1 MILLION TO IMPROVE CARE
BREAST CANCER SUPPORT &
EDUCATION FUND
APPLICATION GUIDE

Quebec Breast Cancer Foundation
1. OVERVIEW

The Quebec Breast Cancer Foundation (QBCF) Support & Education Fund “the Fund” was established in 2014 to improve Breast Cancer care and education in the Province of Quebec. Several million dollars have been invested in this program to permit the accomplishment of more than 20 projects targeting different aspects of breast cancer care. This Fund aims to support quality of care improvement programs, clinical translational projects as well as educational initiatives with the goal to address breast cancer care gaps and education disparities within the health system across Quebec.

In keeping with this Fund strategy and in line with priorities 4 and 5 of the refreshed strategy by the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer, the Foundation is pleased to launch a new request for proposals (RFP) “1 Million to improve care”. All health professionals and community organizations involved in the provision of breast cancer care and education are eligible to apply. To guarantee the highest quality of project selection, an external peer review process is used to assess proposals.

This important initiative will enable better collaborations among multidisciplinary health care teams and community organizations to constantly enhance breast cancer care and therefore improve patient experience and outcomes across Quebec, all while generating new knowledge in breast cancer care and hence reinforcing QBCF’s leadership in this field.

2. KEY DATES FOR 2023-2024 APPLICATION

- Application submission period opens: February 7, 2023
- Full proposal due: March 17, 2023
- Award notification date: Summer 2023

3. QUEBEC BREAST CANCER FOUNDATION

The Quebec Breast Cancer Foundation has invested over $61 million in its mission which unfolds under four (4) main axes of interventions:
Since 1994, the Foundation has directed remarkable achievements in breast cancer research, care, and awareness. Indeed, breast cancer mortality is at its lowest level in thirty years, fueled by improvements in treatment options and early detection. Over the course of the previous years, the instrumental work undertaken by the Foundation to support its founding mission and vision has borne fruit. Not only do we exist to serve those affected by breast cancer now, but also to help prevent and better manage breast cancer in the future. Our unique combination of research funding, community engagement and advocacy enable us to make the biggest possible difference in breast cancer control. Visit www.rubanrose.org to learn more.

4. 1 MILLION TO IMPROVE CARE 2023-2024 : OBJECTIVES

There is a period in the breast cancer trajectory that is currently sorely lacking in services. A quick review of existing resources confirms this: there are virtually no support services for the pre-diagnosis period. This period, defined as the interval between the detection of a breast symptom or an abnormality on imaging and the final diagnosis, is a period that varies in length depending on the woman and is highly anxiety-provoking.

A recent article by Webber et al (2021) highlighted different factors associated with the time to diagnosis of breast cancer in symptomatic women in Ontario. The main factors were: being a young woman, having concurrent illnesses, being a recent immigrant, and having higher health care utilization prior to that time.

The objective of this call for proposals is to improve this pre-diagnosis period. The projects presented should therefore target the following areas:

- Improving pre-diagnosis breast cancer navigation, particularly for women outside the PQDCS
- Breast cancer awareness among specific populations (young women, new immigrants, communities with low health literacy);

- Accompaniment and support during the pre-diagnosis period;

- Awareness among front-line professionals of the factors influencing a longer pre-diagnosis period.

5. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Eligibility requirements
1. QBCF Community Support & Education Fund is accessible to all health professionals, clinical researchers, and community organizations currently involved in the provision of breast cancer care and education in the Province of Quebec. Applicants must be employed at the time of the application. Applicants with the status of health care professionals must prove their membership to their respective professional order governing them in Quebec, must have a valid license to practice in Quebec, and must have professional liability insurance. Eligible professionals include, but are not limited to:
   ➢ Clinicians and clinical researchers;
   ➢ Nurses and all nursing-affiliated personnel;
   ➢ Rehabilitation experts (physiotherapy, occupational therapy, kinesiology, sexology, neuropsychology, nutrition, massage therapy, etc.);
   ➢ Social workers and psychosocial health experts;
   ➢ Individuals working at community organisations/patient groups that provide community support and education services to people affected with breast cancer;
   ➢ Other professionals that participate in the care of people affected with breast cancer.

2. QBCF encourages collaborative efforts in this RFP from at least two different institutions from the same sector or different sectors (e.g. two hospitals or one hospital and one community organisation). The involvement of each collaborating partner must be well elaborated (development and deployment of the project, evaluation and interpretation).

3. In a collaborative team application, the main applicant must represent the project, manage the application, and orient the direction of the project. The institution of the main applicant will be the one receiving the funding. Collaborators must contribute significantly or provide specific expertise to the project. Collaborators may manage part of the funds eventually granted, following an agreement with the main applicant institution.

4. There is no limit on the number of research proposals submitted by one individual (as a main applicant, co-applicant or collaborator); however, the same individual can only receive one research award as a principal applicant.
5. The main applicant must have his/her project evaluated with respect to ethics codes and must obtain approvals if deemed necessary before the start of the funded project. The main applicant will provide documentation of such to QBCF within 6 months of proposal approval. It remains the responsibility of the main applicant and collaborators to respect institutional rules and policies of their respective organizations.

6. Proposals must meet the mission of the Foundation and must take place primarily in Quebec.

7. Proposals must clearly define interventions that could lead to improvements in patient outcomes and optimization of breast cancer pre-diagnosis period/education.

8. Proposals must have an impact by innovating or ameliorating an existing service. The project must not duplicate an existing service.

9. Proposals must start and end within the 2 years of funding and must demonstrate, if necessary, that its sustainability is ensured (e.g.: uptake of the project or service by the organization or the health network thereafter).

10. QBCF will not award funds if comparable support for the same project has been obtained from another funding source.

11. Matching contributions from host Departments or Institutions (e.g. in-kind resources, funds, space, equipment, dedicated personnel, etc.) are highly encouraged.

12. Proposals must comply with the application requirements set forth by the QBCF community support and education fund program (application form, budget proposal, documents required, letter of support, etc.). Proposals that fail to do so will be excluded despite potential merit.

13. Applicants will be responsible for project design, feasibility plan and readiness, implementation plan, data management, statistical analysis, and quality assurance processes associated with the project development and for all other aspects of project management required and will comply with all applicable laws, regulations, and rules.

14. All applications must be submitted directly to: subvention.grant@rubanrose.org

15. A QBCF project manager will be dedicated to each awarded project and will be responsible for following up with awardees to track progress and get financial updates every four to six months after funding starts.

**Institution requirements**

Applicant institutions must be non-profit institutions with the appropriate resources and support required to execute the proposed project. Hospital centers and community organizations in all regions of Quebec working with people affected by breast cancer are eligible. There will be at least one recipient for each of these two categories of applicants. All subcontracted institutions must
meet the same criteria and agree to the award conditions and policies and procedures of QBCF as outlined in the award contract.

**Budget**
The total overall budget for the QBCF community support and education fund is $1,000,000. The per project budget envelope is $50,000 to $200,000. The amount awarded may vary from the amount requested depending on the evaluation of the project and the funds available.

**Project duration**
An applicant will have up to a maximum of 2 years to develop and complete the awarded project, which will start in summer 2023, following the signing of a contract.

**Selection and Review process**
Projects will be evaluated by a peer-led committee composed of a group of independent experts whose structure and number is adjusted according to the nature of the submitted projects. This review committee may include, but not limited to: Surgical oncologists, medical oncologists, clinician-researchers, pivot nurses and the QBCF director of investment and health promotion (observer). This committee has the mandate to make recommendations to the Investment committee and the board of directors of QBCF.

Members of the review committee will independently score each proposal according to the evaluation grid provided in this document; this will be followed by a common review session.

### 6. APPLICATION COMPONENTS

Applicants should expect to complete and submit the following:

- **Lay abstract**: Should include maximum 250 words and should be written for review by a QBCF lay patient advocate. This abstract will be shared with QBCF beneficiaries (patients, caregivers, ambassadors, volunteers) and donors. The lay abstract should concisely describe the aim for the project and how it will impact breast cancer pre-diagnosis period and/or education in Quebec.

- **Proposal**: The proposal section should be no more than 20 pages (including references) and must include the following sections:
  - **Problem Statement**: This section should describe the unmet need and rationale backing the proposed project and elaborate on how this project will have an impact on the breast cancer pre-diagnosis period and/or education. Use evidence from a credible data source to justify the gaps and education disparities;
  - **Hypothesis**;
  - **Specific objectives**;
  - **Methodology/project design**;
  - **Feasibility plan including details related to available resources**;

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➢ Project timeline with milestone tracker: All projects should be achievable within the 2-year timeline. The timeline should be corresponding with the requested budget for each year;

➢ Sustainability plan including a high-level practical approach that also highlights the implication of multistakeholder partners to ensure the continuity of the initiative beyond end of funding. Do not assume the opportunity for renewal;

➢ Data sharing plan: Data generated by QBCF funding is expected to be made accessible to the community to the fullest extent possible within local regulations and policies. A detailed data sharing plan or explanation for why data cannot be shared must be provided in the full proposal;

➢ Clinical Significance (if applicable): Project should demonstrate a clear impact on patient outcomes and care optimization;

➢ Budget and Justifications: Budgets should accurately align with work proposed for each year. Large unspent balances at the end of a fiscal year will delay following payment;

➢ Project Team and Expertise: Detail project personnel, level of effort and how each area of expertise will contribute to the project;

➢ Letters of support and collaboration: Demonstrate a strong buy-in from the institutions and inter-disciplinary groups, provincial government/agency, associations/medical societies, and patient groups. Letters of institution support should verify available resources as described in the proposal and indicate they can accept QBCF terms and conditions without modifications. Multi-institution awards require letters of support from each institution. Letters of collaboration should include details of shared resources and/or expertise as described in the proposal and acceptance of QBCF terms and conditions.

7. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For more information or questions, please contact:

Email: subvention.grant@rubanrose.org
Appendix A:

The following award conditions, policies and procedures are for the grant timeline and are subject to change.

I. Award Terms and Conditions

1. The granted funds will be used solely for the activities described in the grant recipient’s submitted proposal. Major changes in the direction of the project should be discussed beforehand with QBCF leadership.

2. This Fund does not cover institutional overhead and indirect costs.

3. No less than 70 percent (70%) of funds received from QBCF must be spent by the end of each fiscal year during the grant timeline. A justification for unexpended sums is required.

4. By accepting this award, the grant recipient and affiliated institution agree to adhere to these Grant Award Terms and Conditions, including the intellectual property agreement.

5. The grant recipient must provide a declaration of any conflict of interest prior to contract initiation.

6. All publications and communications related to the awarded projects that are supported entirely or partially by QBCF funding must include the following statement as an acknowledgment for QBCF: “(Supported) (Supported in part) by the Quebec Breast Cancer Foundation.” QBCF logo must appear on any communications related to the awarded projects. QBCF should also be listed in the grant recipient’s annual report (if applicable). QBCF would be thankful if its support was also acknowledged in interviews, press releases, or other public discussions of the related projects. This obligation will survive the grant timeline.

7. The grant recipient should understand that she/he may be invited to attend QBCF-related events e.g. the annual scientific forum to present the latest findings on the awarded projects, or may be asked to accommodate a donor request on behalf of QBCF, with the clear consideration that QBCF will not obligate attendance or participation as a condition of the award. QBCF will make every effort
to minimize the frequency of such invitations and to compensate reasonable travel expenses associated with attendance at such events/requests.

II. Policies and Procedures

1. All awardees will have the following distinctions:

   a. A profile on the QBCF website
   b. Included on grantee lists and announcements
   c. Invitation to the annual QBCF gala

2. Award Phase

   a. Unless otherwise notified, each “QBCF Support and Education Fund” award is for two years.

3. Reporting and Communication

   a. A dedicated QBCF grant manager will be assigned to each project in order to follow up on yearly progress reports, finances, and deliverables. The QBCF grant manager will meet (either virtually or face to face) with grant recipient every four to six months to go through financial reporting.

   b. Unless otherwise stated by QBCF, an annual progress and financial report is required to assess progress. This report should describe progress to date and must show actual (not estimated) disbursement of funds and provide explanations for significant variance from the approved budget.

   c. Final financial reports are due within 60 days of the end of the grant year. Balances greater than 30% of the awarded budget require justification and detailed plans to spend down the balance and must be approved by QBCF. Subsequent payment for the current year may be withheld if a final financial report for the previous year is not provided.

4. Budgets, no cost extensions and carry forward balances

   a. All budgets and financial reporting are in CAD dollars.

   b. QBCF does not impose spending restrictions in any budget categories. However, purchasing of major equipment and (or leasing) facilities are not considered a part of this Fund budget and should be discussed with QBCF prior to expenditure.

   c. Travel funds greater than $6,000 per year should include detailed justifications. Travel funds to attend QBCF events are not allowed as these expenses are paid for or reimbursed...
by QBCF. Participation in conferences or conventions outside the scope of this project are not allowed expenditures.

d. QBCF funds may be used for salaries for new human resources required to initiate the awarded project. However, remuneration of the main applicant and collaborators is not accepted. The sustainability of funding of new salaries at the end of the granting timeline must be included in the sustainability plan.

e. QBCF does not require pre-approval for common (not major) budget reallocations, but we appreciate notification of any significant changes to the budget so that we can keep our records current.

f. End of year balances of less than 30% of the awarded budget do not require QBCF approval to be carried forward to the next year but must be reported on subsequent financial reports. Unspent funds should be returned to QBCF at the end of the granting timeline.

g. No cost extensions may be granted in cases where awardees are not receiving renewal money and need to extend their current award. These decisions are made at the discretion of QBCF and are based on large balances or other circumstances that have delayed progress. This does not disqualify the grantee to apply for other grants in the next funding cycle.

h. Balances on past awards that are still active must be reported annually. Awards will have scheduled follow ups until the balance is spent down or applied to another current award.

5. Multi-institutional awards

a. QBCF terms and conditions apply also to multi-institutional awards.

b. QBCF does not require a detailed budget or financial report from the partnering institutions but reserves the right to request one.

6. Installments

a. QBCF payments are to one institution only, the institution of the main applicant. Payments to support the effort of co-applicants at other institutions are handled as subcontracts between the institutions.

b. QBCF awards are split into two equal annual payments that are indicated in the award letter and contract.

c. All award payments are made by cheque in Canadian dollars.
7. Conduct of Projects

   a. QBCF assumes that all grantee institutions are compliant with their respective ethics codes and institutional policies.

   b. Projects involving research on human subjects should be conducted pursuant to Good Clinical Practice.

8. Changes of Institution or Main Applicant

   a. The main applicant will conduct his/her project at the same Institution or university that initially endorsed the application throughout the entire grant period. The grantees who wish to change their location must submit an official letter of request by e-mail to QBCF. The request must detail the reasons for the change and describe all possible consequences on his/her project. Institutional authorities must also approve the change by notifying QBCF in writing (institution letter head and signed by authorized institution official). The administration of the new institution must notify QBCF as well in writing that they accept to host the grantee and accept the rules and terms by signing a grant acceptance letter. The new institution contacts and payment form should also be forwarded to QBCF. Final financial report from old institution showing all charges and final unspent balance should be sent to QBCF. Upon receipt and review of the above documents, the unspent balance will be paid to the new institution on behalf of the grant recipient.

   b. Transfer of a QBCF award from main applicant to another one is not allowed.

9. Intellectual property and Financial Conflicts of Interest

   a. A mutually accepted intellectual property agreement is required prior to contract initiation.

   b. A statement of financial conflict of interest is required prior to contract initiation. QBCF assumes that all grantee institutions have policies in place on financial conflict of interest reporting and management.