

## Equity Research Fellow: Call for Applications, AY2024-2025

Feeding America's Equity Research Fellow Program provides a unique opportunity for select scholars in the social, economic, health/nutrition and behavioral sciences to pursue their equity-related research and scholarship while being integrated into the research and work of the largest hunger relief organization in the United States.

At Feeding America, we believe all people at all times should have access to the fundamental resources they need to reach their full potential. We know there are structural and systemic barriers that prevent this from happening. If we are to support actions for equitable access to healthy food and opportunity for all, then equity requires keeping the people most impacted by hunger at the center of our work and decision making. We strive to eliminate the root causes of hunger and work to address the unjust and avoidable race-based health and economic disparities. In doing so, we commit to using the best available data to identify and develop effective solutions for people and places who have disproportionately faced persistent food insecurity.

### FELLOWSHIP DETAILS

Since research has been a vital part of our organization since its start, sponsoring the Equity Research Fellow program is a natural articulation of who we are and what we are out to accomplish.

The overarching goals of the program include to:

- Further center equity in FANO's research work and advance/support the overall organization in its progress to be more equitable and anti-racist.
- Expand FANO's research capacity to examine social and structural contributors to inequities in food insecurity and understand the lived experience of network members, neighbors, and partners working within the charitable food system.
- Catalyze/Engage a network of scholars, particularly scholars from BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) and historically oppressed communities, in food insecurity research.

Feeding America will name an early- or mid-career social scientist as its Equity Research Fellow for a one- year appointment with the potential for a second year if funding is secured. The Fellow will **start** their position in early Fall 2024, to be determined by Feeding America and the chosen Fellow. The Equity Research Fellow (ERF) program consists of two main responsibilities.

**First**, the ERF will be fully integrated into the Feeding America Research and Innovation Department. Dedicating 5-7 hours of time per month beyond completing the research project, Fellows will:

- Serve as a member of the [Feeding America Technical Advisory Group \(TAG\)](#) during the ERF position.
  - Monthly 2-hour meeting with occasional pre-reads
- Lend their expertise, time and capacity permitting, by:
  - attending relevant R&I department meetings and engage as a thought partner with department staff,

- providing requested technical assistance or consultations on Feeding America or network projects,
- participating in relevant grant/team workshops or community meetings, and/or
- helping develop joint products and tools to build network members' capacity for equity and research.

**Second**, the ERF will conduct at least one original research project with either original data collection and/or original data analysis (i.e., not a review of existing research). Fellows are welcome to use existing data at Feeding America and external datasets (e.g., census data or the WBNS).

The project should be achievable in approximately 12 months (from project design to presenting results) and it should relate to issues of equity within food security and/or charitable food assistance. (If necessary, fellows may be eligible to extend the fellowship period up to 6 months to complete any deliverables. However, this does not provide extra funding.) Fellows should use funds from the fellowship award (see below) to fund research activities including compensating research participants, required software, graduate/undergraduate research assistants, travel, conference attendance/fees, etc.

If agreed upon with Feeding America, Fellows are free to involve graduate students, trainees, and colleagues/collaborators in their work while resident at Feeding America. Visiting scholars may also convene professionals and colleagues in their areas of expertise for conversation and connection and serve as a resource in the organization.

Please see the application website to download a list of potential research projects that support Feeding America's strategic equity goals and initiatives. Fellows can choose among these projects, suggest alterations in their application, or propose their own research project that furthers the same goals. Applications will be evaluated based on whose proposed projects will best further Feeding America's strategic equity goals and initiatives.

### FELLOWSHIP FUNDING AND LOGISTICS SUPPORT

Feeding America Research Fellows are awarded \$150,000 per academic year. This money should be used to conduct the research project (including travel, conference fees, funding a lab and/or research assistants), in the development of tools and resources for assisting other Feeding America projects, and/or for salary support.

If desired and available, Research Fellows can use office space at the Chicago office and will have access to existing data and internal Feeding America system, as appropriate. Research Fellows will also be integrated into the Feeding America Research and Innovation Department and will partner with a staff member to help onboard and socialize the Fellow into the organization and network. This staff member will serve as a co-researcher: helping refine the research project, connecting the Research Fellow to relevant Feeding America teams and network partners, and collecting, analyzing, and synthesizing the research.

### THE REQUIREMENTS

All scholar applicants must have a doctorate level (e.g., PhD, DrPH, DSW, JD, MD, EdD) or comparable terminal degree, or a career background that shows their ability to conduct high-level, peer-reviewed scholarly research. Doctoral or other graduate students are not eligible to apply. Preference will be given to early- or mid-career scholars.

It is not a requisite that Research Fellows be experts in food insecurity or the charitable food assistance (CFA) system. However, successful candidates will have a demonstrated record of scholarly activity in equity (scholarship of discovery, integration, application/engagement, and teaching/learning) and will be expected to develop a functional understanding of food insecurity and the charitable food assistance system during their time as a Fellow.

Research Fellows do not need to be “in residence” at Feeding America’s headquarters (Chicago). We encourage visiting our office in person to meet the team and food banks when relevant to the research project or when supporting Feeding America projects. However, we are well positioned to collaborate virtually.

### APPLICATION PROCESS

All applications undergo an initial internal screening for relevance to the Feeding America’s priority areas and the strength of the application. Strong applicants will be reviewed by a team of Feeding America employees and external experts. A set of finalists will be invited to an interview with the recruitment team.

#### *To Apply*

1. Please review the position description and needed application materials thoroughly.
2. [Click here](https://forms.gle/ecZY8jj2rP2UrJhe6) [or copy in this link: <https://forms.gle/ecZY8jj2rP2UrJhe6>] to submit your application. In this form, you will be asked for your contact details, basic information, and the following application documents:
  - a. **Cover Letter:** highlighting scholarly/research commitment to understanding equity, how this fellowship aligns with your work, and your interest in working with Feeding America.
  - b. **Research Project Submission:** After reviewing the potential research projects (see application website) and you have decided a project that best matches your expertise and interests, fill out this submission document (see application website). 2 notes:
    - i. If you are suggesting a project beyond those we provided, you may add up to 2 pages outlining a potential project. This should describe a potential plan to collect or analyze data, how it would fulfill similar goals as listed in the potential projects document, and how it relates to your prior work on equity. Please still answer the questions in the submission document.
    - ii. We recognize that the Fellow’s project is unlikely to be conducted exactly as outlined in our project list or in the proposal. The selected Fellow will work with Feeding America staff to refine and ensure research projects advance Feeding America’s equity priorities as well as advance scholarly or policy research.
  - c. **CV:** up-to-date abbreviated CV (5 pages maximum)
  - d. **Optional exemplary work:** Up to 2 supplementary materials that provide a demonstration of your work are welcome.
3. Applicants who proceed past the initial screen may be asked to provide two professional references.

#### *Selection Process*

An application review committee will review the applications and narrow the applicant pool to 3-4 finalists. These finalists will be invited to interview with a member of the Feeding America

executive team, the current Feeding America Equity Visiting Scholar, and the Fellow program lead.

### SELECTION CRITERIA

The selection of Research Fellows is based on individuals' demonstrated record of research accomplishment, the alignment between selected project and expertise, and commitment to equity. Strong preference is given to proposals connected to Feeding America's current programs and initiatives, although scholars whose projects are less immediately relevant to current activities could be considered, particularly if those projects are especially innovative and could potentially lead Feeding America to consider new and promising research directions in the future.

Feeding America seeks to promote diversity through all its program activities. Feeding America does not discriminate based on race/ethnicity, color, religion, gender and/or gender identity, pregnancy or parental status, marital or domestic partner status, national origin, ancestry, age, sexual orientation, disability or medical condition, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by law.

### BACKGROUND ON FEEDING AMERICA

Feeding America ([www.feedingamerica.org](http://www.feedingamerica.org)) is the nation's leading hunger-relief nonprofit organization. Our mission is to feed America's hungry through a nationwide network of member food banks and engage our country in the fight to end hunger. Our network of 200 food banks serves the entire country, including the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, securing, and distributing billions of meals annually. Our member food banks support approximately 60,000 local charitable agencies, which provide food directly to individuals and families in need. In a typical year, the Feeding America network provides food to more than 46 million people facing hunger in the United States, including 12 million children and nearly 7 million seniors. This need has increased dramatically during the COVID pandemic.

Feeding America's mission goes beyond simply providing food. We are also addressing hunger by increasing public awareness, connecting people seeking emergency food assistance with federal benefits, and advocating for federal and state programs and policies that support Americans with low-income. In addition to providing direct food assistance to families and individuals, we strive to create opportunities for the people we serve to achieve self-sufficiency. We believe that collaboration is the key to addressing hunger among our neighbors. That means partnering with government, researchers, businesses, advocacy groups, and other charitable partners to understand the complex needs of our neighbors dealing with food insecurity and develop tailored solutions that effectively meet the needs of those we serve.