

Call for Proposals

Migration in the Ever-Changing Ecosystem

Submission deadline: November 30th, 2026

The Metropolis Institute invites proposals for sessions and posters for the 29th Metropolis Canada Conference, taking place in Vancouver in March 2027.

Canada's migration landscape is undergoing a period of significant change. Reductions in immigration targets, fewer temporary residents, growing economic pressures and government budget constraints are reshaping migration policy and the institutions responsible for welcoming and supporting newcomers. At the same time, artificial intelligence is transforming how governments, employers, service providers and migrants make decisions and interact with one another.

These developments are neither isolated nor short-term. They raise fundamental questions about the future of Canada's immigration system, the structure and capacity of the immigrant-serving sector, and the ability of newcomers and vulnerable migrants to establish secure and successful lives in Canada.

The 2027 Metropolis Canada Conference will bring together policymakers, researchers, immigrant-serving organizations, community leaders, employers, educators and people with lived experience to examine these transformations and identify practical responses.

Themes for Submission

Proposals are particularly encouraged under three principal themes:

1. Artificial Intelligence and the Migration Process
2. Rethinking the Immigrant-Serving Sector
3. Migration and Growing Vulnerability

Theme One: Artificial Intelligence and the Migration Process

Artificial intelligence is rapidly becoming part of nearly every stage of migration—from the circulation of information and the preparation of applications to immigrant selection, border management, settlement services and labour-market integration. AI offers opportunities to improve access, efficiency and service delivery, but it also presents serious questions about transparency, privacy, accountability, bias and unequal access to technology.

Possible topics include:

- The use of AI in immigration selection and application processing
- Algorithmic decision-making, transparency and accountability
- AI applications in settlement and integration services
- Translation, interpretation and access to information
- AI-assisted employment matching and credential recognition
- Digital literacy and unequal access to new technologies
- Privacy, data protection and informed consent
- Algorithmic bias and discrimination
- The use of AI by immigration consultants and prospective migrants
- AI-generated misinformation, fraud and exploitation
- The effects of automation on newcomer employment
- Maintaining meaningful human judgment in technology-assisted systems

We particularly welcome proposals that move beyond speculation and examine how AI is already affecting migrants, institutions and frontline services.

Theme Two: Rethinking the Immigrant-Serving Sector

The immigrant-serving sector is entering a period of structural transformation. Reduced numbers of newcomers, changing categories of admission and significant funding pressures are forcing organizations to reconsider how services are designed, delivered and sustained.

This transformation should not be understood simply as an episodic response to a temporary decline in immigration.

It raises longer-term questions about the mandate, structure and capacity of the sector. Organizations may need to consolidate services, develop partnerships, adopt new technologies, share infrastructure, diversify funding and reconsider which populations they serve.

Possible topics include:

- The effects of reduced immigration targets on settlement organizations
- Government budget reductions and organizational sustainability
- Restructuring, consolidation and collaboration within the sector
- New models for regional and community-based service delivery

- Maintaining institutional knowledge and workforce capacity
- Recruiting, retaining and supporting frontline settlement workers
- Digital, hybrid and AI-assisted settlement services
- Serving newcomers beyond the initial settlement period
- Partnerships between governments, municipalities, employers and community organizations
- The role of smaller, rural and remote settlement agencies
- New approaches to measuring outcomes and demonstrating impact
- Diversifying funding and reducing organizational dependence on single sources
- Ensuring that transformation does not reduce access for the most vulnerable
- From coordination to collective impact: what can local immigration partnerships or sector umbrellas contribute to a changing immigration system?

Proposals should consider not only how the sector can manage current reductions, but what a resilient and effective immigrant-serving system should look like in the years ahead.

Theme Three: Migration and Growing Vulnerability

Newcomers arrive in Canada at a time of rising living costs, limited housing availability and affordability, pressure on public services and increased economic uncertainty. These conditions can intensify vulnerabilities that already arise from precarious immigration status, limited support networks, discrimination, language barriers and difficulties securing employment that reflects a person's skills and experience.

Vulnerability is not experienced equally. Immigration category, legal status, gender, race, age, disability, family structure and place of residence can significantly shape settlement outcomes. Refugees, asylum seekers, temporary foreign workers, international students and migrants with uncertain or expiring status may face particular risks.

Possible topics include:

- Housing affordability, overcrowding and homelessness
- The rising cost of living and newcomer poverty
- Food insecurity and access to essential services
- Precarious employment, workplace exploitation and wage gaps
- Mental health, isolation and family well-being
- Temporary status and pathways to permanent residence
- The experiences of refugees and asylum seekers
- International students and changing migration policies
- Gender-based violence and family vulnerability

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Sheraton Vancouver Wall Centre
Vancouver, British Columbia
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- Racism, discrimination and hate
- Access to health care, education and legal services
- Regional differences in newcomer vulnerability
- The intersection of immigration status with gender, race, age and disability
- Community-based approaches to prevention, protection and resilience
- Building resilient local immigration ecosystems in an era of funding uncertainty

We welcome proposals that identify emerging forms of vulnerability, document the experiences of affected populations and offer evidence-based solutions.

Additional Areas of Interest

While priority will be given to proposals addressing the three principal themes, submissions may also examine other important issues related to immigration, settlement, integration and inclusion, including:

- Public confidence in Canada's immigration system
- Immigration levels and demographic change
- Francophone immigration
- Indigenous-newcomer relations
- Regionalization and rural immigration
- Citizenship, identity and belonging
- Intercommunity relations and social cohesion
- Immigration and public opinion
- Labour shortages and economic integration
- Family reunification
- Migration governance and intergovernmental cooperation
- International and comparative migration perspectives

Proposal Formats and Categories

Applicants may submit proposals for either a **poster** or a **session**.

Sessions may take the following **categories**:

- **Panel discussion:** multiple speakers sharing diverse perspectives
- **Research presentation:** overview of a specific study or project
- **Educational lecture or keynote talk:** informative and conceptual
- **Practical workshop:** hands-on learning or skill development
- **Roundtable discussion:** interactive, participant-driven exchange
- **Case study or best practice session:** real-world examples and lessons learned
- **Program or policy changes:** government department updates the sector on a new program or changes to existing policy or programs

Proposals that bring together researchers, policymakers, practitioners and people with lived experience are strongly encouraged. We also welcome sessions that bridge sectors, regions and linguistic communities.

Note that we will accept a maximum of 3 session proposals per organization. Priority will be given to multi-presenter and multi-organization sessions.

Submission Requirements

Proposals should include:

- The proposed session title (Optional: for sessions and workshops given by a team, title of individual presentation)
- Format: **Session** or **poster**
- The selected conference theme and, for sessions only, the category
- A summary of the proposed presentation or session (50 words maximum - Will be included in the program)
- The names, titles and organizational affiliations of all participants
- Each participant must be marked as either an organizer, presenter, moderator, or contributor:
 - **Organizer:** Main contact person for the submission. They are responsible for coordinating the presentation and the presenters, and for communicating with the Metropolis Institute Events team (for example, providing any session updates as soon as possible) as well as with the presenters. The organizer must inform all participants that the proposal is accepted and ensure that they register.
 - *If an organizer is also a presenter, they must also include themselves in the 'presenter' section of the form. Otherwise their name will not be included on the program.*
 - **Moderator (or session Chair) (optional):** Facilitates and manages the presentation. They introduce the presenters, manage speaking time among presenters, prepare questions and guide the discussion with the audience
 - **Presenter:** Prepares and delivers a presentation
 - **Contributor:** Contributed to the presentation or the research being presented but will not be presenting and may not be in attendance at the conference. They will be credited, but not involved in logistics or communications leading up to the event.

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Questions may be directed to the Metropolis events team, at metropolis@acs-aec.ca.

Join us in Vancouver in March 2027 as we consider how Canada's migration system and immigrant-serving institutions can respond to technological change, structural transformation and growing vulnerability.