

OFFICIAL CONFERENCE PROGRAM



INTER-FAITH FOOD SHUTTLE

Growing Stronger Communities

ANNUAL AGRICULTURE CONFERENCE

Sustainable Agriculture for Nutrition Security

November 5 - 7, 2025

PRESENTING SPONSOR



WELCOME!



INTER-FAITH FOOD SHUTTLE

📍 1001 Blair Drive, Suite 120
Raleigh, NC 27603

☎ (919) 250-0043

🌐 foodshuttle.org
growingstrongercommunities.org

Hello Friend!

On behalf of Inter-Faith Food Shuttle, welcome and thank you for joining us for this inaugural gathering of growers, educators, food system advocates, and changemakers.

Rooted in our mission to feed our neighbors, teach self-sufficiency and grow healthy foods by cultivating innovative approaches to end hunger, this conference is a celebration of the power of agriculture to nourish both people and communities.

Together, we're cultivating a hunger-free community—one seed, one harvest, one connection at a time.

We are honored to have you here as we share knowledge, foster collaboration, and grow stronger—together.

Let's feed. Let's teach. Let's grow.

Warmly,

A blue ink handwritten signature, appearing to read 'L. Ron Pringle', written in a cursive style.

L. Ron Pringle
President & CEO, Inter-Faith Food Shuttle

2:00 PM – 6:00 PM **Arrival and Check-in at the Sheraton Raleigh Hotel**

2:00 PM – 4:00 PM **Optional Tours of the Inter-Faith Food Shuttle
Farm and/or the Food Bank of Central and Eastern NC**

Note: self-transportation required

Farm address: 2300 Dover Farm Road, Raleigh, NC 27606

Food Bank of Central and Eastern NC address: 1924 Capital Boulevard,
Raleigh, NC 27604—enter through the visitor entrance (painted purple area).

Tours will start every 15 minutes at both locations, beginning at 2:00pm,
with the last tour beginning at 3:15pm. Tours will last approximately
30-45 minutes.

6:00 PM – 7:00 PM **Welcome Reception**

Oak Forest Ballroom Lobby / Esplanade



7:30 AM – 8:30 AM

Breakfast

Oak Forest Ballroom Lobby

8:30 AM – 8:45 AM

Welcome & Opening Remarks

[Kimberly Burrows](#), *Chief Development Officer, Inter-Faith Food Shuttle* -
Oak Forest Ballroom

8:45 AM – 9:00 AM

A Word from Our Sponsor

[Jon Zwinski](#), *US Region Head & General Manager, Chiesi USA*

9:00 AM – 10:30 AM

Fireside Chat: The Power of Growing Together

[L. Ron Pringle](#), *President & CEO, Inter-Faith Food Shuttle*

10:30 AM – 10:45 AM

Networking Coffee Break

10:45 AM – 12:00 PM

Morning Breakout Sessions

Choose one session to attend; see session descriptions (pages 7 - 11) for more info

- + **FROM SEED TO SCALE:** Building and Expanding Food Bank Agriculture
- + **TRANSFORMING HEALTH THROUGH FOOD IS MEDICINE:** Innovative Programs for Nutrition Security
- + **OPENING NEW GROUND:** Access, Ownership, and Creative Growing Spaces



12:00 PM – 1:15 PM

Networking Lunch & Trade Show

1:15 PM – 2:30 PM

Afternoon Breakout Sessions

Choose one session to attend; see session descriptions (pages 7 - 11) for more info

+ NOURISHING MIND AND BODY: Cultural Preservation Through Local Foods

+ STRONGER TOGETHER: Building Trust and Creating Win-Win Solutions for Farmers

+ THE ROLE OF UNIVERSITIES IN NUTRITION SECURITY

2:30 PM – 2:45 PM

Networking Coffee Break

2:45 PM – 4:00 PM

Afternoon Breakout Sessions

Choose one session to attend; see session descriptions (pages 7 - 11) for more info

+ REMAINING RESILIENT: Refocusing Our Advocacy in a Changed Landscape

+ HOW TO BUILD A FOOD IS MEDICINE PROGRAM

+ ROOTED IN RESILIENCE: Supporting Neighbors to Grow Their Own Solutions to End Hunger

4:00 PM – 5:00 PM

Day 1 Wrap-Up & Preview of Day 2

[L. Ron Pringle](#), *President & CEO, Inter-Faith Food Shuttle* - Oak Forest Ballroom

5:30 PM

Buses leave the hotel for the Farm Dinner

Ground Floor Lobby

6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Farm Dinner

Reception at 6:00 PM followed by dinner at 6:30 PM

8:00 PM

Buses depart from the Farm to the hotel

7:00 AM – 8:00 AM

Breakfast & Table Topics

Oak Forest Ballroom

8:00 AM – 8:15 AM

Morning Welcome & Reflections from Day 1

Oak Forest Ballroom

8:15 AM – 9:00 AM

General Session: Spotlight on Successful Partnerships

[L. Ron Pringle](#), *President & CEO, Inter-Faith Food Shuttle*

9:00 AM – 10:30 AM

Self-Facilitated Breakout Sessions

Attend your regional session

REGIONS:

SOUTHEAST – OAK FOREST BALLROOM

NORTHEAST AND MID-ATLANTIC – HANOVER BALLROOM I

MOUNTAIN PLAINS AND MIDWEST – HANOVER BALLROOM II

SOUTHWEST AND WESTERN REGION – HANOVER BALLROOM III

10:30 AM – 10:45 AM

Networking Coffee Break

10:45 AM – 11:30 AM

Group Harvest: Sharing Partnership Plans

[Rajesh Mirchandani](#), *CEO, Storyteller Consulting* - Oak Harvest Ballroom

11:30 AM – 12:00 PM

Closing Plenary: Growing Forward Together

[L. Ron Pringle](#), *President & CEO, Inter-Faith Food Shuttle*



TRACK 1: PLANT MORE LOCALLY

Hanover Ballroom I

+ FROM SEED TO SCALE: Building and Expanding Food Bank Agriculture

November 6th — 10:45 AM

PRESENTERS: [Margaret Burn](#), *Lowcountry Food Bank (SC)* + [Donna Vick](#), *Second Harvest Food Bank (TN)* + [James Hoffer](#), *Dayton Food Bank (OH)* + Kristen Sommerfield, [Inter-Faith Food Shuttle \(NC\)](#)

Whether you're starting your first garden or running a small farm, the steps to grow your impact are rooted in strategy, planning, and relationships. This session will guide you from the earliest stages—assessing space, resources, and community needs—to scaling production, diversifying crops, and integrating agriculture into your organization's mission. Attendees will explore case studies from food banks that went from small plots to thriving multi-acre operations, learn about volunteer and staffing models, and walk away with practical planning tools to fit any scale.

+ THE ROLE OF UNIVERSITIES IN NUTRITION SECURITY

November 6th — 1:15 PM

PRESENTERS: [Heidi Coe](#), *Second Harvest Heartland (MN)* + [Tom Mainzer](#), *Feeding Pennsylvania* + [Greta Klawiter-Lein](#), *Augsburg University (MN)* + LeBroderick Woods, [Tougaloo College \(MS\)](#)

Colleges and universities can play a unique role as drivers of nutrition security, food sovereignty, and farming and food justice. This session examines how higher education institutions can use land and partnerships to meet real community needs. We'll explore successful partnerships between universities, food banks and other organizations, from leveraging Extension programs for public benefit, to campus land use for food production to support both the student population and the broader community.

+ **ROOTED IN RESILIENCE:** Supporting Neighbors to Grow Their Own Solutions to End Hunger

November 6th — 2:45 PM

PRESENTERS: [Alexa Poindexter](#), *Ozarks Food Harvest (MO)* + Jessica Allen, [Ozarks Food Harvest \(MO\)](#) + Lynn Conyers, [Inter-Faith Food Shuttle \(NC\)](#) + G4E Neighbor, *Inter-Faith Food Shuttle (NC)*

Communities already hold the knowledge and capacity to feed themselves—if given the right tools and support. This session highlights examples of food banks and local organizations providing resources, training, and technical assistance to help neighbors grow their own food. We'll discuss asset-based community development, culturally responsive program design, and how to balance support with empowerment. Participants will learn about Ozarks Food Harvest's garden outreach programs, including Garden-to-Go-Kits (seed distribution), Plant it Forward (public plant distribution), field trip opportunities, educational workshops and garden technical assistance; and also hear about Food Shuttle's Gardens for Everyone program, its support of local community gardens and other local growing opportunities.

TRACK 2: CULTIVATE BETTER HEALTH

Hanover Ballroom II

+ **TRANSFORMING HEALTH THROUGH FOOD IS MEDICINE: INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS FOR NUTRITION SECURITY**

November 6th — 10:45 AM

PRESENTERS: Erica Pine, [Chiesi USA](#) + [Allison McGee](#), *Feeding Southwest Virginia (VA)* + [Maria Bowman](#), *Blue Ridge Area Food Bank (VA)* + [Liz Hatzenbuehler](#), *Food & Healthy Policy – Boston (MA)* + [Dr. LaPorchia Collins](#), *Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy, Tufts University*

Join us for a powerful panel exploring the full spectrum of population-level healthy food policies and programs. Panelists will share insights on how initiatives such as Produce Prescription Programs, Food Pharmacies,

and Medically Tailored Groceries and Meals are reshaping the narrative around nutrition and disease management. Expect compelling stories from LaPorchia, Maria, and Allison on the transformative impact of Produce Prescription Programs, and hear from Liz about how Massachusetts leveraged the 1115 Waiver to make Medically Tailored Groceries accessible to Medicaid patients. We'll also examine the critical role of nutrition counseling and education, and the far-reaching consequences of government shutdowns on food access. Be prepared to be inspired—and challenged—to formulate your own programs that build trust, engage communities, and drive healthier outcomes for all.

+ NOURISHING MIND AND BODY: Cultural Preservation Through Local Foods

November 6th — 1:15 PM

PRESENTERS: [Margaret Burn](#), *Lowcountry Food Bank (SC)* + [Victoria Smalls](#), *Gullah Community (SC)* + Joseph and Helen Fields, [Gullah Farmers \(SC\)](#) + Gary Besaw, [Great Lakes Intertribal Food Coalition \(WI\)](#) + Kara Black, Tribal Elder, [Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin](#)

Food is more than nutrition—it's heritage, memory, and identity. This session explores how culturally connected foods strengthen mental and physical health while reinforcing community pride. Through storytelling and knowledge-sharing, this session will reflect on how different regions, cultures, and communities are preserving their food ways and improving their nutrition security.

+ HOW TO BUILD A FOOD IS MEDICINE PROGRAM

November 6th — 2:45 PM

PRESENTERS: [Trevor Hyde](#), *Wake County Cooperative Extension (NC)* + [Athan Barkoukis](#), *ED Farmer FoodShare (NC)* + [Kendall Kirk](#), *Nourished Rx* + [Isis Villegas Eynon](#), *FreshConnect*, [Gleaners Food Bank \(IN\)](#) + Rickeya Feggans, [Feeding America](#)

Food Is Medicine (FIM) programs connect food access with healthcare, offering a powerful way to improve health outcomes and reduce medical

costs. In this session, we'll explore the end-to-end process of building a FIM program: sourcing fresh produce, designing medically tailored food packages, partnering with healthcare providers, and measuring health impact. You'll learn how to navigate funding streams, integrate nutrition education, and align your program with both patient needs and healthcare system priorities.

TRACK 3: HARVEST OPPORTUNITIES TOGETHER

Hanover Ballroom III

+ **OPENING NEW GROUND:** Access, Ownership, and Creative Growing Spaces

November 6th — 10:45 AM

PRESENTERS: [Leigh Ann Hammerbacher](#), *Triangle Land Conservancy (NC)* + [Heather Szaro](#), *Triangle Land Conservancy (NC)* + [Kierra Hyman](#), *Triangle Land Conservancy (NC)* + Amy Ballard, [City of Raleigh Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources \(NC\)](#)

Access to land is one of the greatest challenges for community agriculture—especially for historically marginalized communities. This session explores innovative solutions to protect and expand land access, from long-term lease models to conservation and community land trusts. We'll also look at unconventional growing spaces—including protected lands like City parks, land trust owned properties, and land protected by conservation easements—and discuss the partnerships and permissions needed to make them viable. Participants will leave with policy tools, partnership strategies, and creative ideas to unlock underused spaces for food production.

+ **STRONGER TOGETHER:** Building Trust and Creating Win-Win Solutions for Farmers

November 6th — 1:15 PM

PRESENTERS: [Charles Parrish](#), *Inter-Faith Food Shuttle (NC)* + [Carter Crain](#), *Food Bank of Central and Eastern NC* + [Athan Barkoukis](#), *Farmer Food Share (NC)* + [Colleen Hanlon-Smith](#), *Peak Season (MA)* + Larry Davis, [Davis Farms Sandy Creek \(NC\)](#)

The most effective partnerships between farmers and food institutions are built on trust, mutual respect, and shared benefit. This session dives into strategies for building lasting relationships, from fair pricing and transparent communication to innovative purchasing programs that turn surplus or “seconds” into valuable community food. We’ll also explore how circular economy models can reduce waste and mitigate risks for farmers while improving food sourcing and access.

+ REMAINING RESILIENT: Refocusing Our Advocacy in a Changed Landscape

November 6th — 2:45 PM

PRESENTERS: [Tyler Edwards](#), *National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (DC)* + [Marguerite Green](#), *Louisiana Food Policy Council* + [Colleen Hanlon-Smith](#), *Farm2Neighbor Maine*

Policy and funding landscapes are shifting, and local agriculture programs are feeling the impact. This session focuses on strategies to adapt advocacy priorities in a time of reduced government support. Participants will learn how to make the case for restoring funds, build coalitions, and amplify the voices of growers, community members, and food banks. Expect practical tips for engaging policymakers and using data to influence change.





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we're helping nourish our communities and
create lasting impact.**

**Because better health begins with access,
care, and connection.**



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