

Call for Programming Proposals: *The Gathering 2026*

Community Safety and Collective Well-Being: What Makes Us Safe?

Proposals due September 1, 2026



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Call for Programming Proposals: *The Gathering 2026*



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Manitoba | the gathering

Summary

Be a part of *The Gathering 2026* - submit a proposal for programming!

In this 24th year, The Gathering will be hosting a diverse range of programming that will attempt to answer the question - '*What Makes Our Community Safe*'. Join us on October 23, 2026, in Winnipeg for The Gathering of Community Builders!

We are looking for proposals for programming for this year's Gathering workshops, panels, and presentations, for facilitating connecting opportunities between participants, and for fun & engaging ways for the community to network.

Get creative and share your ideas with us!

Don't hesitate to reach out to us via (manitoba@ccednet-rcdec.ca) if you would like to brainstorm further. Proposals are being accepted until **September 1, 2026**.

Find information on the event, theme, format, and more in this document.

Theme for The Gathering 2026

Across Manitoba, communities are navigating a time of growing complexity. Rising costs of living, housing pressures, climate uncertainty, political polarization, and increasing demands on community organizations are affecting our collective well-being. At the same time, communities continue to demonstrate resilience, innovation, and care in the face of these challenges.

The Gathering 2026 – *Community Safety and Collective Well-Being: What Makes Us Safe?* – invites Manitoba community builders to explore safety as more than the absence of harm. Safety is rooted in strong relationships, secure housing, meaningful livelihoods, accessible supports, collective care, and communities where everyone can thrive.

Yet safety is not experienced equally. Colonialism, racism, and other forms of systemic inequity continue to shape who has access to opportunities, resources, and a sense of belonging. Building safe and healthy communities requires addressing these root causes while advancing reconciliation, racial justice, and community-led solutions.

Through the lens of Community Economic Development, participants will examine how we can address root causes of socio-economic issues, strengthen community resilience, advance justice and reconciliation, and build systems that prioritize people, communities, and the environment.

Together, we'll explore important questions like:

- What makes individuals and communities truly safe?
- How can Community Economic Development strengthen collective well-being and resilience?
- What does prevention-focused, community-led safety look like in practice?
- How do we build stronger connections and shared solutions in an increasingly divided world?
- What role do justice, decolonization, and systems change play in creating safer communities for all?
- What would a truly decolonized vision of community safety and collective well-being look like in Manitoba, and what role can we play in bringing it to life?

You don't want to miss the Gathering 2026!



About The Gathering

The Gathering is an annual pay-what-you-can event where Manitoba's community builders connect, learn, and celebrate success. It is open to all, from staff of community organizations to civil servants, funders, students, academics, or anyone interested in community development and community economic development.

The event objectives include:

- **Networking and Information Sharing**
 - Bring people together to connect and share
 - Foster partnerships and collaboration that are essential for good community work
- **Mentorship and Peer Learning**
 - Learn from each other's work building inclusive communities, fairer local economies, and more sustainable environments
 - Welcome and mentor new and young community builders
 - Celebrate the work to build stronger communities
- **Action and Innovation**
 - Create a space to innovate and try new things
 - Broaden collective understanding of Community Economic Development
- **Agenda Setting**
 - Collectively discuss important questions, challenges, and ideas facing community builders in the year ahead
 - Discuss opportunities for leading social, economic, and environmental change

The Gathering is hosted by the Canadian Community Economic Development Network - Manitoba, with leadership and guidance from a team of community leaders from the Network who work together to design the theme and programming, as well as volunteer at the event.



Format

The Gathering 2026 will be held in person in Winnipeg on October 23, 2026.

The questions guiding this year's Gathering regarding encompasses a broad range of issues and approaches.

To reflect this, we welcome a diversity of programming ideas and formats including workshops, cultural programming, fun activities, and ideas for networking during lunch and in-between sessions. Proposals should consider the important questions posed in the Theme description on page 2, and how these questions might interact with your proposed topic.

Proposals are encouraged to include interactive, discussion-based opportunities, and be mindful of clear takeaways and learning objectives for participants.

We will happily work with you on finessing your proposal to meet the event objectives and to deliver an engaging session.

Learning & Engagement Style

We welcome proposals that engage participants in learning, reflection, relationship-building, and collective action. Sessions may include:

Stories from the Field

Fireside chats, panels, interviews, case studies, or storytelling sessions that share community experiences, lessons learned, innovations, and challenges in building safe, healthy, and resilient communities. (Generally, 60 minutes)

Skills for Community Change

Workshops, demonstrations, and practical learning sessions that equip participants with tools, strategies, and resources to strengthen community safety, well-being, leadership, and Community Economic Development practice. (Generally, 60 minutes)

Ideas, Dialogue & Systems Change



Interactive discussions, circles, panels, and facilitated conversations that explore emerging issues, challenge assumptions, and examine the root causes of social, economic, and environmental challenges. (Generally, 60 minutes)

Connection & Community Building

Networking activities, peer-learning opportunities, mentorship conversations, cultural activities, wellness practices, arts-based engagement, and other experiences that foster relationships, belonging, and collective care. (Variable length)

Areas of Focus

Programming may relate to one or more of the following topics:

Community Economic Development in a Time of Uncertainty: Exploring how communities can respond to economic, social, environmental, and political uncertainty through resilience, local solutions, and collective action.

Caring for Each Other: Examining community safety, collective well-being, mutual aid, belonging, housing, food security, and prevention-focused approaches that help people thrive.

Systems Change from the Ground Up: Addressing the root causes of inequity through community-led solutions, decolonization, anti-racism, reconciliation, advocacy, and systems transformation.

Reimagining Economy, Community, and Care: Exploring community wealth-building, alternative economic models, social financing models, the future of work, artificial intelligence, and approaches that prioritize people, communities, and the environment.

Building Bridges in a Time of Polarization: Strengthening relationships across sectors and communities, fostering dialogue, breaking down silos, and creating opportunities for shared learning and collaboration.

Renewing the Movement: Supporting leadership development, mentorship, knowledge-sharing, organizational resilience, and the next generation of community builders.



Audience and Logistics

The Gathering brings together 300 to 400 attendees. Participants may include front-line or management staff from community organizations, civil servants, funders, students, academics, and others, so participants will have a range of experience and knowledge about the topics presented.

Workshops, panels, and presentations are 60 minutes in length and can accommodate up to 30 people. Other programming (such as community building activities- during the lunch break) will be 30-45 minutes.

If you require use of technology (computers, slides, use of video) please highlight this in the submission form. We try to accommodate all technology requests, however, due to the limited materials and no Wi-Fi, we may not be able to meet your needs.

Selection Process

The call for session proposals closes on **September 1, 2026** and review will be on a rolling basis. Applicants will be notified two weeks after submission, if their proposal has been accepted.

How to Submit

Follow this [link](#) to submit your proposal. If you encounter any difficulty, please email manitoba@ccednet-rcdec.ca for support.

Contact

The Gathering 2026 Planning Committee: manitoba@ccednet-rcdec.ca