



A Message from the Executive Director: Community Visits, Reflections, and Upcoming Initiatives at OFNEDA

Wachay OFNEDA Community,

As spring approaches, I am pleased to share a few updates and reflections from OFNEDA as we continue our work to support First Nation economic development across Ontario. This season brings renewed energy, and with it, new opportunities to connect, learn, and grow together.

This month, we launched our new virtual networking series, **EDO and Entrepreneurs Community Connections**, created as a space for Economic Development Officers and entrepreneurs to come together, share ideas, and support one another. We know EDOs often work under pressure, managing many priorities with limited resources, and we hope this series provides a meaningful place to build relationships and exchange knowledge. I encourage you to join us.

I also had the honour of speaking at the **Bingwi Neyaashi Anishinaabek Northwestern Ontario First Nations Economic Gathering** in Thunder Bay. Gatherings like these remind us of the strength, innovation, and leadership that exist in our communities and the importance of coming together to advance our shared economic priorities.

We have also launched a new **10-part Entrepreneur Training Series** to support and strengthen entrepreneurship in our communities. In addition, our next **Entrepreneur**

Committee meeting will be held on **May 7 at 2:00 p.m.**, and we welcome members with entrepreneurial experience who would like to join and help shape this work.

To support our members, we are also offering two upcoming webinars. One will focus on helping EDOs better understand **CCFA funding** and how to maximize its value. The second will provide support around membership questions and opportunities. We are also looking ahead to our **Annual Conference in Toronto this September**, where we will gather once again to learn, connect, and celebrate the progress being made across our nations.

It is also time to renew your **OFNEDA membership**. Your continued support strengthens our collective voice and helps advance opportunities for First Nation economic growth. Through advocacy, partnerships, capacity building, and investment pathways, our work continues to support communities in creating jobs, growing local economies, and building long-term prosperity.

I also hope you took time on **Mother Earth Day** to honour the land and reflect on the responsibility we carry in this work. Economic development and stewardship go hand in hand. I also hope you enjoyed a peaceful Easter surrounded by family and loved ones. Thank you for your continued leadership, commitment, and support of OFNEDA. I look forward to the work ahead and to connecting with many of you in the months to come.

Meegwetch,



Peggy Domingue
Executive Director, OFNEDA

Time to Renew Your Membership

First Nation Community Membership

Who is this for?

This membership is for First Nations communities and is designed for Economic Development Officers (EDOs), Economic Development Corporations (EDCs), and Tribal Councils.

RENEW NOW

Associate Membership

who is this for?

Any business or person.

Associates include industry partners and students – especially those on the path to becoming an EDO.

RENEW NOW

Entrepreneur Membership

who is this for?

First Nation entrepreneurs who are starting, building, or growing a business in Ontario. Applicants must be members of a First Nation in Ontario.

RENEW NOW



Olivia English

Economic Development Manager

Alderville First Nations

WHAT OUR FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITY MEMBERS ARE SAYING

"Being a member of OFNEDA has been incredibly valuable. The connections I have built and the ongoing support have strengthened my work in economic development and in supporting entrepreneurs within my community.

I have also benefited from the educational opportunities, including the TAED course, which has enhanced both my skills and my perspective. I am grateful to be part of such a strong network and look forward to attending the conference this fall in

Toronto to continue learning and connecting."

15TH
ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF

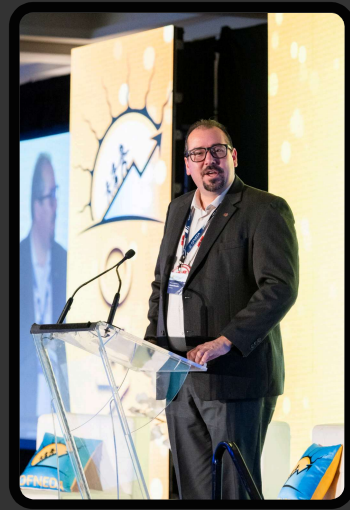
First Nations Economic Advancement Conference

Walking Forward Together – Seizing Economic Opportunity

September 14 to 17, 2026

Pearson Convention Center
2638 Steeles Avenue East., Brampton, ON L6S 6J9

Join us in Toronto as we celebrate OFNEDA's Annual First Nations Economic Advancement Conference. Please book your flights early. Airline discount codes and hotel details will be shared soon so you can plan your stay with ease. This year's conference will offer a strong program that helps businesses identify, study, and act on new economic opportunities in First Nation communities across Canada. The focus is on sustainable growth, long term success, and practical strategies that support strong and thriving First Nation economies.



GET CONFERENCE UPDATES

WHAT'S NEW

EDO and Entrepreneurs Community Connections

May 20, 2026 | 2-3 PM ET

OFNEDA is inviting Economic Development Officers and First Nations Entrepreneurs to connect in a casual, welcoming setting, whether over a coffee, tea, or whatever you enjoy at your desk. This monthly space offers EDOs the chance to have informal conversations with one another, share ideas, discuss challenges and wins, and highlight what is happening in their communities. It is an opportunity to build relationships, exchange practical insights, and strengthen the network that supports economic development across First Nations in Ontario.

RESERVE YOUR SPOT

First Nations Community Highlights



*Chief Joe Miskokomon is pictured alongside Governor General Mary Simon during a ceremony at Rideau Hall in Ottawa, on Thursday, March 19, 2026.
THE CANADIAN PRESS/Spencer Colby*

Chief Miskokomon now a Member of the Order of Canada

Chippewas of the Thames is celebrating an important milestone. **Chief R. K. Joe Miskokomon** has been appointed a Member of the Order of Canada, one of the country's highest civilian honours. Chief Miskokomon has dedicated more than 50 years to advancing First Nations rights, governance, and community wellbeing. His leadership at the community level and across the Anishinabek Nation has strengthened nation-to-nation relationships and supported major negotiations that continue to benefit future generations.

[READ THE FULL ARTICLE](#)



*Our Research/Member Support Specialist, **Monica Lister**, will be available during the live Q and A to provide direct support and answer your questions.*

OFNEDA Memberships 101

May 7 at 10:00 am ET

This session will cover:

- First Nation Community Membership
- benefits and costs
- Associate Membership benefits and costs
- Entrepreneur Membership benefits and costs
- Purchasing and renewal process
- Payment options
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Q and A

REGISTER NOW

WEBINAR



***Monica Lister**, our Research and Member Support Specialist, will join the live Q and A to guide you through the application process, review the funding template, and answer any questions related to this funding.*

Community Capacity Funding Agreement (CCFA)

May 12 at 10:00 am ET

This session will cover:

- Background
- CCFA Tracking Report
- What can the funding be used for?
- Required Reporting
- Success Stories for our Newsletter
- Frequently Asked Questions

REGISTER NOW

NEW 10-PART SERIES FOR ENTREPRENEUR TRAINING

We are excited to launch a new 10 part learning series for entrepreneurs, led by Sarah Hopkins, Matriarch and Founder of Three Sisters Consulting. Each session offers practical training to support our community in starting, building, or growing a business.



May 25 | 12:30 – 4:30

Financial Management Part 1

REGISTER NOW

May 27 | 12:30 – 4:30

Financial Management Part 2

REGISTER NOW

Jun 22 | 12:30 – 4:30

Marketing Part 1

REGISTER NOW

Jun 24 | 12:30 – 4:30

Marketing Part 2

REGISTER NOW

Call for Committee Members

We are seeking community members with strong entrepreneurial experience to join the Entrepreneur Committee. If you have any questions or would like to join, please contact

Presented by:
Carmen Robillard
Program Manager
Ontario Trillium
Foundation

[REGISTER NOW](#)

COFFEE MEET-UP

Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) **Funding Programs** May 21 at 2:00 pm ET

Get an overview of Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) grants, including Seed, Grow, Capital, and the Youth Opportunities Fund. The session will outline what each grant supports and walk through the application process with practical guidance and hands-on development.



Presented by:
Adam Solomon
VP of Business
Development at
ResearchFDI

[REGISTER NOW](#)

COFFEE MEET-UP

Benefits of Investment May 26 at 2:00 pm ET

You will learn how ResearchFDI Academy builds practical skills in investment attraction, including FDI strategy, lead generation, stakeholder engagement, and aftercare. The session will also show how the platform supports both individual learning and team development, along with its formal recognition by the Economic Development Council of Ontario (EDCO).

VIRTUAL TRAINING

Budgeting and Financial Management

May 27 at 9:00 am – 12:00 pm ET



Presented by:

Justin Jimmy

CPA, CAFM, ICD.D



REGISTER NOW

In this short workshop, participants will gain an understanding of what a budget is, the important aspects of a budget, preliminary program budgets, program workpans and appropriations and the budget cycle. Participants will also gain an understanding of financial statements including reporting frameworks, the balance sheet, income statement, debt, cash flows, and various schedules. At the end of the workshop, participant will have gained an understanding of budgeting and financial statements.

Justin Jimmy, CPA and ICD.D certified corporate director, brings more than a decade of experience in financial management, governance, and capacity building. As CEO of Urban Cree Consulting, he supports Indigenous governments, organizations, and businesses with tailored financial and governance solutions.

His background includes leadership roles across First Nations, the corporate and for-profit sector, Indigenous not-for-profit organizations, and advisory boards. His expertise in financial reporting, governance, and community-focused initiatives positions him as a trusted leader in advancing strong, culturally grounded financial practices. Justin is Cree from Onion Lake First Nation.

COFFEE MEET-UP

City of Toronto-Indigenous Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (ICIE)

May 28 at 10:00 am ET



Presented by:
Thomas McGinty
Senior Business
Development Officer
Economic Development
and Culture
City of Toronto

Join us for an information session on the Indigenous Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (ICIE). This session will highlight the programs, supports, and opportunities available to First Nations entrepreneurs.

REGISTER NOW

Questions or Tech Issues? Reach Out Anytime

If you have any trouble logging in, please reach out to our Training Coordinator, **Debbie Donovan**, at trainingcoordinator@ofneda.ca or call **519.200.1033** for assistance. We look forward to insightful conversations and building lasting connections!

IPED Corner

Procurement Canada adds AI ChatBot "Procura"

The government has added a new '**beta**' **tool** to help with your navigation on the CanadaBuys site, an AI chatbot named "**Procura**" that you can ask questions and should be able to help you along your process

LEARN MORE

Northern Ontario Defence Opportunities Funding

Defence Programming for Northern Ontario Businesses

Monday, May 11, 2026 | 10:00 am

MP Rochefort has announced the new Northern Ontario Defence Opportunities Project, delivered through the Business Centre of Nipissing Parry Sound. The program will offer up to \$50,000 to help small and medium sized businesses prepare for Canadian defence procurement, including certifications, cybersecurity, and compliance requirements.

More details **will follow. The North Bay Chamber of Commerce is hosting an information webinar for those who would like to learn more.**

PS: Under the new Defence Investment Initiative, Defence Construction Canada is expected to invest \$16 billion over the next five years, creating significant opportunities for Northern Ontario businesses.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

[View email in browser](#)



OFNEDA

ONTARIO FIRST NATIONS ECONOMIC
DEVELOPERS ASSOCIATION

QUESTIONS ABOUT MEMBERSHIP?

For OFNEDA membership support please contact membersupport@ofneda.ca

STAY CONNECTED



TO LEARN MORE ABOUT US VISIT,

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