

The Wâwiyiyaw

National Circle Newsletter For Indigenous Agriculture & Food

NEWS

UPDATE

Honouring Indigenous Veterans Day

On November 8, Indigenous Veterans Day, we honour the resilience and sacrifices of Indigenous Veterans who served with pride, despite facing injustices upon their return. Due to discriminatory policies, many Indigenous Veterans were denied critical support, with only one in ten receiving land or loans through the Soldier Settlement Act.

This history underscores the mission of the NCIAF to support Indigenous communities in reclaiming agricultural roots and building resilience. Today and every day, we remember and thank our Indigenous Veterans. For more on this history, the Gord Downie & Chanie Wenjack Fund offers [educational resources](#).

A Recap of *Nourishing Nations Roundtable* Community Resources Event for Indigenous Food Sovereignty

The NCIAF recently held a dynamic event focused on empowering Indigenous community leaders to build networks and learn together. The *Nourishing Nations Roundtable* highlighted NCIAF-supported and Indigenous-led projects and food systems related to gardens, orchards, and greenhouses.

The gathering offered a space to share opportunities, success stories, and key insights from each area.

The day was spent exploring resources to establish and expand these projects, community garden and orchard leaders shared their journeys and provincial experts offered practical knowledge, strategies, and support options for building resilient food systems.



Feedback from attendees showed a strong interest in bringing these efforts to more communities, underscoring the rising demand for food production initiatives that unite youth and elders across Indigenous lands. Many attendees found the experience transformative, with shared stories fostering a sense of unity and purpose.

This event marked a positive step towards building a sustainable, Indigenous-led agricultural future. NCIAF looks forward to organizing similar events and fostering the partnerships and connections that drive food security and sovereignty for Indigenous communities.

NCIAF Partners with Bioenterprise to Empower Indigenous Agri-Food Entrepreneurs

NCIAF and Bioenterprise, Canada's Food & Agri-Tech Engine, have joined forces to strengthen support for Indigenous entrepreneurs in the agri-food sector. Through this partnership, NCIAF will connect Indigenous agri-food businesses with Bioenterprise's extensive network of mentors, resources, and funding opportunities, helping to enhance innovation and business growth within Indigenous communities.



"We are excited to welcome NCIAF into Bioenterprise's network and to collaborate with Canada's Indigenous leaders in agri-food," said Dave Smardon, CEO of Bioenterprise Canada. "By building an inclusive ecosystem, we can help strengthen food security and sovereignty through Indigenous innovation."

NCIAF President & CEO Kallie Wood emphasized the organization's commitment to fostering a collaborative environment in agriculture. "Our shared vision with Bioenterprise is to break down barriers and build an inclusive community of Indigenous entrepreneurs, advocates, and partners to drive sustainable growth in agri-food," Wood said.

This partnership will give Indigenous communities access to new funding opportunities, specialized services, and sustainable practices that support food security and economic resilience.

Co-designing the Future: NIAP Advisory Circle Shapes Indigenous Agriculture Programs



The National Indigenous Agriculture Program (NIAP) Advisory Circle was created to guide and advise the development of NCIAF programming. Consisting of Indigenous and non-Indigenous individuals who bring diverse agricultural and agribusiness experiences and knowledge from across Canada, the NIAP Advisory Circle will focus on youth education, training opportunities, local food system development, and community garden/food sovereignty initiatives.

On October 31st, the NIAP Advisory Circle met for the first time. The meeting was spent updating the members on what NCIAF has delivered to date, the development of the NIAP framework, and discussing what is on the programming horizon. With the Advisory Circle's wisdom, enthusiasm and direction, the NCIAF will be delivering its first program focused

agricultural food systems and cooking classes into First Nations communities. This program, titled Nourishing Nations Empowering Generations, will be co-designed directly with community. This custom approach was developed with the intention of providing flexible and tailored solutions to meet the unique needs of each individual nation. Next steps will include a pilot program in the 2025 growing season.

To learn more about the NIAP Advisory Circle, its members, and NCIAF Programs, please visit our [programs page](#).

NCIAF Presence Goes International at the Tri-National Accord

In October, NCIAC's Senior Vice President of Business Development attended the Tri-National Agricultural Accord which exemplifies a valuable collaborative approach for advancing agricultural trade and rural development across North America.

Chris had the opportunity to present the goals and objectives of the National Circle for Indigenous Agriculture and Food and shared how this partnership offers an essential platform to ensure that Indigenous voices are included in discussions on agricultural policy and trade decisions impacting Indigenous communities across Canada and North America.

This commitment to working together started with a U.S.-Canada agreement in 1984, which expanded to include Mexico with the creation of NAFTA in the early 1990's and has continued through annual trilateral meetings since 1992. Today, under the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), the Accord strengthens opportunities for Indigenous food producers to access broader North American and global markets.



To fully realize the benefits of these agreements, Indigenous representation is vital. The Accord's consultative structure allows Indigenous agricultural leaders, through the Circle, to provide valuable input to provincial and federal officials.

Each year, provincial and state representatives gather as delegates to the Tri-National Agricultural Accord, where the Circle plays a key role in advocating for Indigenous agriculture and food systems.

To learn more about the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture and the Tri-National Accord, visit their [website](#).

Building Strength from Within: Meet Our Director of Capacity Development

Kate Fraser is the Director of Capacity Development for the National Circle for Indigenous Agriculture & Food. With a deep-rooted passion for agriculture, Kate grew up on a farm in southwestern Ontario and recently started a family flower farm with her husband and daughters.

Kate is a devoted mother to twin four-year-old daughters – born on her own birthday. She is also an identical twin herself, which adds a unique blessing to her family dynamic. Kate's role as a mother feeds her dedication to empowering youth and instilling a love and respect for Canadian agriculture.

Tell us a little about yourself and your position with the NCIAF.

I have a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Western Ontario with a double major in Psychology and Health Sciences and furthered my education through certification in agile project management. My career spans multiple sectors across Canadian agriculture, including six years with Farm Credit Canada.

Committed to educating youth and the broader public, I strive to inspire an interest and respect for Canadian agriculture, highlighting the journey from farm to table and its essential role in the economy and our health and well-being.

Currently, my team is developing community-driven programs that integrate agriculture, food systems, health, and education, co-created with Indigenous communities to celebrate and empower First Nations, Inuit, and Métis cultures across Canada. The first program will focus on bringing agriculture into the classrooms of First Nation communities.

What inspired you to join the NCIAF?

I was inspired to join the NCIAF by my Métis husband and daughters, who deepen my commitment to supporting Indigenous communities across Canada. I bring a passion for building and navigating new challenges, embracing the unknowns that drive creative solutions. I feel both excited and humbled by the opportunity to contribute to NCIAF's mission.

What have you found to be the best part of working with the NCIAF so far?

The best part of working with the NCIAF has been the opportunity to shape the organization and its programs from a blank canvas, filling it with vibrant initiatives and meaningful impact. Building from the ground up has been both a challenge and a joy, and I have been honored to listen to and learn from the wisdom shared by Indigenous people I have had the privilege to meet.



What OUR COMMUNITY SAYS ABOUT US

Gathering to share knowledge, experience and to grow connections is an integral part of the support NCIAF provides. Taking time to reflect is key to any journey.

At the NCIAF, feedback is welcomed as it helps shape our future events and provides valuable input from the attendees or community members to ensure their voices are heard. Following the Nourishing Nations Roundtable hosted on October 30, 2024, the team at NCIAF encouraged feedback from attendees to hear what they enjoyed and what they think can be enhanced for the next roundtable. Here are a some quotes provided by event attendees!

Thank you to the attendees for sharing their words and participating in the event. The NCIAF looks forward to the next event!

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“I loved hearing all the stories from the different Indigenous communities and how we all have similar goals and objectives. I love hearing the different methods that are being utilized, what is working and what is not.”

-Nourishing Nations Roundtable Attendee

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“I liked listening to all the knowledgeable professionals, sharing stories and being a part of advancing our future of food sovereignty and food security. Sharing knowledge, acquiring connections and new relationships and honoring our lands and people”

-Nourishing Nations Roundtable Attendee

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Event Highlights

[AWC East 2024 Conference Nov 17-20](#)

Location: Niagara Falls, ON

[Canadian Western Agribition Nov 25-30](#)

Location: Regina, SK

[Indigenous Seafood Farming Celebration Nov 26](#)

Location: Ottawa, ON

Please reach out to info@nciaf.ca if you would like to list an event.

Funding Opportunities

Local Food Infrastructure Fund (Large Projects Stream) will open in January 2025 for projects \$150,000 to \$500,000. [More info.](#)

Contact us to find out how the NCI AF can fill the requirement of project partner on your application.

Stay Informed



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Featured Partner

HERE IS OUR FEATURED
PARTNER OF THE MONTH



“By working together [with NCI AF] and building a connected agri-food innovation ecosystem that actively involves Indigenous voices, we can help advance the innovation and entrepreneurship that will strengthen food security and sovereignty.”

Dave Smardon, CEO, Bioenterprise Canada

