

Research Consortium

The IFN Research Consortium will bring fellowship practitioners together in a collaborative study to examine how fellowship participants drive change across all levels of society. This initiative aims to deepen our understanding of fellowship impact while building a supportive community of practice.

Research Questions

The consortium will explore three key questions:

1. To what extent do diverse strategies facilitated by fellowship programs support alumni in contributing to changes at different levels of society (i.e., individual, institutional, community, systems)?
2. How does the design of fellowship programs influence administrators' ability to effectively support alumni in contributing to changes at different levels of society?
3. What are effective resources and approaches to evaluate the impact of fellowship programs in supporting alumni contributions to change?

Eligibility Requirements

Fellowship programs interested in joining the consortium must:

- Be currently active
- Have a mission that includes creating positive social change
- Have at least 3 years of implementation experience
- Be willing and available to commit to a 1-year period of engagement starting March 2025

Engagement Tracks for Research Partners

IFN offers three distinct ways for fellowship programs to participate in the consortium research, each designed to accommodate different levels of involvement and organizational capacity. All tracks include research engagement with your fellowship participants and alumni communities during the one-year commitment beginning March 2025.

Network Partner

Estimated commitment: **20-30 hours over one year**

Network Partners contribute valuable perspectives while maintaining flexibility in their level of engagement.

Partners will:

- Share program experiences and insights with the consortium
- Participate in at least two design discussions (March-June 2025)
- Engage in a one-on-one consultation on data collection strategies
- Support outreach to program alumni for data collection
- Contribute to analysis activities as available
- Attend the 2026 Impact Fellowships Summit (virtual or in-person, registration waived for two staff)

Network Partners receive a \$1,000 stipend to support their participation.

Co-Design Partner

Estimated commitment: **40-50 hours over one year**

Co-Design Partners take an active role in shaping the research approach and analysis.

Partners will:

- Share program expertise and resources with the consortium
- Participate in at least four design discussions (March-June 2025)
- Engage in a one-on-one consultation on data collection strategies
- Support outreach to program alumni for data collection
- Collaborate on data analysis and interpretation
- Contribute to disseminating findings across the fellowship sector
- Attend the 2026 Impact Fellowships Summit (virtual or in-person, registration waived for two staff)

Co-Design Partners receive a \$1,500 stipend to support their participation.

Impact Grant Partner

Estimated commitment: **200-500 hours, varies with proposal scope**

Impact Grant Partners lead focused research initiatives within their programs.

Partners will:

- Design and implement a research project with program participants and alumni
- Engage in regular consultations for technical support and progress updates
- Develop a published report sharing methodology, findings, and insights
- Present experiences at the 2026 Impact Fellowships Summit (virtual or in-person, registration waived for two staff)

Impact Grant Partners receive \$5,000-\$15,000 in funding based on their proposal scope.

Questions about these engagement opportunities? Please contact our Research Lead, Aisha Thompson-Banton at athompsonbanton@irex.org.