



FSLN COMMUNITY FOOD SYSTEMS MENTORSHIP

2026 PROGRAM INFO CALL

February 5, 2026

TODAY'S FLOW

About the
FSLN & Our
Mentorship
Program

Meet the 2026
Mentors

Application
Information

What to
Expect as a
Mentee

Q & A



GROUNDING IN PURPOSE

A national peer learning community that

- **connects** current and emerging leaders
- **strengthens** individual and collective leadership capacity, and
- **fosters** collaboration across communities

To **accelerate** the realization of a just, equitable and sustainable food system that generates good food, health, and opportunity for all!



OUR CULTURAL AGREEMENTS

Honor and celebrate our **collective wisdom** - together, we know a lot!

Be mindful of our power, privilege, and how much space we are taking up

Take responsibility for impact, regardless of intent



Meet each other where we are. Showing up is enough, and listening is participating

Give grace to one another and approach conflict with curiosity

Silence is not consent - proactively seek permission

Honor **confidentiality** - lessons leave, stories stay

Take care of our own **physical, mental, and emotional needs**

Challenge assumptions, respect our differences, and **speak from our own experience**

COMMUNITY FOOD SYSTEMS MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

Program Goals

- To **build relationships** of solidarity and support across the movement
- To **create space** for seasoned leaders to share their wisdom, knowledge, & expertise with others
- To **strengthen the capacity of food systems leaders** to catalyze social change through food

Stats to Date

- Launched in January 2018
- 8 cohorts = **Over 200 mentees** total; 63% identify as BIPOC
- **100% of participants** feel more confident in their leadership **capacity** & 90% planned to make changes to their practices



COMMUNITY FOOD SYSTEMS MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

Mentee Focus

- **Organizational Leadership**
 - Developing accountability within an organization
 - Community engagement and transferring power
- **Personal Leadership**
 - Prioritizing where to direct your energy to be most effective
 - Addressing self doubt and imposter syndrome
- **Racial Equity**
 - Navigating white spaces in the food movement and within organizations as a person of color
 - Creating culturally relevant and responsive places in agriculture
- **Technical areas**
 - Community engagement, marketing and promotion, coalition building, urban farming, non-asset based distribution, food business and social enterprise operations, supply chain management.



IN MENTEE'S WORDS:



2026 MENTORS



ANGEL MENDEZ



BEVELYN AFOR UKAH



KAMYAR ENSHAYAN



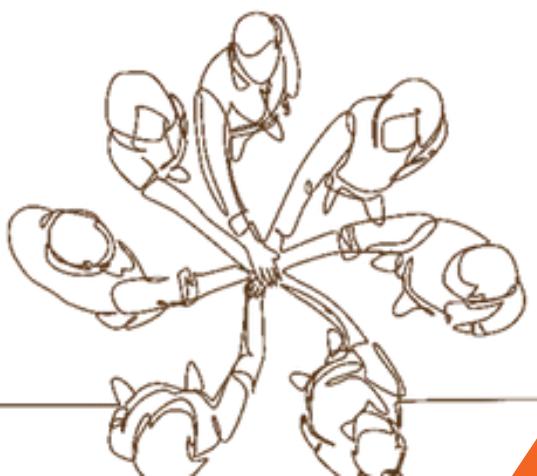
RICH PIROG



KAREN LEHMAN



LYDIA VILLANUEVA



2026 MENTORS, CONTINUED



REV DELE



KAREN WASHINGTON



MILES GORDON



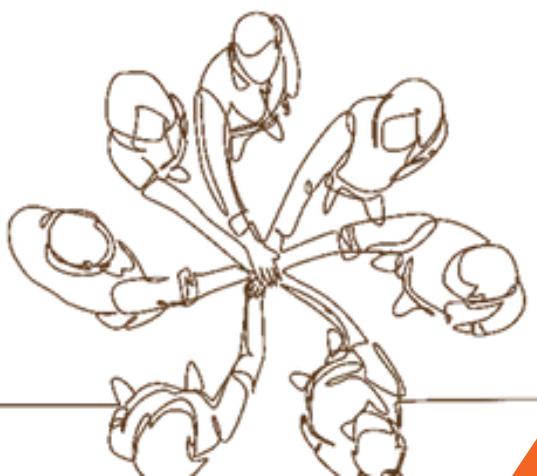
ROWEN WHITE



NANCY CREAMER



SHARON THORNBERRY



WHAT TO EXPECT

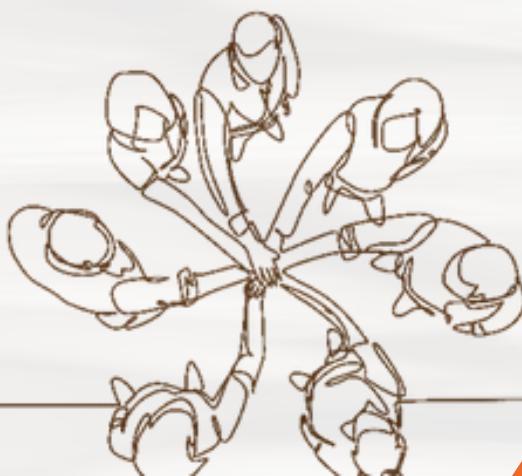
The 2026 Mentorship Program Includes:

- ✓ 8-hours of Direct Coaching Support from a Mentor over 4 months
 - **April 6 – July 17, 2026**
 - Create time for follow-up, prep, and action in-between calls - commitment is required!
 - Mentees set their own goals for the program, mentors support in finding the path
- ✓ Mentee Cohort Development
 - Kickoff, midway, and debrief/reflection connection points
 - Key Dates for 1-hour Mandatory Mentee Zooms:
 - Mentee Cohort Kickoff Call: Monday April 6, 3 CST / 1 PST
 - Mentee Cohort Midway Call: Monday, May 18, 3 CST / 1 PST
 - Mentee Cohort Wrap-Up Call: Monday, June 29, 3 CST / 1 PST



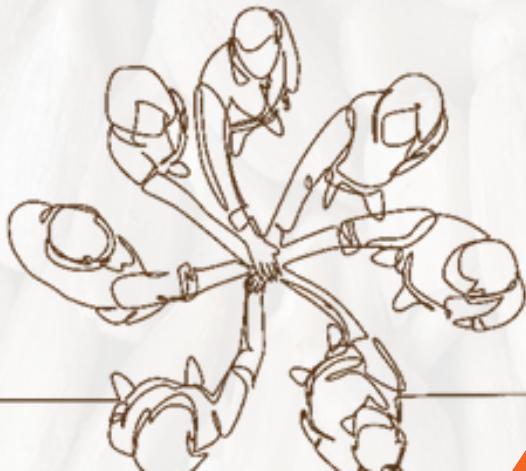
MENTORSHIP VS. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

- Mentorship is based on relationship — a mentor's purpose is to support their mentee.
- Mentees consistently say their mentor was a sounding board.
- Asking for and receiving specific technical assistance may be *part* of the relationship, but it is not its primary purpose
- Answers/solutions ultimately reside within the mentee.
- Mentors are also learning — solidifying their own experience and expertise, and exchanging ideas with mentees.



KEY DATES

- Applications open through **March 8th**
- Mentees notified: week of March 25th
 - Survey to confirm participation
- Mentee kickoff call: Monday, April 6th
- Mentee midway check-in call: Monday, May 18
- Mentee closeout call: Monday, June 29
- Mentorship runs: April 6 - July 17, 2026

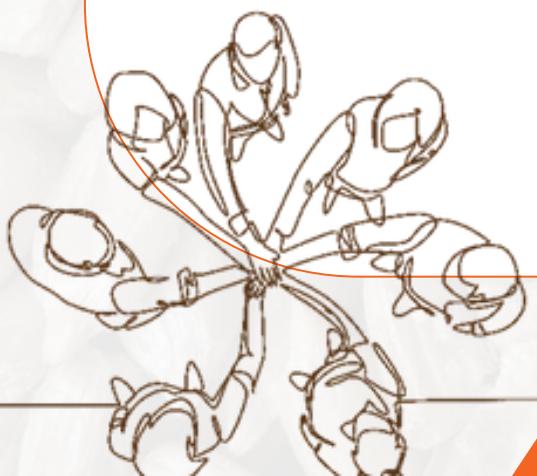


ELIGIBILITY

Who Should Apply

- Anyone from nonprofit 501(c)3 organizations, fiscally sponsored projects under a 501(c)3, and mission-driven food and farm businesses, extension staff and public servants who identify as food system professionals.
- Program staff to Executive Directors. Food systems leaders from all identities and levels of experience.
- Applicants and their supporting organizations must both be verified members of the FSLN

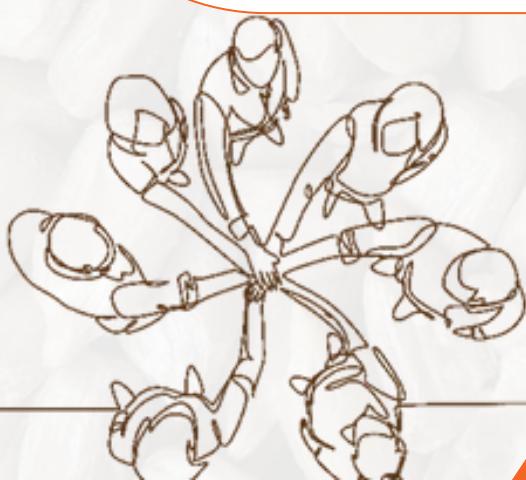
Consider your time and availability to engage with a mentor and follow-up between calls.



APPLICATION TIPS

When Filling Out The Application

- Be thorough. Incomplete applications will not be considered.
- Read the website carefully, especially the descriptions of the mentors, who you want to mentor you and why.
- Be honest about your current status and your leadership journey.
- Deeply consider why you are seeking mentorship and what you want to get and give from this relationship.
- Select your 1st ,2nd and 3rd choice for mentor on the application.
- Complete the provided Organizational Capacity Assessment Matrix.



APPLICATION PROCESS

How We Evaluate Applications

- FSLN screens applications for completeness. If incomplete, it will be discarded.
- FSLN then screens complete applications and passes them on to selected mentors.
- Mutual matching process.
- Mentors review applications and select who matches with their background.

If selected, mentee will be notified and must confirm by the deadline.





QUESTIONS?

SHARE YOUR SHOUT-OUTS!

Reflections | Appreciations | Encouragements | Concerns

Take yourself off mute or type in the chat

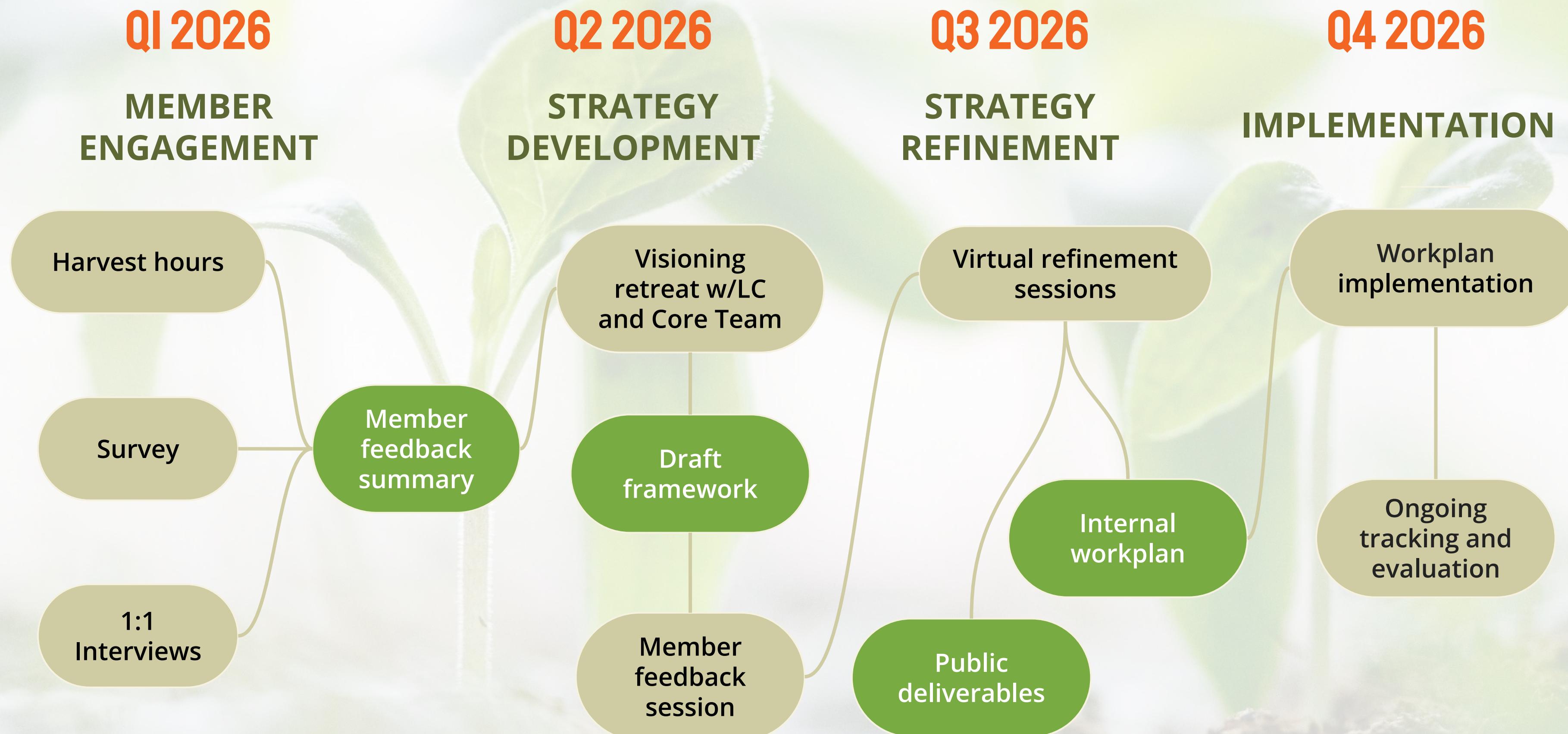
BREAKOUT TIME

*“What’s a time when you felt a **deep sense of belonging** to a community?”*

*“What were the **conditions** that allowed for that sense?”*

15 minutes total (3-4 minutes per person)

MEMBER ACTIVATION PROCESS



WHERE WE'RE HEADED - 2026

Resourcing Leadership

- Community Food Systems **Mentorship Program**
- Food Systems Leadership **Retreats**
- **Virtual trainings /** capacity building opps

Resourcing Collaboration

- **Communities of Practice**
- **Policy Advocacy** to secure permanent funding for LFPA
- Network & Coalition Stewards **Gathering**

Resourcing Network Infrastructure

- Backbone **staff** team
- Network **governance** & leadership pathways
- **Member activation** & priority setting



FSLN MILESTONES

2017
Initial Research and Design



2018
FSLN Launches



Food Systems Mentorship Program reaches 100 mentees

Systems Leadership Retreats for 130 members

2020
COVID pivots

Support to understand + leverage unprecedented federal funding

Researching **COVID's impact on food systems**

2021

Merged with National Good Food Network

Deepened commitment to **advancing racial equity** across the network



2023

Launched **F2FA Learning Lab**

Strengthened **advocacy partnership** with NSAC

Expanded work in **Value Chain Coordination & Federal Resource Mobilization**

2024

Largest Mentorship Cohort to Date

Hosted **first state-level fellowship** (AR)

FSLN Evolution Process Kicked Off

2022

Inclusive strategic planning process

2,700+ individuals receive capacity building support
Over **1000** in Communities of Practice

Accelerating Impact

A resource-enriched approach that deepens support for projects through direct acceleration of mission-driven impact.



Core Acceleration Services

Multiplier's seasoned team provides efficient, cost-effective administrative and operations support that is core to our work:

- Finance and accounting services
- Grants and contracts management
- HR and payroll administration
- Fiduciary oversight and IRS compliance
- Risk management and business insurance



Program Impact Acceleration

An accelerator team brings additional senior nonprofit expertise including:

- Strategic planning and capacity building
- Program design and outcomes measurement
- Fundraising and donor relations support
- Team recruitment and team development
- Strategic partnership development

WHAT WE'RE CURRENTLY ASKING

“What does it mean to **belong** to FSLN?”

“How can FSLN **show up for its members** in this uniquely challenging moment?”

“What **powers** and **responsibilities** should FSLN members hold?”

“What is FSLN’s **ideal niche** in the ecosystem of national food systems groups?”

