



ONWAA

SPRING 2025 NEWSLETTER

HELLO
SPRING

It's the best time of year for growth and new beginnings! ONWAA extends a warm welcome to new and returning members. Biindigen!

We have completed reports on Barriers to Accessing Medications, Cost of Administration, and Market Basket Measure. Check them out at [Onwaa.ca/news](https://onwaa.ca/news).

ONWAA welcomes Chelsea Brunelle to the new role of Policy Specialist.

We wish everyone a wonderful Spring and Summer season with friends & family!

SAVE THE DATE

ONWAA's Fall Assembly
October 21st-23rd, 2025
Chelsea Hotel, Toronto

Ishkoday has
launched the
Energy App,
"Boodewewin".



<https://ishkoday.ca/>





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A message from the President, Samantha Maracle:

Dear ONWAA Members,

She:kon skennenko:wa! It is such a pleasure to welcome Spring and share my thoughts with you on self-renewal, self-revitalization and mentorship of others. Although I have served my community of Tyendinaga for over 30 years, I have only just begun to learn who I am and what my purpose is within Creation. Since beginning FNTI's Bachelor of Indigenous Social Work Program in Sept 2024, I have completely entrenched myself in ceremony, teachings, socials and discussions on worldview. This has deeply influenced my perspective on who I am and where I come from, particularly in relation to meaningful connections and allowing vulnerability to learn from the past, honour the present, and hope for the future.

Our indigenous culture and teachings emphasize the importance of community, reciprocity, and intergenerational knowledge-sharing—principles that closely mirror the essence of true mentorship. What's more important is that we have a responsibility to share these teachings with others so that they too can learn and share with their loved ones. I've come to appreciate that mentorship, in an Indigenous context, is not just about guidance, but about mutual respect, listening deeply, and walking alongside one another in a spirit of shared growth.

This understanding has challenged me to think with Ka'nikonhri:yo (A Good Mind) when considering the connections we build—not only in professional relationships but as enduring bonds rooted in trust and cultural awareness. It's a reminder that the connections we seek must be grounded in authenticity, humility, and a willingness to learn from those with different worldviews and emphasizes the importance of knowing and loving yourself before we can be a mentor or helper to others.

I am truly grateful for the ONWAA organization for their inspiration and guidance throughout my journey. Wishing for health and wellness for you all!

Nya:wen ko:wa,

Samantha Maracle
Ontario Works Administrator/ ONWAA President



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A message from the Training & Development Team:

As we step into a new fiscal year, our Training and Development team is excited to work with you! We're seeing a growing demand for training — and we've grown our team to meet your needs.

We're thrilled to welcome two new Income Assistance Facilitator Trainees, Jane Kieley and Keith Nadiwon, to our team, who will work alongside our Income Assistance Trainers, Angela Ritchie, Krista Hunt, Rhonda Martin, Sheila Hammock, our Student Support Coach, Mycah Panjaitan and Manager, Kelsey Leblanc. Their experience and passion will help us continue delivering high-quality training and expand our reach across the regions.

This year, we're offering a variety of regional training sessions in both Winnipeg and Mississauga, such as:

- Ontario Works Reporting Requirements – Toronto on May 21 & 22 and Winnipeg on May 7 & 8
- Ontario Works Directives Training – Mississauga on June 17-19 and Winnipeg on August 19-21
- Privacy and Confidentiality – Mississauga on September 17 & 18 and Winnipeg on November 19 & 20
- Homemakers Training – Mississauga on November 5 & 6

These training sessions are free to attend, so be sure to visit our Events Page to register for a session and learn more. In addition to regional training, our team continues to provide free onsite training, bringing our workshops directly to your community for accessibility and convenience. Some training topics include: New Administrator and Case Worker Training, Employment Support Worker Training, Chief & Council presentations, Life Stabilization Training, Homemakers training and more! New this year, we're excited to offer Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) training for those interested in expanding their knowledge and skills in this area.

Our onsite training dates fill up quickly so if you need training or support, you are interested in having an Income Assistance Trainer provide a customized training session online or in-person, or would like to have your training needs assessed, please contact info@onwaa.ca or call 1-877-291-7542.

We'd love to work with you and look forward to connecting with new and existing members! Warm wishes from your Training and Development Team,

Kelsey, Mycah, Keith, Jane, Krista, Rhonda, Sheila, Angela



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A message from the Digital Team:

Mino M'nookmik! Happy Spring!

Hello ONWAA Members! We hope everyone is enjoying the warmer weather and the return of Spring. Over the Winter, the Digital Team focused on developing new eLearn courses for the LMS. This year, we are continuing to enhance the curriculum by adding infographics to support policy and legislative updates in both the LMS and in-person learning formats, as well as developing new eLearning courses later in the year. We are also preparing new materials for the upcoming ONWAA Fall Assembly, featuring a fresh, updated design.

We are especially excited to share that the Digital Team is developing ONWAA's first Podcast! We look forward to sharing engaging episodes with our membership throughout the year – stay tuned for updates. If you have any ideas or topics, you would like us to explore in the podcast, we would love to hear from you!

If you have any questions or suggestions, please do not hesitate to reach out. Your feedback is important to us and helps us improve our services!

Thank you!

Digital Team at ONWAA





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Welcome to Spring!

ONWAA's Curriculum Development team has something special in the works for you. We've been working tirelessly to develop a one-of-a-kind Indigenous Leadership Workshop aimed at equipping participants with the knowledge and tools needed to deliver their own workshops within their respective communities. This workshop will be a multi-day engagement session, featuring facilitation and public speaking lessons designed to sharpen your skills and boost your confidence when speaking in front of others.

We recognize that many of us often struggle with self-confidence, self-assurance, and public speaking. This training is designed to help strengthen those skills, empowering participants to speak out and lead with new confidence. We often learn better when the person teaching us has a similar background. This helps us connect with them and understand more easily, while respecting our unique language and values—ultimately empowering Indigenous voices to lead with strength, teach with wisdom, and build communities that thrive from within.

Mentorship Program

ONWAA is looking to develop a more formal mentorship program. We will be conducting a survey at the Spring Regional sessions and looking for a couple people to sit on a steering committee over the summer and sit in on a couple meetings which should not take more than an hour at a time. If you are interested, please email executive.director@onwaa.ca.

Respectfully,

Jessica Nadjiwon-Smith
Executive Director





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The ONWAA and Ishkoday teams met in Toronto for 2 days of Strategic Planning to prepare for the year ahead. Not only did they come up with some great ideas for the organization during the sessions, but they also bonded as teammates and had a lot of fun! Some staff decided to try Go Kart Racing one evening. Keith Nadjiwon walked away with bragging rights as the official winner!



Sponsorship

Do you know any business owners that would love to support our non-profit organization and contribute to our mission? We have a variety of sponsorship packages available for any budget. We are so grateful to our current sponsors! Please contact our Communications Officer, Victoria, at tz.cd@onwaa.ca for more details. Miigwetch!

Follow us on social media for more news and updates:



[official.onwaa](https://www.instagram.com/official.onwaa)



[Ontario Native Welfare Administrators Association](https://www.facebook.com/OntarioNativeWelfareAdministratorsAssociation)



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