



SPRING NEWSLETTER

June 2026



Message from the President of the Board

She:kon sewakwe:kon!

As the seasons change and spring returns, I'd like to wish you well during this time of renewal, growth and re-birth. Mother Earth is waking; the waters are beginning to run freely and all of Creation is continuing the cycles that sustain us.

Enjoy this time of cleansing and healing in your communities, your families and especially yourselves; always moving with gratitude, respect and love for all beings.

On behalf of the ONWAA Board of Directors, take good care and Happy Spring!

Samantha Maracle

ONWAA President



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<https://www.onwaa.ca/>



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SPRING NEWSLETTER

Message from the Executive Directors Desk

We are well into 2026 and well on our way to getting this year started. Many exciting things will be happening this year. Along with our regional sessions and on-site visits, we have some other exciting things planned.

This year, the Board and managers are working on the concept of de-colonizing our personnel policy and human resource practices to ensure we are servicing members and staff in a more wholistic way. This work will not happen overnight but will be an ongoing process where we make incremental changes to ensure that this happens smoothly.

Preparation for the Fall Assembly is underway and both the ONWAA and Ishkoday conferences will run in conjunction with each other the week of October 20th to the 22nd, 2026 at the Chelsea in Toronto. The theme for this years assembly is *"Reconnecting to our Roots"*.

Elections for both Board of Directors will be occurring on October 20th and there will be several communications regarding this as we move into August and early fall so please watch for announcements and emails.

Last but not least, ONWAA is working on developing a few new training products and additional research. Trainings will include Data Sovereignty and Artificial Intelligence and one that will be piloted and later become available early in the 27-28 year. It involves a 4-week program that will assist First Nations communities in writing their own Income Assistance and Homemakers programs for their communities. Research projects will continue on pharmaceutical access for our communities and the market basket measure. If you are experiencing issues, please feel free to reach out to owen.research@onwaa.ca.

Respectfully,

Jessica Nadjiwon-Smith



SPRING NEWSLETTER

Update from the Training & Development Team

Hello Spring! In May we honored the Waabigwani-giizis “Flower Moon” or Budding Moon and in June we welcome Ode’imini-giizis (Strawberry Moon). Right now, we are planting our seeds and honoring what was lost over the winter. We’re seeing a blooming demand for training and have been booking up quickly! Please arrange a meeting with a MYC Team member to organize on-site visits for training as soon as you are able. We’re excited to welcome new ONWAA members and want to remind everyone of our ONWAA Helpdesk that is available 8:30am to 4:30pm Monday to Friday throughout the year. You can call the ONWAA hotline at 1-877-291-7542 or email info@onwaa.ca. This year, we’re offering a variety of regional training sessions such as:

June 10 & 11, 2026 - TPON & Reporting Requirements with Jane Kieley - Mississauga

August 5 & 6, 2026 - Local Policy with Krista Hunt - Location: Thunder Bay

September 22 & 23, 2026 - Change Management with Staci Williams - Toronto

November 4 & 5, 2026 - Change Management with Staci Williams - Thunder Bay

November 24 & 25, 2026 - Local Policy with Krista Hunt - Mississauga

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.

We are excited for what the year brings and look forward to connecting with new and existing members!

Smiles from your Training and Development Team,
Kelsey, Angela, Krista, Jane, Keith, Chelsea, & Mycah!



SPRING NEWSLETTER

Update from the Ishkoday Team

Ishkoday is the sister organization of ONWAA, whose goal is to alleviate energy poverty in First Nations. Ishkoday strives to achieve this through the Residential Energy Efficiency Curriculum, Energy Poverty Bootcamp, Ontario Electricity Support Program (OESP) and Hydro One Remotes, Low-income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP), and tools such as the Boodawewin application which matches users to energy programs they may be eligible for.

Are you looking to assist households with energy savings? Try our Boodawewin App! Boodawewin is the fastest way to determine eligibility for programs. There are many energy programs available in the province, and this app makes finding programs fast, easy, and accessible.

Ishkoday co-hosted Regional sessions alongside ONWAA in May and will be continuing to host sessions throughout June. You can find last year's Regional Reports on the Ishkoday website. Please scan the QR code or visit <https://ishkoday.ca/> for more information. You can also find a comprehensive document of all energy programs on the same page.



Update from ONWAA's Communications Officer

With summer on the horizon, we are feeling re-energized by the sun and longer days. On June 21st, we encourage you to take some time to celebrate Summer Solstice. As the sun reaches it's highest point on the longest day of the year, it is the perfect time to reflect and recharge as a bright, warm season begins.

At ONWAA, we are developing an updated website and continue to strive for clear and seamless communications to keep you, our membership, informed and up-to-date.



SPRING NEWSLETTER

Update from the Digital Team

Mino M'nookmik! Happy Spring!

Hello ONWAA members! We hope that everyone is enjoying the warmer weather as we approach the summer months. Recently, the Digital Team finished developing Privacy & Third-Party Verification eLearn course, as well as continuing to revise course materials to reflect policy and legislative updates. This spring we are preparing new materials for the upcoming ONWAA Fall Assembly, featuring a fresh, updated design, as well as preparing for this year's new Inside ONWAA podcast episodes.

The Digital Team recently published a new Inside ONWAA Podcast episode titled, "Energy Poverty of First Nations with Ishkoday" In this episode we sit down with folks from Ishkoday – First Nations Energy Sustainability Association and explore the challenges communities face and the importance of Indigenous-led solutions for building sustainable and self-determined energy futures. Be sure to listen to our Podcast on Spotify and stay tuned for this year's episodes.

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

Thank you!

Digital Team at ONWAA.

Inside ONWAA Podcast



Episodes:

*The History of
ONWAA*

*Energy Poverty in
First Nations*



SPRING NEWSLETTER

2026 Fall Assembly

Reconnecting to our Roots



Save the Date



October 20-22, 2026



Toronto, Chelsea Hotel

ONWAA's is excited to announce our upcoming Fall assembly. It is the biggest event of the year for our membership to come together in person to learn, grow, and connect.

The theme for this year's assembly is *Reconnecting to our Roots*. Join us as we reflect on the importance of First Nations cultural traditions, teachings, and sacred knowledge. Together, we will rekindle our connection to our roots by honouring the wisdom of elders and ancestors and remembering our First Nations ways of knowing and being.

ONWAA's Fall Assembly will take place October 20-22, 2026 in Toronto. Our sister company, Ishkoday, will host their assembly simultaneously on October 20-21, 2026. Please save the dates! More details for hotel reservations will be announced this summer.

We look forward to seeing you there!

