



Appendix D
Letter of Information and Consent Form
[Survey]

Title of the Study: ***Mapping Northumberland County's Food System: Assets and Opportunities***

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Invitation: You are invited to participate in an interview as part of the research study, *Mapping Northumberland County's Food System: Assets and Opportunities*. You have been invited because of your knowledge, experience, or involvement in Northumberland County's food system. Your participation will contribute to a better understanding of the people, organizations, relationships, and initiatives that make up the local food system and how it has evolved over time.

Background: Northumberland County has a diverse network of farms, food businesses, institutions, community organizations, and food-related initiatives. While many organizations are working to strengthen the local food system, there is currently no comprehensive inventory of these assets or shared understanding of how they connect. This project builds on previous community food system engagement activities. It will support future collaboration by documenting existing assets and identifying opportunities for strengthening the local food system.

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this study is to:

- document organizations, initiatives, and resources that make up Northumberland County's food system;
- better understand the history and evolution of the local food system;
- identify existing partnerships, strengths, challenges, and opportunities;
- document lessons learned from previous food system initiatives; and
- inform future food system planning and collaboration.

Study Procedure: If you agree to participate, you will be asked to provide consent at the beginning of the survey. The survey will take approximately 20-30 minutes to complete. It may take longer if you choose to provide detailed responses to the open-ended questions. With your permission, the interview will be audio-recorded to ensure an accurate transcript.

Length of Study: The project will take place between Summer and Fall 2026. Interviews will occur following completion of the online survey, with findings presented at a community gathering in Fall 2026. A final report will be completed following the conclusion of the project.

Risks: This study presents limited foreseeable risks beyond those encountered in everyday conversation. Some participants may feel uncomfortable discussing challenges or past experiences related to the local food system. You may decline to answer any question or withdraw from the interview at any time prior to data analysis without penalty.

Because Northumberland County's food system is small and interconnected, there is also a possibility that you could be recognized based on your role, organization, or comments. To minimize privacy or reputational risks, findings will generally be reported at a broad or aggregate level and identifying details will be removed where possible.

Benefits: Although there is no direct personal benefit from participating, your knowledge and experience will contribute to a better understanding of Northumberland County's food system. Findings will support future collaboration, planning, and community-led food system initiatives.

Voluntary Participation: Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Choosing not to participate, or deciding to withdraw, will not affect your relationship with the researchers, Community Power Northumberland, Loyalist College, or any participating organization. Survey participants may withdraw from this study at any time prior to submitting the

results of this survey, by simply closing the survey. Once survey results have been submitted, there is no ability to remove them.

Confidentiality and Data Security: Participant information will be kept confidential throughout the data collection, analysis, and storage processes. While the survey collects identifying information about organizations, businesses, farms, and initiatives, participants' perspectives and opinions will not be publicly attributed to them or their organization. Organization-level information will only be publicly included in the Asset Map where it is already publicly available or where participants have provided explicit consent for its inclusion.

Confidential research data will be securely stored within the Loyalist College network file for a period of 7 years, as per the recommended minimum data retention period. During this time, only authorized CFHC research personnel will have access to this data. After a period of 7 years, study data will be permanently deleted.

Raw or identifiable research data will not be shared with Community Power Northumberland, Steering Committee members, or other project partners.

Use of Artificial Intelligence Tools: Artificial intelligence tools may be used to support administrative or writing-related aspects of the project; however, no participant responses, interview transcripts, recordings, or other confidential research data will be entered into these tools.

Compensation for Participation: There is no monetary compensation for participation in this study.

Dissemination and Publications: Study findings will be summarized in a final report and shared with Community Power Northumberland, project participants, and other community partners. Findings will also be presented at a community gathering to support discussion about future food system priorities and opportunities for collaboration. No participants will be identified without their explicit permission.

Contact Information:

If you have questions about this study, please contact the Principal Investigator:

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If you have concerns about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact:

Jessica Becking, PhD

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