



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

Wachay OFNEDA Community,

I hope this message finds you well and that you are staying safe and keeping cool during this period of extreme summer heat.

As we continue through the summer months, I want to take a moment to express our heartfelt solidarity with the First Nations, families, and communities that have been affected by the ongoing wildfires. Many communities have experienced evacuations, disruptions to daily life, and uncertainty as they navigate these difficult circumstances. Our thoughts are with everyone impacted, as well as the community leaders, emergency responders, and volunteers who continue to work tirelessly to support those in need. During challenging times such as these, we are reminded of the strength, resilience, and unity that define our Nations.

In support of two First Nation communities that have experienced significant losses, OFNEDA will be launching a fundraising initiative and collecting donations to assist affected community members. We encourage those who are able to contribute to this important effort. Additional information on how members can support these communities will be shared in the coming weeks.

Earlier this month, we were pleased to host our second Regional Meeting Forum in Thunder Bay, bringing together community leaders and economic development professionals for valuable discussions, collaboration, and knowledge sharing. We also hosted several virtual learning and networking opportunities throughout July, including training on Budgeting and Financial Management, virtual EDO and Entrepreneur Community Connections networking sessions, and Coffee Meet-Ups focused on Land Stewardship as a Community and Economic Development Opportunity and Powering Sustainable Community Energy. Thank you to everyone who participated and contributed their knowledge and experiences.

Our team is working hard as we prepare for a very special milestone, the **15th Anniversary Crystal Celebration of the First Nations Economic Advancement Conference (FNEAC)**. We are excited to welcome delegates, speakers, exhibitors, sponsors, and partners from across the country for this landmark event. If you have not already registered, we encourage you to do so soon. This year's conference features a dynamic agenda covering a wide range of timely and relevant topics, including Economic Development Through Public Safety and Community Stability, Redefining Wealth on Our Own Terms in a Changing Canada, Energy Sovereignty, Electrification and Sustainability, Procurement and Winning Contracts, Indigenous Entrepreneurship, Business Growth and Innovation, Community Economic Development Success Stories, Leadership, Partnerships and Capacity Building, and many more sessions designed to support First Nations economic advancement and community prosperity.

I would also like to remind members that nominations are now open for the FNEAC Economic Developer of the Year Award and Community Project of the Year Award. Do you know a First Nation community, project, or Economic Development Officer making a lasting impact through economic development? Nominate them today and help us recognize their achievements at the FNEAC Gala Dinner and Awards Celebration.

I would also like to extend a sincere chi-meegwetch to our sponsors, partners, speakers, exhibitors, and supporters. Your commitment and investment help make this conference possible and contribute to strengthening economic opportunities and capacity building within First Nations communities.

In addition to our programming, members of the OFNEDA team were honoured to attend the Indigenous Hockey Fundraising Event at the Richmond Hill Golf Club, which

celebrating the achievements and talents within our communities.

As we continue our work throughout the year, OFNEDA remains committed to providing professional development opportunities, networking, and resources that support economic growth, self-determination, and community prosperity across First Nations.

Thank you for your continued leadership, dedication, and engagement. Together, we are building stronger communities and creating opportunities for future generations.

Meegwetch,



Peggy Domingue
Executive Director, OFNEDA

Have you registered for OFNEDA's Annual Conference yet?

Join us for a special celebration filled with education, networking, and recognition as we commemorate this important milestone.

First Nations Economic Advancement Conference

September 14–17, 2026

Pearson Convention Centre, 2638 Steeles Ave E, Brampton, ON L6T 4L7

Conference Ticket Prices

Entrepreneur Member Ticket – \$280

Exclusively available to OFNEDA Entrepreneur Members.

Regular Conference Ticket – \$560

Conference registration for non-members.

Additional Gala Guest Ticket – \$100

For non-conference attendees and additional guests attending the Gala only.

IMPORTANT: Complimentary conference registration is limited to one designated representative per First Nation member community. Any additional attendees from the same community must register at the regular conference rate of \$560 per person.

CELEBRATE OUR CRYSTAL ANNIVERSARY WITH US

Do you know a First Nation community, project, or Economic Development Officer making a lasting impact through economic development?

Nominate them today for a FNEAC Award and help recognize their achievements at the First Nations Economic Advancement Conference (FNEAC) Gala Dinner and Awards Celebration.

NOMINATE NOW

First Nations Community Highlights

Whitefish River First Nation Employment Opportunities

Whitefish River First Nation is currently seeking qualified candidates to fill vacancies within its Economic Development Department. This is an excellent opportunity to contribute to initiatives that support community growth, economic development, and

Click below to learn more and apply:

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT/BOOKKEEPER

PROJECTS ENGAGEMENT COORDINATOR

Application Closing Date: July 31st, 2026, at Noon

Interested applicants must submit a current resume, cover letter, two (2) work-related references, one (1) character reference (with contact information), and applicable education diplomas/certifications.

WHAT'S COMING UP

EDO and Entrepreneurs Community Connections

Wed, Aug 12 | 2:00 PM – 3:00 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

UPCOMING REGIONAL ENGAGEMENT FORUMS

REMINDER

Regional meetings are intended for First Nations Economic Development Officers, but they are also open to First Nations entrepreneurs, Chief and Council, or a designated representative from the First Nation.

Our Regional Meetings are small gatherings where we meet with First Nations in the hosting area to hear community priorities, challenges, and opportunities. These sessions help us share OFNEDA programs and resources while ensuring each community feels informed and supported. You will have the chance to connect with Peggy Domingue, Ryan Moore, Reema Chopra, and other team members, and your input will help guide the development of upcoming toolkits. **Breakfast, snacks and lunch are included.**

IMPORTANT:

Please select the Regional Engagement Forum location closest to your Chapter or First Nation. Travel expenses will only be covered for attendance at the nearest forum location. Economic Development Officers are encouraged to attend the forum closest to their Chapter or First Nation.

Regional Engagement Forum – London, ON

Tuesday, Sep 29, 2026 | 8 AM – 4:30 PM

Four Points by Sheraton London

1150 Wellington Rd, London, ON N6E 1M3 | (519) 681-0600

RESERVE YOUR SPOT FOR LONDON

HIGHLIGHTS FROM REGIONAL ENGAGEMENT FORUMS



What Should I Do If I Missed a Live
OFNEDA Webinar or Training Session?

Missed a live webinar, training session, or Coffee Meet-Up? No problem!

You can watch past recordings anytime through your OFNEDA Member Dashboard, including sessions such as our Tech Essentials, SharePoint, and Microsoft 365 Training. Visit **OFNEDA.ca** and log in using your member email address to access your Member Dashboard, where you can watch recordings of past webinars, training sessions, and Coffee Meet-Ups at your convenience. Catch up on missed sessions or revisit valuable content anytime and make the most of your membership benefits.

CATCH UP ON MISSED SESSIONS

BUILD & GROW: A 10-PART SERIES ON ENTREPRENEURSHIP

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.



Mon Sept 21
12:30 PM – 4:30 PM ET

REGISTER NOW

Managing Growth: Scaling
Your Business Sustainably

Session Overview

Growth is exciting but it can also break a business if you're not ready for it. This session is for entrepreneurs whose business is picking up and who want to grow with intention. We'll talk about what scaling really looks like for small First Nations businesses, when to hire, when to move to a physical location, and how to manage the financial side of growth without losing control. We'll also explore what it means to grow in a way that stays true to your values.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Identify 2–3 areas of your business that are ready to grow
- Create a simple hiring checklist or staffing plan
- Map out the financial steps needed to support your next growth stage
- Name at least one boundary or value you want to protect as you grow

Mon Oct 19
12:30 PM – 4:30 PM ET

REGISTER NOW

Procurement: How to
Sell to Government &
Corporate Clients

Session Overview

Growth is exciting but it can also break a business if you're not ready for it. This session is for entrepreneurs whose business is picking up and who want to grow with intention. We'll talk about what scaling really looks like for small First Nations businesses, when to hire, when to move to a physical location, and how to manage the financial side of growth without losing control. We'll also explore what it means to grow in a way that stays true to your values.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Identify at least 2 procurement programs or opportunities relevant to your business
- Read a sample RFP and identify the key evaluation criteria
- Start or update your capabilities statement
- Register with at least one vendor database or certification program



Presented by:

Luke Antonio,
PLA Ltd. | Prosperi Co. Ltd.

REGISTER NOW

COFFEE MEET-UP

Turtle Island Building Trust:
Building Verified Pathways to
Indigenous Procurement

Aug 4, 2026 | 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM

Luke will discuss our expanded procurement portal, which now includes opportunities from MERX, CanadaBuys, and Bids & Tenders, and provide an overview of BuildCode's work developing Economic Development, business verification, and directory platforms for communities and organizations.



Presented by:

Jett Lafantaisie
Regional Manager –
Ontario | Indigenous
Banking Group



Presented by:

Adam Carswell
Relationship Manager |

COFFEE MEET-UP

Introduction to Business
Banking

Aug 11, 2026 | 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM

Join TD Bank for an informative session on grants, funding opportunities, and access to capital for First Nations businesses and entrepreneurs. Learn about the key factors that lenders consider when assessing credit, gain practical financial advice, and discover the tools, resources, and banking solutions available through TD to help support business growth and long-term success. This session will provide valuable insights for anyone looking to strengthen their financial knowledge and access funding opportunities.

REGISTER NOW



Presented by:
Jennifer Saeck,
Of Counsel
Mshkawzi Law, LLP.

COFFEE MEET-UP

Opportunities for Cross Border Indigenous Trade

Aug 25, 2026 | 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM

Jennifer will talk about foreign trade zones, customs brokering, and how sovereignty can support economic growth and global opportunities.

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!

Cando 32nd Annual National Conference & AGM

Join Cando in Victoria, BC, October 5–8, 2026 for its 32nd Annual National Conference & AGM. As Canada's premier event dedicated to Indigenous Economic Development, the conference brings together economic development professionals, business leaders, and community stakeholders from across the country. Attendees can expect engaging speakers, workshops, networking opportunities, youth and women in business panels, accredited training, a tradeshow, and the Economic Developer of the Year Awards. Don't miss this opportunity to gain new insights, expand your network, and explore the latest trends shaping Indigenous economic development.

REGISTER FOR CONFERENCE NOW

Introducing the Rezolution Rising Futures Bursary

Rezolution is proud to launch the **Rising Futures Bursary**, a \$25,000 annual award supporting Indigenous youth and young adults with lived experience in care as they pursue education, build financial literacy, and create long-term prosperity.

The bursary includes education funding, a managed investment account, personal development support, and one-on-one mentorship, helping recipients build a strong foundation for their future. The inaugural recipient will be announced at **Rezolution Summit 2027. Applications open January 15, 2027.** Learn more and help us support the next generation of Indigenous leaders.

LEARN ABOUT THE BURSARY

IPED Corner by Ryan Moore

We need your help / stories for our toolkits; tell us about your entrepreneurial journey, or your trials and tribulations with procurement – your stories can help future entrepreneurs in their navigation to success. Click here to learn more about [CanadaBuys](#) and [Ontario Tenders](#) opportunities. If you want to book an appointment with **Ryan Moore**, our Director of Indigenous Procurement & Entrepreneurship Development, then click the link below.

BOOK AN APPOINTMENT WITH RYAN

NRC M-55 Rehabilitation Project Opportunity

OFNEDA members are invited to explore potential opportunities related to the **NRC M-55 Office Accommodation Project** in Ottawa. Ledcor, in partnership with Indigenous consulting firm **AKI Consulting**, is developing an Indigenous Participation Plan to identify and engage Indigenous businesses, workforce, training providers, and service organizations for this major construction project. Current opportunities include **general labour, cleaning and sanitation services**, along with a range of future trade and subcontracting opportunities. Members interested in learning more about the project, discussing capacity, or exploring potential participation are encouraged to connect directly with **Inez Halaska**, Indigenous Procurement Specialist, at inez@halaskaconsulting.ca or **(403) 580-6342**. Coffee chats and introductory discussions are available for interested businesses and organizations.

For context, below is a link to the public-facing project brief for the overall project NRC M-55 Rehabilitation Project

Project Brief:

https://canadabuys.canada.ca/sites/default/files/webform/tender_notice/43658/24-58099_annex-a---project-brief.pdf

Terms of Reference:

https://canadabuys.canada.ca/sites/default/files/webform/tender_notice/75312/appendix-c-m-55-tor_en.pdf

DOWNLOAD THE FLYER NOW

Grant Opportunities

Northern Ontario Defence Opportunities Program (NODOP)

Now open!

<https://tbcnps.ca/northern-ontario-defence-opportunities>

Indigenous Intellectual Property Program grant

<https://ised-isde.canada.ca/site/intellectual-property-strategy/en/indigenous-intellectual-property-program-grant>

Indigenous Youth Entrepreneurship

<https://nacca.ca/iye-program/>

Rural Ontario Development Grant

Next opening **August 17**

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/rural-ontario-development-program>

Indigenous IP Program

<https://ised-isde.canada.ca/site/intellectual-property-strategy/en/indigenous-intellectual-property-program-grant>

Open until August 26

Miinikaanan Badakidoon

Opening soon for Thunder Bay & Region Indigenous entrepreneurs

<https://gothunderbay.ca/supportprograms/miinikaanan-badakidoon/>

FedNor Build Communities Strong – Local Impact Stream fund

Up to \$1million and Indigenous may be 100% non-repayable

<https://fednor.canada.ca/en/our-programs/build-communities-strong-fund-local-impact-stream-northern-ontario>

Indigenous Prosperity Foundation – LaunchPad
<https://www.indigenousfoundation.ca/launchpad>

Tips & Tricks

Do you know what an ITB is?

When the government purchases a major contract in defence, they require that company to spend a certain amount back into Canadian businesses; so there are companies looking to buy from Canadian companies to fulfill their requirements. If that business is an Indigenous led business the government will multiply that spend by 10x, so it’s really advantageous for them to do work with Indigenous businesses. And you can see this list here of companies who have money to spend: <https://ised-isde.canada.ca/site/industrial-technological-benefits/en/projects-and-obligations/report-contractor-progress/breakdown-current-obligations-contractor>

[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



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