

Fall & Winter 2024

Newsletter



Happy Holidays to our Membership from the Executive Director!

This past year has been incredible. Saying goodbye to retirees, hearing from new members, meeting new Administrators and watching Ishkoday (First Nations Energy Sustainability Association) run its first-ever event in conjunction with the ONWAA Assembly. It's been busy, but exciting for everyone here on the team. But what a year and next year will be just as active.

We have successfully renegotiated the MYC contract for the next fiscal year with a promise to continue, we have managed to renegotiate the Homemakers contract at a higher contracted rate, and we continue to work with ISC to renew a longer-term contract to support our digital team and additional training.

In January, the Board of Directors will be meeting to complete strategic planning exercises for both of the organizations. Next year's events and outcomes for our organization are going to be fulsome and plenty. I look forward to working with you all again over the coming months.

From my family to yours, I wish you all a safe and happy holiday season. May it be filled with good food, happy memories, family and great friends.

Yours truly,

Jessica Nadjiwon





Energy Team Update:

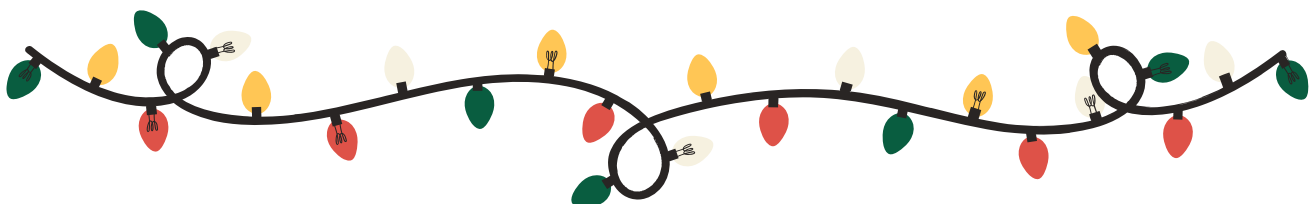
It was great seeing everyone recently in Toronto at the General Assembly and we hope to see you and those we missed again soon. This is a reminder that the ONWAA Energy Office is available to assist members of your community in completing applications for the Ontario Electricity Support Program (OESP). Our membership offices have been keeping us busy processing OESP and LEAP applications. As always, we are here to support you and your community members in saving money on their hydro bills.

We are available to assist you and your community members by phone and in person (with an on-site visit). For those of you with new staff, please give us a call or send us an email. We would be more than happy to explain and/or review the different programs with you. If you need any forms or information to help your members access the programs, we can assist.

We are here to help First Nation households access the monthly credit which is applied directly to their electricity bills. This assistance applies to both initial applications and renewal applications. The credit ranges from \$52.00 - \$113.00 per month of the hydro bill, so it is worth the 20 minutes it takes to apply. We have been busy assisting community members with applying for and receiving the Low-income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP) grant. LEAP is an additional program used to provide emergency financial assistance to help cover residential hydro bills. Presently there are specific communities that qualify for LEAP assistance through ONWAA (Hydro One Remote residential customers). Hydro One Networks customers can be directed to a help agency as well. In both cases, applicants can receive up to \$650.00 in emergency assistance for their electricity bills (\$780.00 if your home is heated electrically). Once the funds have been depleted, however, the LEAP grants will no longer be available (this year).

We look forward to continuing our work with you to help you and your community members in the application process for both the OESP credit and the LEAP grant. Let's get all of your clients with a residential hydro account on the OESP program. Please contact us to host a site visit within your community by email (oesp@onwaa.ca) or call us at 1-844-885-3157.

We wish you and yours a Happy Holiday season and look forward to hearing from you in the New Year.



Curriculum Development Update:

Hello everyone! I'm Andrew Uchmanowicz and I'm in Sault Ste. Marie. The ONWAA team was kind enough to bring me on as a Curriculum Developer , and I've been here since early July of 2024.

Since welcoming me with open arms, ONWAA trusted me to deliver on a very important project called our "Short Term Capacity Building Project", in which I was a co-author. The project covered the topic of Burnout, a very serious issue threatening our First Nations social assistance workers. Because of the heavy nature of the topic, I saw it as a great opportunity to educate and help others struggling with mental health issues and counteract stereotypes. It made me feel a personal responsibility to share important knowledge surrounding the issue, use my voice to speak up against the stigma, and encourage others to be brave enough to use their own voices to seek the help that they may need.

The project will be presented at a workshop in the form of a retreat, where the attendees will have the opportunity to participate in self-help activities and learn important tools and strategies to prevent and cope with the stress-related feelings of trying to balance home and work duties. It is important in these trying times that we make sure to be heard, and keep in mind that each and every person could be fighting a battle we're not even aware of.

Thank you for your continued support and I look forward to continuing to contribute to the cause.

Sincerely,

Andrew Uchmanowicz
andrew.curriculum@onwaa.ca



Communications Update:

Thank you for trusting us to provide culturally appropriate curriculum and training for 52 years! We are here to help.

I am currently transitioning from Curriculum Developer to my new role as Communications and Information Officer at ONWAA. I look forward to keeping the membership informed throughout 2025!

I'd like to extend a warm welcome to our newest team member, Sheldon Adams, from Eagle Lake First Nations.

I wish everyone a peaceful and safe holiday season and a Happy New Year!

Happy holidays,

Victoria Zultek
vzultek@onwaa.ca





Policy & Research Team Update:

Aanii everyone!

It was a pleasure to see so many of you at this year's assembly. Our team is busy this winter with three research projects! We complete two of these projects annually: Cost of Administration for Income Assistances offices on-reserve and Market Basket Measure Research: the cost of living on-reserve.

Additionally, we are excited to announce that ONWAA's Personal Summary of Strengths and Needs App prototype will be tested in early 2025! This application seeks to provide a holistic approach to assessing income assistance on reserve. We invite clients to participate in this research project, which will capture progression, sustainability, and life stabilization success indicators, as well as needs and readiness for employability.

All three projects involve in-person and in-community research activities. Looking ahead, we are organizing community engagement sessions to better understand the challenges faced by staff and recipients. If your community is interested in partnering with ONWAA for any of these research opportunities, please contact us by December 14th, 2024. We would love to come to visit you.

You can email us at research@onwaa.ca and policyanalyst@onwaa.ca to set up a call where we can discuss how these projects could work best for your community and how we can prepare for our visit. We value your feedback and sharing! Together, we will make meaningful change. Chi-Miigwetch for your continued support. The policy and research team wishes you a safe, fun, and relaxing holiday season!

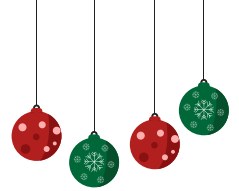


Digital Team Update:

Hello everyone! It was so nice to see familiar faces and meet new folks at the Fall Assembly in Toronto this past October. We hope you all had a safe trip back home and enjoyed yourself in Toronto.

We want to take a moment to reflect on recent news and share what's ahead for our team. First, we welcomed two new members of the Digital Team, Naomi, and Chanice. They started this spring and summer as our new Digital Content Creator and Digital Content Creator trainee. This summer we revised the FNSSAC Module 2 online course, and incorporated some new footage and eLearning design elements to enhance our new videos.

The Digital Team is looking forward to a busy following couple of months with development for eLearning courses Servicing Those with Disabilities, Life Stabilization & Case Management, Mental Health & Addictions, and Developing Culturally Appropriate Income Assistance. The Digital Team at ONWAA hope you have a safe & warm holiday season!



For over 45 years, ONWAA has established a reputation as a leader in customized design and training in the delivery of social programs. ONWAA engages a wholistic approach and delivers culturally appropriate training. Blended with its accomplished and experienced staff ONWAA can provide the following:

- Onsite Training
- Community Presentations
- Local Policy Development
- Resource Development
- Customized Webinars
- Customized E-Learning Courses
- Training Needs Assessments and Implementation of Training
- Policy Analysis
- Help Desk

Community Presentations

ONWAA is available to facilitate community presentations to clients, leadership, and other programs and services. ONWAA can host information meetings with the Chief and Council to clarify policy and identify unique issues that the First Nation is facing.

E-Learning

ONWAA develops E-Learning courses. The First Nation Social Service Administrators may request specific learning topics for their staff.

Local Policy Development

ONWAA is available to assist your community with local policy development that is reflective of First Nation needs and local business practices. Areas of local policy include: Discretionary Benefits, Transitional Support Fund, and Local Business Practices.

Webinars

ONWAA hosts micro-sessions on various topics via webinars. These sessions are approximately 1 hour in duration and provide an overview of various special topics. Invitations to webinars will be sent to Administrators via email. Administrators can register their staff.

Resource Development

ONWAA develops many resources to help with program delivery. Resources include: job aids, training workbooks, supplementary forms, brochures and client marketing strategies.

Training Needs Assessment

ONWAA is available to meet with the First Nation Ontario Works Administrators to identify and help determine areas where training may be needed. ONWAA will work with you to implement a customized training plan to meet the unique needs of your community.

ONWAA Help Desk

ONWAA offers a call-in help desk available to members. ONWAA can help with Ontario Works policy interpretation and other social program questions. The help desk can be reached at 1-877-291-7542.

FNSSAC Class of 2024



Congratulations to our graduates!
We wish you success in your future endeavors.



Happy Retirement to the Administrator Retirees!

**Lucille Morrisseau
Sandy Porter
Donelda Gagne
Cheryl Buckshott
& Bernadeen Francis**



**It has been our pleasure working
with you and we wish you all the
best in your retirement.**



Notice for Upcoming Membership Fees for 2025:

A gentle reminder for voting members: to be considered a member in good standing and be able to vote on bylaws or in our elections, you need to have paid dues by May 1st, 2025. If fees are not paid by May 1st, access to the website will be turned off and other member benefits will cease. Communities that pay past the deadline can still be members, but without voting rights.

Motion #36-2024, passed by the Board of Directors on October 21st, 2024. This motion was passed due to unpaid fees to ONWAA over the last several years and the amount of staff time spent chasing down unpaid invoices. The Board of Directors has decided that after 120 days they will be sending outstanding payments to a collection's agency. If you have any amount owing to us, please get it paid promptly to avoid these invoices going to collections. The Board did not make this decision lightly and hopes the membership understand the need to make this decision.

Upcoming Training Sessions:

Northern Region

Designing Culturally Appropriate Income Assistance Programs

- Jan. 8-9, 2025
- Lands and Estates – TBD
- STCBP - TBD

Southern Region

- *Life Stabilization and Case Management* – Dec. 4-5, 2024
- *Lands and Estates* – Feb. 19-20, 2025
- STCBP – Feb. 18-20, 2025

Other Sessions

- *ONWAA Holiday Meet & Greet WebEx* – Dec. 11, 2024 at 10:30AM - 12:00PM EST / 9:30AM – 11:00AM CST

For more information check out:
www.onwaa.ca/events

Thank you to our sponsors for hosting booths at Fall assembly!



Thank You

Thank you to all our sponsors for your contributions to the successful 2024 ONWAA and FNESA Fall Assembly. We wouldn't be able to continue our mission without the help from our generous sponsors: Bruce Power, Algoma University, Save On Energy/IESO, Algoma Business Computers, Framatome, Envirocentre, Clearesult, International Solar Solutions Inc., & Nuclear Waste Management Organization. Your support is much appreciated. Chi-Miigwetch!



NUCLEAR WASTE
MANAGEMENT
ORGANIZATION

SOCIÉTÉ DE GESTION
DES DÉCHETS
NUCLÉAIRES

ONWAA extends a special thank you to our sponsor, Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO).

According to our research, this non-profit organization ensures Canada's nuclear fuel is managed safely. They ensure the long-term protection of people and the environment for present and future generations. NWMO works with Indigenous communities to ensure regulations and industry standards are followed. They generously sponsored ONWAA and Ishkoday (First Nation Energy Sustainability Association) for Fall Assembly this year.



We appreciate your support and generous contribution. The staff at NWMO are doing very important work to keep us safe and protect our environment. Miigwetch from the team at ONWAA and Ishkoday.

