# Ishkoday/ONWAA 2026 Assembly

October 20th to 22nd, 2026

Chelsea – Toronto, Ontario

Chelsea Hotel - 33 Gerrard St., Toronto, ON M5G 1Z4

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| **Pre-Registration** | **Monday, October 19th, 2026** | | |
| **6:00pm-8:00pm** | **Pre-Registration**<br>F: ONWAA and Ishkoday Staff<br>*Hotel Lobby* | | |
| **Day 1** | **Tuesday, October 20th, 2026** | | |
| **7:00am-8:00am** | Registration & Coffee | | |
| **8:00am-9:00am** | **Regional Board Meeting for Ishkoday and ONWAA**<br>**All Member Meet and Greet**<br>**Regional Sessions – Meet with your Board Member**<br>Region 1 – David Fiddler, Region 2 – David Kelly Region 3 – Elizabeth Ferris<br>Region 4 – Emma Recollet, Region 5 – Pauline Copegog | | |
| | **BREAK** | | |
| **9:10am-9:30am** | MC: Adam McLaren<br>**Opening Prayer and Greeting**<br>*Elder David Fiddler and Drum: Kayla Sutherland*<br>**Opening Comments**<br>ONWAA/Ishkoday President and Chair – Samantha Maracle | | |
| **9:30am-10:00am** | **Energy and Social Assistance** – Deputy Grand Chief Bobby Narcisse NAN | | |
| | **BREAK** | | |
| **10:15am-11:00am** | **Roots and Relations: Indigenous Perspectives on Connection and Energy** – Bryan Loucks | | |
| **11:00am-11:45am** | **Reconnecting to our Roots –** Priscilla Yellowhead Tobey | | |
| **12:00pm-1:00pm** | Lunch provided – **Awards, *Membership Vote on Audit*** | | |
| **1:15pm-2:30pm** | **IESO Programming Focus Group**<br>F: IESO and Chelsea Brunelle, Ishkoday BB33 | **1965 Information Session**<br>F: Karen Cameron, ISC and Lesley Langdon, MCCSS<br>Churchill | **Homemakers Forms**<br>F: Jessica Nadjiwon, ONWAA<br>Wren |
| | **Assignment of Benefits**<br>F: Mycah Panjaitan, ONWAA<br>Rosetti | **Hydro One LEAP Applications and OESP**<br>F: OESP Team, Ishkoday<br>Windsor | **ACSD**<br>F: Sandra Barnes-Fontaine and Michelle Newton, MCCSS<br>Carlyle |
| **2:45pm-4:30pm** | **IESO Programming Focus Group**<br>F: IESO and Chelsea Brunelle, Ishkoday BB33 | **Income Assistance Reform**<br>**F:** AFN and IFSD<br>Churchill | **Discretionary and TSF**<br>F: Maya Nadjiwon, ONWAA<br>Rosetti |
| | **Navigating Ontario Works Technology Software**<br>F: Kelsey LeBlanc, ONWAA<br>Wren | **ONWAA Pharmaceutical Research Report Back**<br>F: Owen Cober, ONWAA<br>Windsor | **Exploring a Virtual ODSP Caseworker model for First Nations** F: MCCSS<br>Carlyle |

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| **Day 2** | **Wednesday- October 21st, 2026** | | | | |
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| **8:30am-9:00am** | Please go to your chosen workshop for the day | | | | |
| **9am-4:00pm** | **Money in Balance: The Four Directions of Financial Wellness**<br>F: Origin<br>Seymour | | | | |
| | **Coaching Through a Trauma Informed Lens**<br>F: Staci Williams<br>Churchill | | | | |
| | **Energy Poverty Bootcamp**<br>F: Adam McLaren<br>Stevenson | | | | |
| **9:00am-12:00pm** | **½ Day Sessions** | | | | |
| | **Walking Stick Workshop**<br>(Space is limited requires sign-up at registration)<br>F: Priscilla Yellowhead Tobey<br>BB33 | **Working the Frontline and ensuring self-wellness**<br>F: Keith Nadjiwon, ONWAA<br>Windsor | **Carrying the Fire Together: First Nations Systems Leadership in Response to Energy Poverty**<br>F: Marcie Romenco Wren | **Decolonizing our Social Work Practice**<br>F: Jay Lomax, Bachelor of Indigenous Social Work Instructor<br>Carlyle | **Bereavement and Grief for Frontline Staff**<br>F: Krista Hunt, ONWAA<br>Rosetti |
| **12:00pm-1:00pm** | LUNCH (on your own) | | | | |
| **1:00 pm-4:00pm** | **½ Day Sessions** | | | | |
| | **Protecting our First Nations Elders**<br>F: Angela Ritchie, ONWAA<br>BB33 | **Powering Ourselves: Community Choices in Energy (Planning?)**<br>*F: Natasha Daniels, Efficiency Canada and Nicholas Puran, Ishkoday-Windsor* | **Energy Efficiency Consumer Training Showcase**<br>F: Richard Carreiro, Ishkoday<br>Carlyle | **Keeping the Circle Strong: First Nations Human Services in Two Worlds**<br>F: Marcie Romenco Wren | **Culturally Appropriate Employment and Training**<br>F: Keith Nadjiwon, Rosetti |

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| **Day 3** | Thursday- October 22nd, 2026 | | | |
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| **8:30am-9:00am** | Please go to your chosen workshop. | | | |
| **9:00am-12:00pm** | **½ Day Sessions** | | | |
| | **Bereavement and Grief for Frontline Staff**<br>F: Krista Hunt<br>*Seymour* | **Energy Efficiency Consumer Training Showcase**<br>F: Richard Carreiro, Ishkoday Energy Workshop<br>Stevenson | **Showcase: Designing a community-based Income Assistance Program**<br>F: Kelsey LeBlanc<br>Churchill | **Culturally Appropriate Employment and Training**<br>F: Keith Nadjiwon, ONWAA<br>Rosetti |
| | ***Business Continuity Best Practices***<br>*F: Mycah Panjaitan*<br>*Carlyle* | | **Protocols for Engaging with Indigenous People**<br>F: Gord Downey and Chanie Wenjack Foundation<br>Wren | |
| **12:00pm-1:00pm** | LUNCH (on your own) | | | |
| **1:00pm-2:15pm** | **1/4 Day Sessions** | | | |
| | **Energy as a Relationship**<br>*F: Nick Puran*<br>*Seymour* | **Report Back on Energy Poverty Research in First Nations**<br>F: Adam McLaren<br>Stevenson | **Discretionary and TSF**<br>*F: Maya Nadjiwon, ONWAA*<br>*Rosetti* | **Artificial Intelligence Information Session**<br>*F: Staci Williams, ONWAA*<br>Churchill |
| | **FNSSAC Students Meet and Greet**<br>F: Mycah Panjaitan<br>Windsor | **NWMO Siting**<br>F: Greg Plain, NWMO<br>Wren | **The Price of Welfare: Exploring Narratives of First Nations Economic Development in Ontario's Bill 5**<br>*F: Owen Cober*<br>*Carlyle* | **Report Back on the Market Basket Measure**<br>*F: Chelsea Brunelle*<br>*BB33* |
| **2:30pm–3:00pm** | ***Executive Director Report*** **–** Jessica Nadjiwon<br>**Closing –** Kelsey LeBlanc | | | |
| **3:00pm-4:00pm** | **New Board Meet and Greet (For the New Board of Directors Only)**<br>*F: Jessica Nadjiwon* | | | |

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| **Pre-Registration - October 19th from 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm.** |
| We are encouraging attendees to pre-register for the two-day event at this time. We are attempting to avoid long lines and delays day of the assembly. |
| **Vendors: All vendors will be located**<br>**Administrators Only Regional Sessions** |
| These sessions are for the First Nations Ontario Works and Homemakers Staff to meet with members of their Board.<br>Region 1 – David Fiddler and Chelsea Brunelle, BB33<br>Region 2 – David Kelly and Victoria Zultek, Wren<br>Region 3 – Elizabeth Ferris and Mycah Panjaitan, Rosetti<br>Region 4 – Emma Recollet and Krista Hunt, Windsor<br>Region 5 – Pauline Copegog and Keith Nadjiwon, Carlyle<br>Other Regions – Jessica Nadjiwon, Ballroom |
| **Opening/Closing Protocols, Plenary and Guest Speakers** |
| **MC:** Adam McLaren<br>**Opening Prayer:** David B. Fiddler - **Drum:** Kayla Sutherland<br>**Opening Remarks: ONWAA President** – Samantha Maracle |
| **Energy and Social Assistance** – Deputy Grand Chief Bobby Narcisse NAN |
| **The Indigenous Connection to Energy** – Bryan Loucks |
| **Reconnecting to our Roots** – Priscilla Yellowhead Tobey |
| **Lunch and Awards** |
| **October 20th - Workshop Descriptions** All sessions are 1.15 hours long |
| **IESO Programming Focus Group**<br>F: Chelsea Brunelle<br>Audience: Everyone<br>Description: Participate in this focus group session that will discuss energy efficiency on-reserve for residential, commercial, and other non-residential facilities. Voice your opinion on how to build awareness and communicate energy efficiency to members/leadership as we transition to updated energy technologies such as heat pumps. Energy-saving measures and protections will be discussed to share best practices, communicate challenges, and voice energy priorities of the past, present, and future in our communities. |
| **1965 Information Session**<br>F: Karen Cameron, ISC and Lesley Langdon, MCCSS<br>Audience: Ontario Works Administrators and Homemakers Coordinators<br>Description: First Nations Ontario Works administrators and finance personnel play a key role in supporting the 1965 Agreement certification process and this session aims to clarify its purpose, process, and participation. The Information Session will be presented by Indigenous Services Canada and the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services and will allow for some questions and answers post-presentation. |
| **Homemakers Forms**<br>F: Jessica Nadjiwon<br>Audience: Homemakers Coordinators |

Description: This is a refresher on when to complete the Form 4, and what are the file requirements for all of the forms when delivering the Homemakers Program.

**Assignment of Benefits**
Facilitator: Mycah Panjaitan
Audience: Ontario Works Administrators, Staff and MCCSS
Description: Assignments of Benefits are mandatory forms for those waiting on receiving employment insurance. Come learn how to complete and submit the forms.

**Hydro One LEAP Applications**
Facilitators: Gene Taylor, Rhonda Howells and Kara McLeod
**Description:** This session will be a review of how Hydro One Remotes LEAP applications need to be completed and submitted to the Ishkoday team.

**ACSD**
Facilitator: TBA
Audience: Everyone
Description: This session will explain Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities (ACSD) and the Transition to Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)

- What ACSD is;
- Eligibility criteria for ACSD;
- What items and services are provided
- The application for ACSD;
- How to transition to ODSP when recipient reaches 18 years of age.

**Sessions from 2:45pm to 4:30pm**

**IESO Programming Focus Group**
F: Chelsea Brunelle
Audience: Everyone
Description: Participate in this focus group session that will discuss energy efficiency on-reserve for residential, commercial, and other non-residential facilities. Voice your opinion on how to build awareness and communicate energy efficiency to members/leadership as we transition to updated energy technologies such as heat pumps. Energy-saving measures and protections will be discussed to share best practices, communicate challenges, and voice energy priorities of the past, present, and future in our communities.

**Income Assistance Reform Presentation**
F: AFN and the Institute of Fiscal Studies and Democracy
Audience: For those new to their positions in community
Description: The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) and IFSD Advisors Ltd. (IFSD) will provide an update on the On-reserve Income Assistance (IA) Program Costing Project, a key component that will support IA Program reform. Participants will learn about the project's origin, objectives, and collaborative approach, as well as hear about key themes emerging through First Nations engagements and research activities.

**Discretionary and TSF**
F: Maya Nadjiwon
Audience: Everyone

Description: As of 2018, the Discretionary Benefits cap was removed for First Nation Ontario Works Delivery Agents ensuring benefits, including housing related costs, are available to social assistance recipients (OW and ODSP) on a case-by-case basis for a variety of health related and non-health related purposes. While Discretionary Benefits are only available to social assistance recipients, Transitional Support Funding (TSF) is available to support low-income individuals and families living on-reserve for housing-related benefits. Administrators are encouraged to develop local policies on the issuance of Discretionary Benefits and TSF that are consistent and reflective of community needs.

**Navigating Ontario Works Technology**
F: Kelsey LeBlanc
Audience: Everyone
Description: This 1.5-hour session will help participants understand the different technology software that is available to First Nation Ontario Works Delivery Agents (Social Assistance Management System (SAMS) and AD Morrison). Information is being provided, especially for those First Nations that are interested in delivering ODSP, in order to make an informed decision on what software to use. Some of the topics that will be covered are Privacy laws, Accessibility of third-party verification, Capabilities of each software system. Participants will have an opportunity to share experiences about the software that they utilize – e.g. what components they like about it or what desired features may not be included.

**ONWAA Pharmaceutical Research Report Back**
F: Owen Cober
Description: ONWAA has been researching barriers to accessing pharmaceuticals since January 2025 and has produced multiple reports on the topic. This session will focus on the most recent report, outlining how the research was conducted, the key findings of the report, and what actions can be taken to work towards self-determination for First Nations in the pharmaceutical sector.

**Exploring a Virtual ODSP Caseworker Model for First Nations**
F: MCCSS
Audience: Ontario Works Administrators, Staff and MCCSS
This session will introduce the concept of a Virtual ODSP Caseworker model and share lessons learned from an existing municipal approach. Participants will have an opportunity to discuss community needs, explore how a similar model could support access to ODSP services in First Nations communities, and provide feedback to help inform future ministry considerations.

**Day Two - October 21st**

**All Day Sessions**

**Money in Balance: The Four Directions of Financial Wellness**
F: Origin
Audience: Everyone
Description: Financial Literacy is about more than numbers—it connects to our goals, responsibilities, relationships and overall well-being. This introductory session offers a firsthand look at ORIGIN's Financial Literacy Workshop and its culturally grounded, Medicine Wheel-based approach. Participants will experience highlights from the curriculum, including real-life scenarios and hands-on activities exploring budgeting, banking, credit, debt and saving. They will also discover how the full workshop can be brought into their communities to support meaningful, judgment-free conversations and build financial confidence among the clients they serve.

**Coaching thru a Trauma Informed Lens**
F: Staci Williams
Audience: Ontario Works Administrators/Staff and Homemakers Coordinators
Description: Trauma informed care requires an understanding how historical trauma and experiences can impact an individual, community, and front-line workers. This session will provide an overview of the core principles of trauma informed care, with emphasis on coaching and emotional intelligence competencies required to effectively coach and motivate individuals.

**Energy Poverty Bootcamp**
F: Adam McLaren
Audience: Everyone
Description: Ishkoday's Energy Poverty Bootcamp is an intensive (1) day course that creates an open and shared learning environment to collaboratively examine First Nations stark realities in working with the Energy Sector through a cultural competency lens. The course is designed to be high impact, revealing stark realities while also being interactive and collaborative. Our course covers the following subjects: Indigenous Customs, Bias and Privilege, Examining Worldviews, Terminology, Indigenous ways of knowing and governance, History of Colonization, Generational Trauma, Review of Energy Poverty concepts, Energy Poverty in First Nations Statistics, Examination of First Nation barriers to Energy Efficiency.

**Wed, Oct 21 - ½ Day Workshops Morning**

**Walking Stick Workshop**
F: Priscilla Yellowhead Tobey
Audience: Everyone but must have signed up at registration (Space is limited to 40)
Description: This half day build your own walking stick craft workshop will be laced with storytelling. A walking stick provides an extra point of contact with the ground, widening your base of support and making it easier to stay upright, in this workshop you will decorate and create your own walking stick.

**Working the Frontline and ensuring self-wellness**
F: Keith Nadjiwon
Audience: Everyone
Description: Living and being influenced by western civilization, we are often conditioned to believe that self-care is selfish that it will get in the way of us striving to meet our goals, but it is an essential practice for protecting our wellbeing as front-line workers. When you're faced with life's stressors, you can utilize self-care tools to manage, cope, and rebalance your daily life.

**Carrying the Fire Together: First Nations Systems Leadership in Response to Energy Poverty**
F: Marcie Romenco
Audience: Everyone
Description: The overarching goal of this workshop would be to support First Nation Social Service Administrators in examining how energy poverty is landing in social assistance administration as workload, role confusion, staff pressure, emergency response, and systems frustration. Rather than duplicating Ishkoday energy training, program navigation, or program-information work, this session would focus on the administrative and systems-level impacts of energy poverty. This workshop would also be grounded in Indigenous social work principles, circle work, smudging, and facilitated dialogue. Participants would examine what administrators are currently carrying, what can be shared with partners, what should be set down because it belongs to broader systems, and what can be built collectively. The session would also

explore how repeated energy-related issues could be documented and transformed into evidence for broader systems change, collective advocacy, and stronger support for First Nation social assistance systems.

**Decolonizing our Social Work Practice**
F: Jay Lomax, Bachelor of Indigenous Social Work Instructor
Audience: Everyone
Description: This session explores how to shift social work away from colonial foundations toward practices rooted in Indigenous knowledge and sovereignty. It outlines the historical harm caused by systems like the child welfare industry, emphasizing the need to move beyond western models that prioritize individual compliance over community healing. Participants will find frameworks for centering Indigenous worldviews, honoring kinship systems, and advocating for self-determination. By prioritizing cultural safety and land-based approaches, social workers can help dismantle power imbalances and support the resilience of Indigenous families and nations.

**Bereavement and Grief for Frontline Staff**
F: Krista Hunt
Audience: Homemakers Coordinators and Human Services Frontline Staff
Description: This half day training provides frontline staff with a practical and compassionate understanding of grief and loss, and how it presents in their clients, staff, and communities they serve. Participants will explore common grief responses, and the important role of culture, trauma, lived experience, and community can play in the grieving process and designing programming. The training will build practical skills for responding to grief with empathy while maintaining professional boundaries. Participants will also explore strategies for supporting their own well-being while working alongside individuals experiencing loss.

**Wednesday, Oct 21st - Afternoon Sessions**

**Protecting our First Nations Elders**
F: Ange Ritchie, ONWAA
Audience: Homemakers Coordinators and Homemakers
Description: This workshop will provide an in-depth explanation of what Elder mistreatment is, the types of mistreatments that elders may endure and how we as communities can work together to prevent Elder mistreatment. Participants will learn how Elder mistreatment can affect everyone in the community and find their role in supporting them.

**Powering Ourselves: Community Choices in Energy (Planning?)**
*F: Natasha Daniels, Efficiency Canada and Nicholas Puran, Ishkoday*
Audience: Energy Champions or those working on energy planning for their communities
Description: While First Nations are supposed to be a federal responsibility and normally fall under federal jurisdiction, the energy system is provincial jurisdiction. This workshop will explore concepts we find within energy democracy and energy planning. Thru case studies we will discuss and investigate problems that may arise as we work towards energy plans for our First Nations communities and remind ourselves to be mindful as we work thru our planning processes. Best practices will be shared amongst participants.

**Showcase: Energy Efficiency Consumer Training**
F: Richard Carriero
Audience: Everyone
Description: This showcase walks participants thru the free training we provide in First Nations consumers. The training will provide participants with knowledge and understanding of the following concepts: Home Basics, Terminology, Energy Efficiency, and Challenges for First Nations. Learners will explore energy production, healthy homes, and how to save on energy usage. Learners will connect, reflect, and apply principles of energy efficiency to reduce energy poverty as it relates to the unique challenges of First Nations communities.

**Keeping the Circle Strong: First Nations Human Services in Two Worlds**
Facilitator: Marcie Romenco
Audience: Those working in Human Services

Description: The overarching goal of this workshop would be to create a culturally grounded and supportive space for First Nation Social Service Administrators to reflect on the realities of working in two worlds. The session would focus on how administrators can remain grounded in First Nations values, culture, responsibility, and community wellness while also navigating colonial legislation, compliance requirements, funding restrictions, and organizational pressures. This workshop would be grounded in Indigenous social work principles, circle work, smudging, storytelling, and facilitated dialogue. It would create space for participants to name what they are carrying, recognize that they are not alone, and explore practical ways to maintain balance, role clarity, cultural grounding, peer support, and collective strength while working within systems that often do not reflect First Nations realities.

**Culturally Appropriate Employment and Training**
F: Keith Nadjiwon, ONWAA
Audience: Everyone
Description: This session will explore approaches to designing and delivering employment and training programs that are culturally appropriate and reflective of community priorities. Participants will learn how life stabilization supports and addressing barriers to participation can help achieve meaningful employment outcomes while reconnecting with traditions. Participants will learn about culturally appropriate employment and training programs that can be applied to their Employment Program. Participants will learn how Life Stabilization can be applied to their Employment Program.

Day 3 – **Thu, Oct 22nd – Morning Sessions**

**Bereavement and Grief for Frontline Staff**
F: Krista Hunt
Audience: Homemakers Coordinators and Human Services Frontline Staff
Description: This half day training provides frontline staff with a practical and compassionate understanding of grief and loss, and how it presents in their clients, staff, and communities they serve. Participants will explore common grief responses, and the important role of culture, trauma, lived experience, and community can play in the grieving process and designing programming. The training will build practical skills for responding to grief with empathy while maintaining professional boundaries. Participants will also explore strategies for supporting their own well-being while working alongside individuals experiencing loss.

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**Showcase: Designing a Community Based Income Assistance Program**
F: Kelsey LeBlanc, ONWAA
Audience: Everyone
Description: This showcase we will be an introduction into the new four module program that will be offered in 2027-2028 where over the course of a year for any individuals who are interested in facilitating conversations will be able to learn the skills to design their own income assistance program. This new curriculum will provide comprehensive training to equip participants with facilitation skills, research and development skills. In addition, the training program will provide tools and strategies for change management and program design. Each module is four days in duration for a total of 16 days of train the trainer curriculum, tools, and delivery.

**Culturally Appropriate Employment and Training**

F: Keith Nadjiwon, ONWAA
Audience: Everyone
Description: This session will explore approaches to designing and delivering employment and training programs that are culturally appropriate and reflective of community priorities. Participants will learn how life stabilization supports and addressing barriers to participation can help achieve meaningful employment outcomes while reconnecting with traditions. Participants will learn about culturally appropriate employment and training programs that can be applied to their Employment Program. Participants will learn how Life Stabilization can be applied to their Employment Program.

**Business Continuity Best Practices**
F: Mycah Panjaitan, ONWAA
Audience: Everyone
Description: Emergency situations can occur unexpectedly, from pandemics, cyber-attacks, hydro or water outages, natural disasters, and community evacuations. As part of the Ontario Works Service Plan, you will be requested to plan for business continuity in the event of an emergency within your community. However other staff working in community and for organizations should consider what goes into a business continuity plan. It is expected that you will be able to service individuals regardless of the emergency. Being prepared is crucial to increasing community safety, building community resiliency, and ensuring business continuity. Participants will gain knowledge and tools to develop and implement emergency preparedness and business continuity plans within their communities.

**Protocols for Engaging with Indigenous People**
F: Gord Downie & Chanie Wenjack Fund
Audience: Everyone
Description: The term *Indigenous Protocols* is becoming commonplace within organizations to improve processes in day-to-day interactions with Indigenous Peoples and communities. The concept of Indigenous Protocols varies from nation to nation, community to community; however, it is not a prescribed set of rules or behaviours that must be adhered to. It is a principle-based approach to how interactions occur cross-culturally to ensure respectful engagement with Indigenous Peoples and communities.

**Thursday Afternoon 1pm-2:30pm Sessions**

**Energy as a Relationship**
Facilitator: Nick Puran, Ishkoday
Audience: Everyone
Description**:** What effect does energy have on wellbeing? What if we viewed energy not as a commodity but rather as a relationship between people, place, and time? Building on the Healthy Homes training, we will explore exactly why our relationship with energy matters and how it affects all areas of wellbeing – physical, emotional, and spiritual.
Themes we will explore in this workshop include:

- How energy is viewed around the world – East, West, and Indigenous Perspectives
- What academia says (studies on wellness in homes)
- How energy choices can be dictated by race, income, geography, disability, and housing status – what kind of relationship do we have with energy when it's something to fear (disconnects, high bills, etc.)? Why is reducing energy not always virtuous?
- Nested systems – how natural systems (biodiversity, ecology) play a role
- What a healthy relationship with energy looks like
- Perspectives from a Homemaker

**Report Back on Energy Poverty Research in First Nations**

F: Adam McLaren
Audience: Everyone
Description: This report back will look at the research Ishkoday has done to date on the energy poverty issues within First Nations communities in Ontario.

**Discretionary and TSF**
F: Maya Nadjiwon, ONWAA
Audience: Everyone
Description: As of 2018, the Discretionary Benefits cap was removed for First Nation Ontario Works Delivery Agents ensuring benefits, including housing related costs, are available to social assistance recipients (OW and ODSP) on a case-by-case basis for a variety of health related and non-health related purposes. While Discretionary Benefits are only available to social assistance recipients, Transitional Support Funding (TSF) is available to support low-income individuals and families living on-reserve for housing-related benefits. Administrators are encouraged to develop local policies on the issuance of Discretionary Benefits and TSF that are consistent and reflective of community needs.

**Artificial Intelligence Information Sessions**
P: Staci Williams, ONWAA
Audience: Everyone
Description: ONWAA staff are not experts on Artificial intelligence, but with all new technologies we need to learn how they can be used appropriately. With rapidly changing models of AI, it is important that we at least understand some basics of AI, specifically how it plays a role in shaping culture. This information session will introduce key concepts and provide you with resources for self-directed learning.

**FNSSAC Students Meet and Greet**
F: Mycah Panjaitan
Audience: Current FNSSAC Students Only
Description: An opportunity for this years FNSSAC participants to meet in-person before the in-class portion of their studies.

**NWMO Proposed Siting Process**
F: Greg Plain
Audience: Everyone
Description: In June 2025, the Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) launched a two-year engagement process with Indigenous Peoples and Canadians to gather feedback on developing a site selection process for the next deep geological repository (DGR).Following the Minister of Natural Resources' endorsement of the recommendations included in *Canada's Integrated Strategy for Radioactive Waste*, NWMO is now responsible for the safe, long-term management of intermediate-level and non-fuel high-level radioactive waste. This waste results from generating electricity and producing medical isotopes. This new process is separate from NWMO's ongoing work over the past 30 years to manage used nuclear fuel. Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation and the Township of Ignace have been selected as host communities for the first DGR to store this waste.

NWMO invites you to a workshop to learn more about the proposed siting process, provide input, and share your thoughts. Everyone is welcome to participate in the important conversations about the health, safety and security of people and the environment for generations to come.

**"The Price of Welfare: Exploring Narratives of First Nations Economic Development in Ontario's Bill 5"**
Presenter: Owen Cober
Audience: Everyone
Description: This research explores how the government of Ontario uses arguments related to First Nations economic development to justify the expansion of mining in Ontario. It will show that the language used by the Progressive

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| Conservative Government of Ontario perpetuates longstanding colonial dynamics, further subordinating First Nations rights to the economic interests of the province. This research was conducted by Owen Cober, ONWAA Research and Policy Analyst, as part of the requirements for his master's degree. |
| **Report Back: ONWAA's Market Basket Measure Projects**<br>Presenter: Chelsea Brunelle<br>Audience: Everyone<br>Description: Join this session to hear the project's lead researcher report back on the cost-of-living research that ONWAA has gathered through collaboration with First Nation community members across all 5 Ontario regions from 2022 to 2026. This session discusses key-findings and provides an understanding of how ONWAA collected data using the market basket measure threshold in a culturally appropriate manner. This unique research project illustrates a realistic picture of what it costs to live on-reserve, in urban, rural, and remote areas based on actual monthly breakdowns of household costs. |
| **Executive Directors Report and Closing**<br>Facilitator: Kelsey LeBlanc<br>Description: |
| **New Board Meet and Greet**<br>Presenter: Jessica Nadjiwon<br>Description: This mandatory session is for both the ONWAA and Ishkoday newly elected Board Members. This will allow all the new Board to meet each other and learn about both organizations. We will talk about protocols, emails, laptops and get you all of the information you require to become a successful new Board Member |

## This year's logos:

ONWAA
Fall Assembly 2026

ISHKODAY
Fall Assembly 2026

This year's theme: 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 our of elders and ancestors and remembering our First Nations ways of knowing and being.

Thank you to our Sponsors:

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Chelsea – Toronto, Ontario

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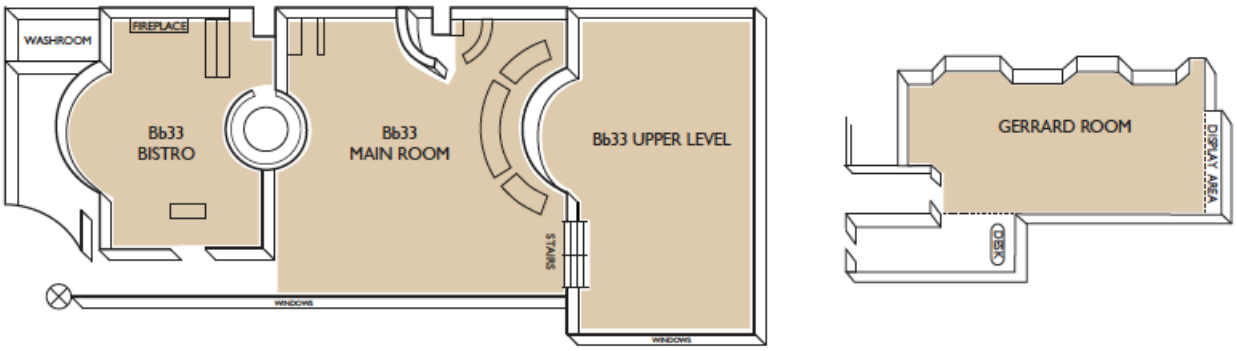
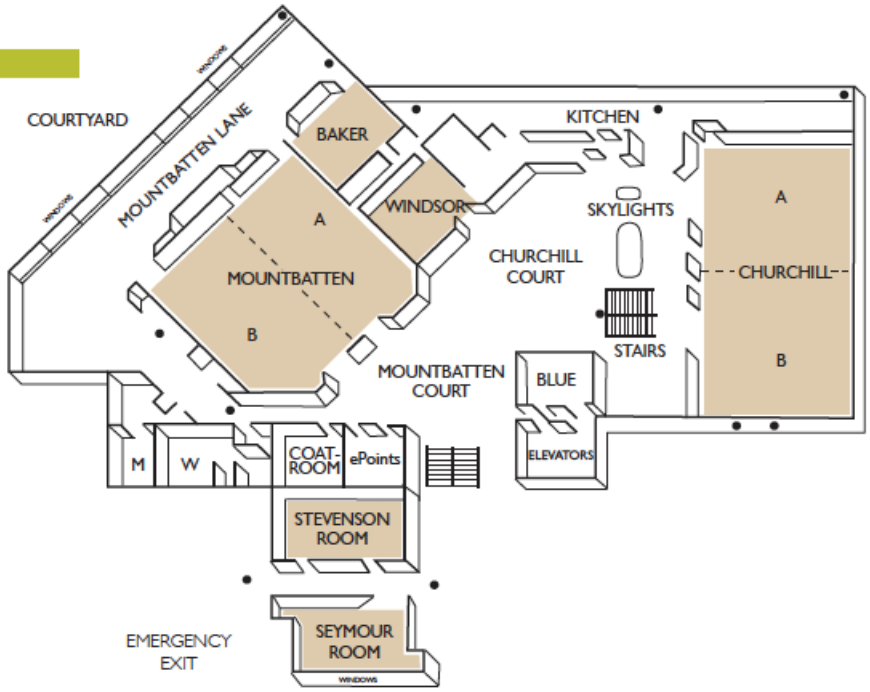
Chelsea – Toronto, Ontario

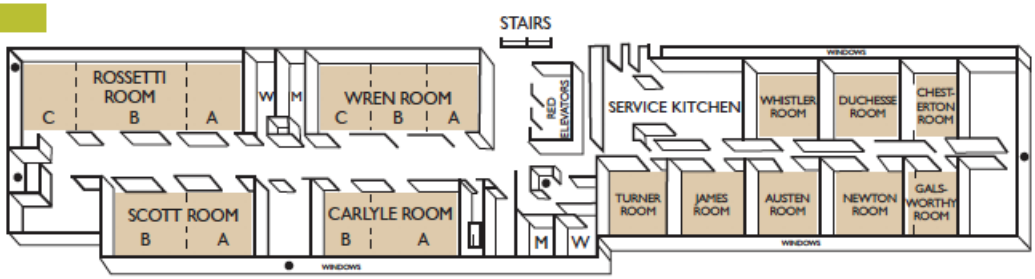
Location : First Floor



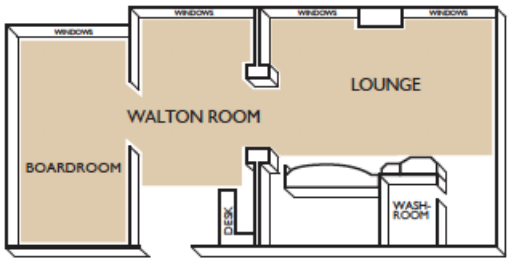

Location : Second Floor




Location : Third Floor




Location : Twenty-fifth Floor




CHELSEA Hotel TORONTO