn more at: <https://www.tamarackcommunity.ca/about>

Location of the Project: Canada (remote). The Tamarack Institute embraces a decentralized model so our staff can remain rooted in their local communities. While we work from home offices across Canada, the Samuel Fellow will be part of a highly collaborative remote team, staying connected through ongoing virtual meetings and digital partnership.

PROJECT INFORMATION

Section 1: Description of the Project

The Tamarack Institute, in partnership with the Belonging Forum, seeks to host a Samuel Fellow to catalyse the integration of **belonging** into community-led poverty reduction, climate equity, and youth employment efforts across Canada.

By building a rigorous evidence base, the project will demonstrate that belonging is a fundamental right for all living things and the vital policy priority of our time.

Section 2: Goals of the Project

- ✿ This work seeks to elevate belonging as a data-driven policy priority, ensuring that community insights provide the necessary evidence to advocate for systemic change at all levels of government. To achieve this, the project focuses on four strategic objectives:
- ✿ **Identifying Community Narratives:** The Fellow will conduct **relational inquiry** by co-hosting conversations with community leaders. This phase focuses on documenting how belonging is being centred into policy priorities at the local level.
- ✿ **Conducting Analytical Mapping:** Using the [Seeds of Transformation](#) framework, the Fellow will translate qualitative data into a **comprehensive analytical table**. This mapping will identify equity gaps and the success factors that drive community-led change efforts.
- ✿ **Building the Storytelling Repository:** Once mapped, data will be catalogued into a dynamic **Storytelling Repository**. This will allow story components to be retrieved on-demand, creating the evidence base

needed to move from anecdotal success to data-driven policy arguments.

- ❖ **Mobilizing Knowledge:** The Fellow acts as a **strategic bridge**, aligning the *Global Charter for Belonging* with Tamarack's advocacy for a *Canada-Wide Strategy for Belonging* through briefing reports that translate community data into evidence-based cases for support. These reports will be accessible to both practitioners and policymakers.

Section 3: Guiding Questions

The Samuel Fellow will explore the following core questions to bridge the gap between community-led action, Canada-wide policy, and global advocacy efforts:

- ❖ How is belonging being quantified and integrated into local policy? (Focusing on the intersection of belonging with existing local priorities)
- ❖ What are the key success factors that allow a community to move from inclusion to belonging?
- ❖ How can international efforts, such as the Global Charter for Belonging, strengthen the case for a Canada-Wide Strategy for Belonging?

Intended Audience: The primary audiences for this research are **Canada-based practitioners and policymakers, as well as municipal leaders** looking for evidence-based strategies to centre belonging. Secondary audiences include **community practitioners** within the Tamarack network seeking to learn from inspiring models, and **global advocacy bodies** interested in how local stories of collaboration can inform international human rights standards as well as international movements for building belonging.

Section 4: Research Methods & Dissemination Approach: The 3 Streams

Within the Samuel Fellows in Belonging Program, we propose three research streams:

- ✿ **Creative**
- ✿ **Advocacy**
- ✿ **Academic**

The tracks are designed to articulate the possibilities of diverse scholarship on belonging. The program recognizes that creative methods, advocacy-focused research, and academic research are all scholarly. All three tracks have the potential to address similar topics. We encourage Fellows and Partners to explore different ways of asking questions and sharing knowledge that instills belonging for the researcher and participants.

To capture the complexity of community-led belonging in Canada, we, at Tamarack, propose a multi-modal methodological approach that bridges the gap between lived experience and policy evidence.

Information Gathering & Methods: Information will be gathered through **relational inquiry**. Fellows will engage in co-hosted virtual and in-person conversations with Tamarack members and partners from the Canadian ecosystem of changemakers who are building belonging. Methods include **participatory storytelling, semi-structured interviews, and collaborative sense-making sessions**.

Key research streams:

- ✿ **Creative Stream:** Fellow will curate a **Storytelling Repository**. This involves cataloging qualitative "story components" (video, audio, and narrative) that capture community stories of belonging.
- ✿ **Advocacy Stream:** Using the **Analytical Mapping Table**, Fellow will translate community insights into **Briefing Reports**. By aligning local data with the *Global Charter for Belonging*, this stream amplifies the stories needed to influence municipal and federal policy in Canada.

By interweaving these streams, the Fellow ensures a reciprocal process that honors community wisdom. This approach serves to inspire changemakers, providing them with the insights needed to weave belonging into the heart of their local priorities.

Section 5: Key Deliverables

- ✿ **Work plan:** A co-created, phased work plan outlining research activities, community engagement, and dissemination of milestones.
- ✿ **1 blog post (500 – 1,000 word):** related to the project the Fellows are working on, posted to the Belonging Forum's website.
- ✿ **Final Output:** Based on one, or a combination of research approaches chosen. Examples:
- ✿ **Advocacy stream:**
- ✿ Mandatory output: 10–15–page piece to document & advance policy/organizing impact.
- ✿ Proposed policy
- ✿ Advocacy toolkit
- ✿ **Creative stream:**
- ✿ Mandatory output: A creative or practical output coupled with an accompanying written component.
- ✿ Curated exhibition
- ✿ A series of webinars
- ✿ A photo journal, etc.
- ✿ **A Final Presentation:** A presentation to the Samuel Fellows cohort to share findings, community perspectives, and actionable recommendations.

APPLICANT INFORMATION

About the Program/What the Program Offers

The Samuel Fellows in Belonging Program empowers young people, recent graduates, and people with lived experience to engage in meaningful research and community action. At the Belonging Forum, our mission is to



build connectedness within and between communities through partnerships, research, programming, learning initiatives, and advocacy. At the Belonging Forum, fostering belonging is central to our work. The Belonging Forum approaches the definition of belonging as connection to **the 4 Ps: people, place, power, and purpose.**

This is to say that belonging comes through our **relationships** with other people as well as through our **rootedness in nature**, our **ability to influence** social, political and economic decision-making, and our **capacity to find shared meaning and purpose** in our lives. The program offers a unique opportunity to apply the lens of belonging to issues that matter, to think intersectionally and holistically about the problems of the 21st century – while working alongside experts and community leaders.

This is a paid opportunity from June 2026 – February 2027. Fellows will carry out the research part-time on a schedule agreed between the Fellow, the partner, and the Belonging Forum. The Fellow will receive a bursary to support their work.

The Program offers:

- ❁ A flexible, part-time research opportunity.
- ❁ A bursary to support your research calculated based on cost of living where the Fellow is based and number of hours committed.
- ❁ Work with national and international community partners.
- ❁ Capacity building, skills development, and mentorship.
- ❁ Network and team building opportunities.
- ❁ All works produced by the Fellows are published on the Belonging Forum website and promoted on our social media channels.

[Equity Statement](#)

We encourage all equity-seeking groups such as immigrants, Black and Indigenous communities, people of color, women, young people, 2SLGBTQ+ community members, and people with disabilities to apply. Please let us

know if you need any accommodation throughout the application and interview process and we will be happy to support you.

Thank you for your interest in the Samuel Fellows in Belonging Program. We thank all applicants for their interest, but only those selected for an interview will be contacted.

Key Attributes and Skills in the Applicant

The ideal candidate will be a graduate-level student or recent graduate in **Community Development, Public Policy, or related fields.**

We seek an individual with a strong foundational knowledge of **systems change and equity-centred community contexts.** To thrive in this role, the Fellow will leverage the following competencies:

- ♣ Ability to translate qualitative community narratives into structured data using community change frameworks
- ♣ Strong storytelling skills with the ability to bridge global advocacy with local policy contexts.
- ♣ Experience in cultivating respectful relationships with diverse communities and co-hosting inquiry-based conversations.
- ♣ Understanding of the realities of equity-denied communities.
- ♣ Proficiency in English is required; bilingualism (English/French) is a significant asset for the Canadian context.
- ♣ Ability to work virtually, both independently and in co-operation with a small team.
- ♣ Strong computer and technical skills with proficiency in MS Office, Canva, and Zoom.

Tamarack is committed to creating a diverse environment. Tamarack strongly encourages candidates from historically underrepresented groups to apply. All qualified applicants will be considered without regard to race, colour, religion, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, national origin, genetics, disability, or age.