

Postdoctoral Fellow in Food Systems Indicators and Assessment at Lakehead University

Lakehead University is seeking applications for a postdoctoral fellowship focused on food systems indicators and assessment. The ideal candidate will possess a passion for inquiry into the nature of municipal and regional food systems, specifically how to accurately measure and understand their transformations and overall functioning. They will work with Dr. Charles Levkoe (Canada Research Chair in Equitable and Sustainable Food Systems and Professor in Health Sciences) and Dr. Jennifer Jarman (Professor and Chair, Interdisciplinary Studies) in close collaboration with community partners including the [Sharing Place Food Centre](#), the [Food Action Network of Northwestern Ontario](#), and [Sustain](#) and [Food Communities Network](#) (FCN). This position is part of the [Common Ground Network](#) and funded through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), in partnership with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC).

The postdoctoral fellow will engage in research and action on food systems indicators assessment, social and environmental justice, and policy evaluation. They will lead the research, design, and implementation of a food systems assessment tool that municipalities across Ontario can use to engage stakeholders in building more equitable and sustainable food systems. This will involve working closely with community partners and a technology partner to evaluate existing report card tools and develop a repository of indicators as the architecture for a living platform to be modelled in Thunder Bay and Orillia/Simcoe County. Central to this work will be balancing local context and place-based needs with the development of a regional, scalable assessment framework that can support other municipalities and organizations while also integrating existing indicator frameworks, including the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact. The postdoctoral fellow will also support network-building and knowledge exchange among other Ontario regions in partnership with Sustain by including food system practitioners, researchers, and partners to inform indicator development, tool refinement, and future uptake. This project aims to produce practical, publicly accessible tools for assessing food systems that support municipal decision-making, community planning, and food systems policy development across Ontario.

The successful candidate will bring strong expertise in qualitative and quantitative methodology and analysis to support evidence-informed policy development. The candidate must be equally comfortable with institutional sources (e.g., StatsCan, AAFC, municipal datasets) and community-held knowledge (e.g.,

farmers, food bank intake staff, neighbourhood organizations, food policy groups). This position offers opportunities to contribute to policy-relevant research, collaborate with partners across food systems and public policy sectors, and pursue independent research within a supportive mentorship environment.

General Outline of Duties

Lead evaluation and redesign of [Thunder Bay Food Systems Report Card](#) and inaugural Orillia/Simcoe County Food System Report Card with academic and community partners;

Develop a detailed platform design brief, specifying what the tool needs to do, for whom, in what format, and with what municipal maintenance model, to guide a technology partner to build;

Support the development of a transferable food systems assessment framework that can be used by municipalities across Ontario;

In partnership with Sustain and FCN, build and steward an Ontario-wide practitioner network by actively engaging food system strategy leads in other regions to ensure the indicator framework reflects diverse regional contexts and is designed for provincial uptake from the outset;

To support grant writing for the technological implementation the tool;

Conduct policy-relevant analyses leading to peer-reviewed and public-facing publications;

Present research findings at academic and/or community conferences and stakeholder meetings;

Produce public-facing knowledge mobilization outputs, including reports, presentations, and policy briefs.

Required Qualifications

Hold a PhD in a relevant discipline, including but not limited to food studies, public health, human geography, planning, or a related field (candidate must have graduated with a PhD within the past six years to be eligible as a postdoctoral fellow);

Have a passion for food systems research applicable to community settings;

Demonstrate experience with survey data, public data sources (e.g., StatsCan, AAFC, municipal datasets), mixed methods research (qualitative and quantitative), data analysis and presentation (e.g., visualization);

Effectively communicate among diverse stakeholders (academic, municipal, community, and industry);

Have familiarity with Indigenous food systems, Ontario food systems policy, governance structures, community food systems initiatives;

Interest in digital platform design and public-facing tool development;

Experience with co-design or participatory approaches to tool and framework development.

Start Date & Duration of Appointment: June 1, 2026 (35 hours/week, full-time); 18 months

Location: This position is remote, but the ideal candidate should be located in proximity to Thunder Bay or Orillia

Salary Range: \$100,000 - \$129,000 (for 18 months)

Review of applications will begin Friday, April 17, 2026 and continue until the position is filled. The electronic application (in the form of one PDF document) should include: a letter of interest, a curriculum vitae, one writing sample, and the names and contact information of three references. A completed [Confirmation of Eligibility to Work in Canada.pdf](#) form must accompany your application package.

Applicants should submit their electronic application by email to: Dr. Charles Levkoe, clevkoe@lakeheadu.ca

Lakehead University is committed to creating a diverse and inclusive environment and welcomes applications from all qualified individuals including women, racialized persons, Indigenous people, persons with disabilities, and other equity-seeking groups. All qualified candidates are encouraged to apply; however, Canadian citizens and permanent residents will be given priority. This is in accordance with Canadian immigration requirements.

Lakehead University has a goal to recruit and retain a diverse workforce as measured by increasing representation of underrepresented groups among applicants, candidates, and hires. Experience working with Indigenous or racialized communities, and/or members of other equity-deserving groups, is a strong asset. A lived experience or worked experience of any of these issues is preferred.

We appreciate your interest; Lakehead University is committed to supporting an accessible environment. Applicants requiring accommodation during the interview process should contact the Office of Human Resources at (807) 343-8010 ext. 8334 or human.resources@lakeheadu.ca to make appropriate arrangements.