

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Common Ground Food Forum

Building a bigger table: Strengthening our relations



June 15 – 19, 2026
Lakehead University Orillia Campus
500 University Avenue, Orillia, ON

For the first time, key food networks are coming together!
Canadian Association for Food Studies
Food Communities Network
Common Ground Network
Food Secure Canada

Due Dates: All submissions are due by **Thursday, January 29, 2026**.

Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA) at this Forum are very important to us. To learn more about our work to ensure greater IDEA, please see below.

PLEASE DISTRIBUTE THIS CALL WIDELY

Themes

Food is inherently social, involving people in every stage—including how it is produced, processed, distributed, consumed, and disposed of, and who is involved at every step. Because of this, shifting agriculture, fisheries and food systems toward sustainability and equity requires a deeper understanding of history, values, inequalities, and relationships.

Building a bigger table: Strengthening our relations will bring four key food networks—the Common Ground Network, Food Secure Canada, the Canadian Association for Food Studies, and Food Communities Network—together in a forum focused on understanding the social relations necessary for transitioning and transforming Canada’s agriculture, fisheries and food systems to be equitable and sustainable.

Specifically, building a bigger table will bring academic researchers together with agriculture and food systems actors, including civic/community organizations, government, industry organizations, and Indigenous and settler communities, to share knowledge, forge and strengthen connections across disciplines and sectors, and seed new collaborations in food systems research and action.

The Forum will feature individual paper presentations, organized panels, roundtables, plenaries, keynote speakers, workshops, poster sessions, and an Exploration Gallery, all organized around four ‘pillars’ of social relations that underpin the Common Ground Network's work.

These include relations between:

- People and Land
- Rural and Urban communities
- Canada and the World
- People in/and Food Systems.

We encourage submissions of any of the above formats on critical and theoretical work, community-based and on-the-ground practice, research-creation and transdisciplinary initiatives, and creative, thought- and feeling-provoking investigations.

Within the broad theme of Building a bigger table: Strengthening our relations, submissions may include, but are not limited to:

- Next-generation scholarship
- Food policy and advocacy
- Food sovereignty
- Food affordability and food insecurity in Canada
- Corporate concentration in the food system
- Food systems and equity
- Global food systems and regimes
- Indigenous food systems and rights relations
- Climate change
- Labour and exploitation
- Racism and anti-racism
- Food epistemology
- Food pedagogy
- Media and communications
- Arts, culture, literature
- Hybrid practice & transdisciplinary approaches to food
- Cross-sector collaboration
- Process design and speculation

In addition to content-based submissions, we also welcome contributions for reimagining the processes by which the Forum's members and their larger communities interact. The submission form includes an option to propose ways to build a larger table into the forum infrastructure itself.

Voices

In our efforts to move towards a more equitable, decolonized environment, we will be giving contributor preference to people who choose to identify as being from marginalized, historically oppressed groups of people (for example: Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour, 2SLGBTQIA+, newcomers, people living with disabilities, Francophones, low-income people).

In addition, many other groups have also been historically excluded from academic, leadership and policy spaces, including activists, producers, youth/students and community practitioners.

To ensure these groups are prioritized in the forum program, people can self-identify on the submission form.

As part of all our contributions, we ask everyone to take time to share this with diverse populations.

Forum Format

The conference is currently planned as a predominantly in-person event with limited capacity for virtual participation. Virtual participation as a contributor needs to be communicated through the proposal submission process. Confirmation of resource availability will be provided closer to the event date, and virtual participation slots will be prioritized for individuals who cannot travel.

Submission Details

- All submissions are due on January 29th, 2026.
- Acceptance notifications will be sent out in March 2026.
- Participants will be provided with their presentation date in April 2026.
- Presenters are limited to present and/or be listed on two of the following:

Submission types may include:

(1) Individual Academic Paper or Community Research/Project

- **Allotted Time:** 15-minute presentation, with 30 minutes of questions and discussion (shared with all papers) within a shared 90-minute time slot
- **Expectations:** 1 individual presenting
- **Submission Requirements:**
 - 250-word explanation of paper or project (abstract)
 - Any tech or presentation needs

(2) Panel or Roundtable

- **Allotted Time:** 60 minutes for panel/roundtable with 30 minutes for Q&A
- **Expectations:** multiple speakers/panellists on a similar topic, suggest bringing in speakers with different perspectives
- **Submission Requirements:**
 - 250-word explanation of paper or project (abstract)
 - Any tech or presentation needs
 - Applicant(s) name and email address(es)
 - All speaker names and email addresses for the panel/roundtable

(3) Workshops or Facilitated Discussions

- **Allotted Time:** 90 minutes (suggest 10-15 mins intro to topic)
- **Expectations:** Audience engagement and interaction are built into the workshop/ discussion
- **Submission Requirements:**
 - 250-word explanation (abstract)
 - Any tech or presentation needs
 - Applicant(s) name and email address(es)
 - Speaker names and email addresses

(4) Exploration Gallery

The Exploration Gallery serves as an informal meeting hub, break room, and contemplation space. Submission types can include student and community posters, interactive installations, books and zines, slide shows and videos, two- or three-dimensional pieces, edible art, and other creative/design works. The Gallery will run throughout the conference and will be open to the public. Works must be delivered to Lakehead University Orillia Campus by Sunday, June 14, 2026 and collected from the Gallery on Friday, June 19, 2026, the last day of the conference.

Note that space is limited, particularly for screen-based works.

(5) Alternative format

- Do you have a different format you'd like to facilitate as a contribution to the forum?
- Do you have a performance piece?
- Do you have a tour that you would like to facilitate?
- Do you have a film you'd like screened?
- Do you have a skill you'd like to share?
- Can be anytime between 5 and 90 minutes.

If you have any questions about submission format or content, please contact the conference crew: info@foodsecurecanada.org with thanks to Food Secure Canada for coordinating submissions.

Forum Fees

Registration Website and Early Bird deadlines will be posted in February, but we offer the price list below to help attendees plan.

Regular Price: \$600 CAD

Early Bird: \$550 CAD

This ticket price covers the costs of the forum, including venue, food & beverage offerings, materials and enables us to offer high-quality experiences. This option enables the Forum to offer free and low-cost services to people most directly targeted by oppression and colonization. We encourage tenured academics, government officials, and established private-sector participants and anyone with institutional or organizational support to pay this level.

Reduced Price: \$400 CAD

Early Bird: \$350 CAD

This reduced price ticket is for those with less institutional/organizational support or who will incur higher than average costs of travel to the conference.

Solidarity Price: \$200 CAD

Early Bird: \$150 CAD

This price level is for students and others with insufficient institutional support, as well as members of groups or organizations focused on social and/or economic justice, owned or governed by historically marginalized groups. This rate might also be for you if you yourself are Indigenous, Black, racialized, a newcomer, an individual challenged with visible or non-visible disabilities, 2SLGBTQIA+, or an individual with low income.

What if none of these pricing options work for me?

If none of these pricing options are accessible for you, please contact this email for additional options: commonground@dal.ca

Do you have funding? Want to strengthen relations across food systems work?

We are working to keep pricing affordable. If you have funding that you could put towards this forum, enabling more people to attend, please contact commonground@dal.ca

Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA) at the Common Ground Food Forum

Other questions that you don't see the answer to below?

If you have a question, somebody else has the same one, too!

Please reach out if you have any questions about inclusion, diversity or other accommodations required to attend, that need to be addressed before you can submit your contribution idea. Please contact commonground@dal.ca.

Forum organizers will continue to add information to this section as it becomes available.

For BIPOC participants:

Common Ground Forum presenters are committed to centering perspectives and voices from BIPOC participants coast-to-coast-to-coast.

BIPOC participants may want to know that Orillia is a predominantly white community.

A notable Indigenous community is present, and their knowledge will be highlighted at the forum. If you are Indigenous and would like to connect specifically with the local Indigenous community, please let us know.

Information about communication

Languages?

The forum will have professional simultaneous interpretation across French and English for as many sessions as possible to foster connections. People are encouraged to present and share knowledge in both French and English.

Interested in Hearing support?

There is no ASL available for the forum. (Remove headset sentence)

There is space that can be reserved at the front for better hearing. Please indicate this is a request when you register. If you require additional support, please let us know.

Information about the physical location

Link to [Orillia Campus Information](#)

Want to ensure there are rest areas?

There will be a couple of quiet spaces for rejuvenation and juicing up electronics.

There is also some seating in hallways, in the residence hall, and outside.

Concerned about finding your way?

There will be an information table and bilingual signage to help navigate the space.

There will also be a whiteboard that is updated daily.

Concerned about getting around the space?

All classrooms are accessible.

There is a wheelchair available for emergency transfer if needed.

Seating in all classrooms is detached.

Seating in the lecture halls is attached swivel seats; however, there are some pull-out chairs as well for larger participants.

There are only a few wheelchair-accessible resident rooms (perhaps 5 in total).

Concerned about where to stay?

Approximately 200 rooms on campus will be booked, with preference given to people with mobility challenges.

There will also be a block of rooms booked at the nearest hotel, which has a direct bus route to Orillia campus and is a 30-minute walk away/15 minutes by electric wheelchair.

Sensitive to lighting?

Classrooms, hallways, dining room, and lecture rooms all have overhead, bright fluorescent lights.

Residence Rooms have bright overhead lights and lamps in each room.

Sensitive to scents?

Orillia campus is designated as a scent-free environment. While this cannot be guaranteed, efforts are made to inform people on campus to refrain from using products with scents.

Looking for gender neutral and/or accessible washrooms?

Gender neutral and accessible washrooms are available in residence. Gender-neutral and accessible washrooms will be marked by signage in the main buildings.

Concerns about Masking/Health and Safety?

Orillia campus is not designated as a mask-required zone. It is a public building and there is no ability to designate it as a masked zone (unless there is an active mandate in place).

Forum organizers acknowledge that creating safe space includes supporting people with compromised immunity and we strongly ask everyone with any concern of illness, no matter how small, to either not attend or to wear a well-fitting mask at all times that covers their nose, mouth and chin in all forum spaces.

Sanitizer is available for participants at key locations (entrance to the academic area and food areas, throughout the building).

Information about Transportation

Link to [Transportation Information](#)

Cost? \$3.10 per ride - Need to pay exact amount - no change given.

Is the Orillia service accessible? Yes, each bus has a ramp option.

How will I get to Orillia?

More information will be forthcoming with registration package, but for folks flying into Toronto, there are options:

- from Pearson Airport to Union Station
- from Union Station by Go Bus or Train to Barrie
- transfer onto Northland buses that go right to the residence building.