



cando

# CONNECT OCT/NOV 2024 | Vol. 11 No. 1 magazine

*Moving Indigenous Economies Forward*

**National  
Youth Panel**

**2024**

**Cando Conference  
30th Anniversary  
Issue**

**Women in Business  
Panel**

**2024 NIEEF  
Scholarships**

**Economic Developer  
of the Year Awards**



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**2024 Women in Business Panel**

**2024 National Youth Panel**

**Cover image:**

The 2024 Cando Conference will feature six outstanding economic developer award nominees working to impact Indigenous communities! A beautiful crystal award will be given to each winner.

Photo Illustration: Paul Macedo

*Cando Connect* Magazine is produced by Cando under the direction of Paul Macedo, Communications Officer.

If you have any story ideas and/or suggestions for improving *Cando Connect* please contact Paul directly at:

e: paul.macedo@edo.ca  
 tf: 1-800-463-9300 ext 236  
 p: 780-990-0303 ext 236  
 f: 780-429-7487

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# 2024 Cando Conference

## 30th Anniversary

### See you in Calgary!

Cando welcomes everyone interested in Indigenous economic development to attend the **30th Annual Cando National Conference** that will be hosted at the Westin Calgary in Calgary, Alberta from **October 21 – 24, 2024**. In the heart of Treaty 7! Cando was last in Calgary in 1994 - for Cando's First Conference.

For updated 2023 Conference information, including registrations, please visit: [www.edo.ca/conference/2024](http://www.edo.ca/conference/2024)

Cando has also just completed delivery of the 7th Annual Economic Development Youth Summit will be held at Grey Eagle Resort on TsuuT'ina First Nation.

For 2024 Youth Summit results and photos, please visit:

[www.edo.ca/youth/economic-development-youth-summit-2024](http://www.edo.ca/youth/economic-development-youth-summit-2024)

The **11th Annual BC Links to Learning Symposium** is scheduled for December 2–4, 2024 at the Westin Bayshore Hotel in Vancouver. More than 275 EDOs and Lands Managers from BC First Nation communities will be supported to attend.

For more information on this event, please visit: [www.links-to-learning.ca](http://www.links-to-learning.ca)

Cando is also planning for in-person delivery of **Alberta Links to Learning Symposium** at River Cree Resort in Enoch, Alberta in February 2025. The event will support training and networking opportunities for Indigenous economic developers representing Alberta First Nation communities. The three days will include accredited training, learning, sharing and networking.

For more information on this event, please visit:

[www.edo.ca/links-to-learning/alberta-links-to-learning-symposium](http://www.edo.ca/links-to-learning/alberta-links-to-learning-symposium)

Cando is pleased to announce the recipients of the **2024 NIEEF Scholarships**. In this issue you will find the profiles and learning journeys of the six (6) scholarship recipients.

Profiles of the 2024 NIEEF scholarship recipients begins are pages **06–13**.

Looking forward to seeing you in Calgary!



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ALWAYS EVOLVING  
ALWAYS FINDING

# A BETTER WAY

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A photograph of a woman with long dark hair, wearing a grey t-shirt, smiling and talking to a man in a blue and white plaid shirt. They are standing in front of a dark-colored truck. The truck has a '4' logo on the side. The background is a bright, sunny outdoor setting with a yellow field.

*DREAM. GROW. THRIVE.*

# IN THE BLUE SKY CITY, WE ARE REMINDED OF WHAT'S POSSIBLE.

Calgary sits at the confluence of the Elbow and Bow Rivers, the traditional gathering places of the First Peoples to call this region home. Here, peoples, cultures, and ideas come together to help create what's possible. Our vision is a city with long-term prosperity and opportunities for all.

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**Calgary Economic  
Development**

BLUE SKY CITY

# 30TH ANNUAL NATIONAL CONFERENCE

**A National Platform Exclusively Focused on Excellence in Indigenous Economic Development**

**Cando is pleased to announce its 30th Annual National Conference to be held October 21-24, 2024 at the Westin Calgary in Calgary, Alberta  
Theme: Evolution & Growth: 30 Years of Inspiring Success**

**This year's conference will be co-hosted by  
Community Futures Treaty 7 & Calgary Economic Development.**

The Cando national conference is the only platform that focuses exclusively on topics and trends related to the advancement of Indigenous Economic Development in Canada. It is an important venue for economic developers and related stakeholders to come together, create new business contacts, share best practices, address obstacles and reveal existing trends in our dynamic economy. Topics and training opportunities, conference attendees will not only see the region's innovative energy, but leave with fresh strategies and tools to take their organizations and communities to the next level.



## What Can I Expect from the Cando Conference?

- Pre-Conference Workshop
- Cando Accredited Training
- Conference Icebreaker Reception
- Community Cultural Tour
- Economic Developer of the Year Awards
- National Youth Panel
- Women in Business Panel
- Interactive workshops, keynote presentations & informative plenary sessions
- Trade Show & Artisan Show & Sale
- President's Reception, Dinner & Dance



## Who attends the Cando Conference?

The Cando conference attracts hundreds of delegates from across the country from a broad cross section of the corporate sector, government institutions, Indigenous communities & development corporations, academics and young people interested in pursuing a career in the field of Indigenous Economic Development.

### Specifically:

- Economic Development
- Program Managers, Band Administrators & Finance
- Indigenous business owners and consultants working with Indigenous communities
- Elected leaders and senior executives
- Academic leaders and students presenting and pursuing the latest research
- Senior Executives from Financial Institutions, the Mining and Energy Sector, Trust & Investment Firms, Law Firms, and many other corporate sector representatives

## What are the Benefits of Attending?

### Bolster Your Professional Network!

This is your chance to mingle with the best and brightest in your field. Check out the latest progress from industry innovators and engage with like-minded people and exchange ideas, and develop friendships with people from all over Canada.

### Build Your Knowledge Base!

The conference is a hotbed of interesting seminars and workshops - attending some great presentations during the conference will allow you to learn about all of the new things that are developing in other regions of the country while expanding your current knowledge within a specific area of expertise.

### Catch Up With Trends!

Attending the Cando conference is a great way to stay on the cutting edge. Learn about the most recent trends in Indigenous Economic Development and bring the leading best practices back home for the benefit of your community or organization.

### Expand Your Resources!

The conference is full of people promoting new ideas, vendors selling new products and consultants teaching new methodologies. Take advantage of this opportunity to fill your toolbox with new techniques for greater success.

### Get Inspired!

The Cando conference offers Canada's most most inspirational showcase of Indigenous youth role models, and economic developers. With so many successful members of your industry present, chances are good that you could bump into your next mentor or role model at the Cando conference.

**Don't miss this excellent opportunity to learn more about Indigenous community economic development & speak with the people directly involved in improving the economic viability of Canada's Indigenous communities!**

**To learn more about the upcoming conference or to register, please visit our web site at:**

**[www.edo.ca/conference/2024](http://www.edo.ca/conference/2024)**

**e-mail Svitlana Konoval at: [skonoval@edo.ca](mailto:skonoval@edo.ca)**

**or call the Cando Office: 1-800-463-9300 or 780-990-0303**

# Thank you to our 2024 Conference partners!

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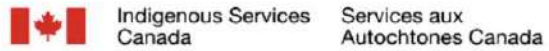
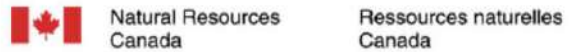


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precedes the Cando National Conference



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# Seasoned worker on verge of post-secondary degree as a mature student



**Dana Cross is a member of Horse Lake First Nation in Alberta and has an impressive resume.**

**By Sam Laskaris  
Cando Contributor**

By the time she was in her 30s, Dana Cross had an impressive resume.

Cross, a member of Horse Lake First Nation in Alberta, had overseen and supervised projects in the oil and gas industry for various companies.

But when the industry started heading in a downward direction and jobs were harder to come by, Cross knew it was time for her to make a change. She decided it was time for her life to head in a completely different direction.

“I found myself in a position where I had to compete with a lot of people with degrees,” she said. “And I didn’t have one.”

Thus, Cross decided to head back to school. For starters, she earned a diploma in Indigenous environmental stewardship and reclamation from Yellowhead Tribal College in Edmonton.

The college is run by four First Nations located in Alberta. They are Alexander First Nation, Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation, O’Chiese First Nation and Sunchild First Nation.

But Cross wasn’t done with her schooling – or Yellowhead Tribal College - after she received her diploma.

Cross, who is 41, is now finishing up her Bachelor of Science degree in Indigenous land management. She is hoping to complete all of the program requirements by July of this year.

“I really made a great decision,” Cross said of heading back to further her education as a mature student. “I only wish I did it sooner. And I’m super happy I’ve been able to learn at Yellowhead Tribal College, which has an Indigenous perspective.”

Cross also has another reason to be pleased. She captured a NIEEF scholarship.

NIEEF is the charitable arm of Cando. The foundation provides scholarships, training and research funding to students involved in Indigenous community economic development.

“This scholarship has come in at a really good time for me and my family,” Cross said. “It’s helped me with my day-to-day (expenses) and allowed me to focus on my schooling.”

Cross is currently living in the Alberta town of Athabasca, located about 150 kilometres north of Edmonton.

Some of her Yellowhead Tribal College classes are online. But she has about a 90-minute commute to Edmonton for her in-person classes.

When she does head to Edmonton for her studies Cross at times is able to stay with family members who live in the city.

Cross is not quite sure what type of job she will land after her graduation this year.

“My immediate goal will be to enter the workforce as soon as I can,” she said.

Cross is interested in environmental science and Indigenous sovereignty and is committed to preserving natural resources and cultural heritage.

Cross is also happy to see a family member following in her footsteps. Her 25-year-old nephew Nicholas Wynn began his Indigenous land management classes at Yellowhead Tribal College in January of this year.

“I’m super excited for him,” Cross said.

**2024 NIEEF SCHOLARSHIP**



# Aspiring accountant also keen to assist Indigenous communities

Dawson Trimper is a firm believer that obstacles can be overcome.

Though he is autistic, Trimper, a 23-year-old member of Bear River First Nation in Nova Scotia, is not letting anything stand in the way of accomplishing his goals.

After completing his high school studies Trimper attended Nova Scotia Community College, graduating in 2020 with honours and a business diploma, with a concentration in accounting.

He is now continuing his education at Cape Breton University. He's in the Bachelor of Business Administration program and is majoring in accounting.

Trimper is hoping to complete program requirements in May of 2025.

"I recognize that I have challenges," Trimper said. "But I don't let those challenges come in my way. I don't view it as a limitation. I use it as something I can use to advance myself."

Trimper added being autistic has its cons as well as pros.

"It's a double-edged sword," he said. "It's hard for certain areas. Like I need extra time with my writing. But I have a super hero computer brain and I'm very good with numbers. I guess that's why I like accounting."

Trimper is also thrilled with the fact he was one of the 2023 recipients of a National Indigenous Economic Education Foundation (NIEEF) scholarship.

"I always go into scholarships with the mind if it's meant to be I'll win it and if it's not meant to be I won't," he said.

"It means being able to focus on my studies and not being stressed about the finances," Trimper said of being one of the scholarship winners.

Funding was provided through NIEEF, the foundation which is Cando's charitable organization. It provides scholarships, training and research funding to students involved in Indigenous community economic development.

After completing his university degree, Trimper wants to fulfil the requirements to become a certified public accountant.

"I think they said people can finish that in 2-3 years," he said. "But you can take up to six years. I take the approach slow and steady wins the race. So, I just might take the full six years to do that."

Trimper has managed to excel in the classroom since commencing his post-secondary career. His cumulative average is about 90 per cent.

"I don't think I've had a mark lower than 75 or 77," he said.

Trimper has also been working for the Canadian government, assisting with procurement strategies, since September of 2020. During the school year he usually works 12-15 hours per week.

The money he earns from this job helps pay for some of his schooling.

"I didn't have what you say is privilege or financing to say I can do whatever I want," he said.

Though he is hoping to become an accountant, Trimper also has another aspiration.

"I want to work in a capacity where I can help Indigenous people and Indigenous communities," he said. "But that doesn't necessarily mean that will be your (main) job."



**Dawson Trimper, a 23-year-old member of Bear River First Nation in Nova Scotia, is not letting anything stand in the way of accomplishing his goals.**

**By Sam Laskaris  
Cando Contributor**

**2024 NIEEF SCHOLARSHIP**

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**edo.ca**

# Indigenous woman successfully juggles entrepreneurship, family life and university



**Jodi Vander Heide-Buswa, a 30-year-old member of Six Nations of the Grand River in Ontario, has owned her own company since 2019.**

**By Sam Laskaris  
Cando Contributor**

Jodi Vander Heide-Buswa has certainly mastered the practice of finding the time to get things done.

Vander Heide-Buswa, a 30-year-old member of Six Nations of the Grand River in Ontario, has owned her own company since 2019.

Her business is titled Niswi B ~ Buswa, Beadwork & Biizikiiganan. The company has three components.

For starters, she sells her custom design clothing, including orange Every Child Matters shirts online through her website <https://niswib.ca/>

The website also features her Indigenous beadwork, which includes earrings, bracelets and dreamcatchers.

Vander Heide-Buswa also spreads awareness and teaches Indigenous history at schools, community meetings and various workshops.

She's also pursuing a degree in equity, diversity and human rights through Laurentian University in Sudbury, Ont. Vander Heide-Buswa is taking all of her classes online.

She also aspires to eventually earn her PhD in Indigenous studies.

Plus, she's a mother of six with her children's ages ranging from 5 to 14. And she was also pregnant early this year with her seventh child, due to be born in June.

So how does Vander Heide-Buswa successfully juggle all of her responsibilities?

"I can't give away a lot of my secrets," she said.

Vander Heide-Buswa, however, doesn't mind sharing how she felt about some recent positive news that she received.

It was announced that she is a recipient of a National Indigenous

Economic Education Foundation (NIEEF) scholarship.

NIEEF provides scholarships, training and research funding to students involved in Indigenous community economic development.

"It was amazing," she said. "It just felt really good. It was a huge relief with everything going on in Canada right now. It's very stressful to focus on your studies when you're wondering if you're going to have a roof over your head or if you're going to have enough food in your belly."

Vander Heide-Buswa said she is fortunate that her First Nation does cover her university tuition fees. But she still has plenty of other school expenses, despite the fact she's taking all of her classes online.

"I go through a lot of materials like printer ink, so I stocked up on that," she said, explaining where some of her scholarship money went.

Because of all of her responsibilities, Vander Heide-Buswa is not able to be a full-time student.

She began her program studies six years ago. And she is not certain when she'll complete all program requirements.

At times she only takes one course per semester. Sometimes she bumps that up and takes two classes in a semester.

But depending on what else has been happening in her life at the time, she said there have been other occasions in the past half dozen years when she has been forced to put her academics on hold.

She relishes the fact, however, that she is able to take all of her classes online.

"I can do things at my own pace," she said.

**2024 NIEEF SCHOLARSHIP**

# Business executive on verge of obtaining Master's degree

Kelly Cameron subscribes to the belief it's never too late to further one's education.

The 52-year-old, who is a member of the Beardy's and Okemasis' Cree Nation in Saskatchewan, has an established career.

Cameron is the business supervisor in Indigenous engagement for SaskEnergy Inc., a company that he has worked for since 2004.

But later this year Cameron is expected to fulfill all of the requirements to earn a Master's degree through Cape Breton University.

Cameron, who lives in Saskatoon, is enrolled in the university's community economic development program. He is able to take classes online. And when he must attend in-person classes, it's rather easy for him to do so as the university program offers classes through Great Plains College, located in Warman, Sask.

For Cameron, Warman is conveniently located for him, about 20 kilometres north of Saskatoon.

"I always wanted to do my MBA," Cameron said of his decision to return to school in September of 2022. "I couldn't find a program that was right before. I guess I'm getting older and thought I should just do it now."

Besides his job, Cameron was also rather busy in previous years helping to raise four children.

His two eldest children, his daughters, are now 22 and 26 and have their own careers.

And he has two sons, aged 14 and 16, who, like him, are also students.

"I hope they look up to me," Cameron said of his children. "I just want to show

them that if you're committed to something, just go out there and do it and finish it."

Many others are also looking up to Cameron now. That's because he was one of six individuals from across Canada that were announced as a National Indigenous Economic Education Foundation (NIEEF) scholarship winner.

NIEEF is the charitable organization of Cando, a national society that promotes economic development in Indigenous communities across the country.

"It means a lot," Cameron said of being one of the scholarship recipients. "All the hard work and the extra hours in the evening for classes and work, it was well worth it."

Cameron has been in his current work position with SaskEnergy since April of 2018. He held various roles with the company in the past two decades.

He had started off with a six-month contract position with the SaskEnergy's Aboriginal development program.

Prior to that his previous jobs included working as an Indigenous recruiter for the department of foreign affairs and international trade and as an academic tutor for the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies (SIIT).

Cameron's previously schooling included earning a diploma in management studies from the SIIT. And he had also obtained a bachelor of management degree from the University of Lethbridge.

Cameron is expecting to complete his Master's classes this July. Then he'll have to work on a final project in September. If all goes well his convocation will be in October.



**Kelly Cameron, who is a member of the Beardy's and Okemasis' Cree Nation in Saskatchewan, has an established career but has never stopped learning.**

**By Sam Laskaris  
Cando Contributor**

**2024 NIEEF SCHOLARSHIP**

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# Student keen to assist Indigenous communities when schooling is complete



**Manon Lacelle is Abenaki and Métis and has some academic achievements she'd like to fulfill.**

**By Sam Laskaris  
Cando Contributor**

Manon Lacelle is eager to travel and have a career where she can assist Indigenous people around the world.

But before setting out to do that, Lacelle who is Abenaki and Métis, has some academic achievements she'd like to fulfill.

Lacelle, who turns 23 on Feb. 15, is expecting to graduate this April from the community, economic and social development program at Algoma University in Sault Ste. Marie, Ont.

She had spent her first two years of post-secondary life at Laurentian University in the Ontario town of Sudbury. But she transferred to Algoma when Laurentian cut the communications program she was enrolled in.

Lacelle wants to continue her education after graduating from Algoma this spring. She's hoping to be accepted into a Master's program at the University of Ottawa where she'll pursue a degree in international development and globalization. She wants to begin those classes this September.

Early on this year, however, Lacelle was uncertain whether, if accepted by Ottawa, she would like to be part of the university's one-year program or if she would like to enroll in its two-year program, which requires a placement term.

Lacelle is also contemplating if she would eventually like to return to Laurentian after that, to earn another Master's degree in Indigenous relations.

"I would love to work with Indigenous communities around the world," she said.

Lacelle received some positive news recently when she was informed that she was a NIEEF scholarship winner.

Funding was provided through NIEEF, the foundation which is Cando's charitable organization.

The NIEEF provides scholarships, training and research funding to students involved in Indigenous community economic development.

"It meant a lot especially since it's a national scholarship simply for Indigenous students," Lacelle said. "It definitely did feel validating."

Lacelle has continued to excel in the classroom since graduating from high school. She had almost a 90 per cent average in her first-term studies this academic year.

One of Lacelle's passions is hitting the road and seeing various parts of the world.

"I love travelling," she said, adding one of her latest journeys was venturing through five European countries: Greece, Italy, Turkey, Spain and Portugal.

Ideally, Lacelle will not be living in major cities while working.

"I prefer residing in a small town as opposed to cities," she said.

Lacelle was born in Windsor but spent most of her childhood growing up in Sturgeon Falls and Sudbury.

"I grew up surrounded by nature, always by the water or in the forest," she said. "It is where I feel the most at home."

As for her eventual career, Lacelle is hoping her schooling will enable her to work with Indigenous people and assist them towards sovereignty in their countries.

"People all over the world, as well as Mother Earth herself have felt the consequences of colonization, and I hope to help bring justice and equity for all of our relations who have suffered," she said.

**2024 NIEEF SCHOLARSHIP**

# Métis student thrilled to be one of the recipients of NIEEF scholarship

Winning a scholarship is always a good thing to celebrate.

But Mohamed Crossman-Serb had another reason to be pleased about his latest accolade.

Crossman-Serb, a member of the Manitoba Metis Federation, was recently announced as being one of the six 2023 National Indigenous Economic Education Foundation (NIEEF) scholarship recipients.

"It's a cool organization," Crossman-Serb said. "So, I'm really happy I won an award from them."

The NIEEF provides scholarships, training and research funding to students involved in Indigenous community economic development.

Besides being Métis through his mother, Crossman-Serb also has Libyan ancestry via his father.

The 29-year-old had graduated with an undergrad degree from the University of Winnipeg in 2019 with a double major in kinesiology and chemistry.

He is now taking another program at the Winnipeg university. He's in his second and final year of the Master's in Development Practice (MDP): Indigenous Development program.

Winnipeg's MDP program is the only one in the world to focus on how Indigenous knowledge and experience can help shape a sustainable path for development, rooted in culture and identity.

Though his classes end this April, Crossman-Serb will also have some program assignments to do this September before he can officially graduate.

And then? Well, he's not quite certain what type of job he'll be seeking after that.

"I'm not too sure yet," said Crossman-Serb, who was born and raised in Winnipeg. "But it will probably be some type of community development work."

Crossman-Serb also anticipates having some spare time when he's not a full-time student.

"I also am excited to spend the extra time to give back to community through volunteering with my Metis community," he said.

Crossman-Serb is also currently working for a Winnipeg-based, non-profit organization titled Green Active Centre.

The centre's work focuses on green commuting, composting and waste reduction, sustainable living and resource conservation.

Crossman-Serb is part of the centre's waste minimization team. He usually works 14 hours per week.

"School is my focus," he said. "Fourteen hours (per week) is as much as I can do at this point."

Crossman-Serb had also helped start another non-profit organization, along with his friends, titled Waterways in 2020.

This organization supports community wellness by using outdoor recreation and canoeing to connect Indigenous youth to various cultural skills and identities.

Crossman-Serb said being a NIEEF scholarship winner was indeed welcome news.

"It means I can commit to school a lot more," he said. "It helps with the financial burden of school. As we know, life is getting more and more expensive."



**Mohamed Crossman-Serb is a member of the Manitoba Metis Federation.**

**By Sam Laskaris  
Cando Contributor**

# building brighter futures

Bursaries, Scholarships, and Awards



## CIBC NIEEF Scholarships

This award will be distributed annually to a first-year Indigenous student who is studying in a four-year degree program studying in the fields of: Business Administration/Economics, Business Finance, Business Management, Natural Resources or Community Economic Development.

## CIBC NIEEF Scholarships

This award will be distributed annually to Indigenous students who are studying in a two-year diploma program studying in the fields of: Business Administration/Economics, Business Finance, Business Management, Natural Resources or CED.

## CIBC NIEEF Scholarships

This award will be distributed annually to an Indigenous student who is studying in any year of a two-year diploma or four-year degree program studying in the fields of: Business Administration/Economics, Business Finance, Business Management, Natural Resources or CED. This student will receive the CANDO funds and the matched funds and the successful candidate will only be eligible for this specific award once.



**Program of Study:** Business Administration/Economics, Business Finance, Business Management, Natural Resources or Community Economic Development  
**Level of Study:** Entering first year of a four-year degree program

**Two Awards: \$10,000 per year for up to 4 years per student**

**Program of Study:** Business Administration/Economics, Business Finance, Business Management, Natural Resources or CED

**Level of Study:** Two-year or four-year program.

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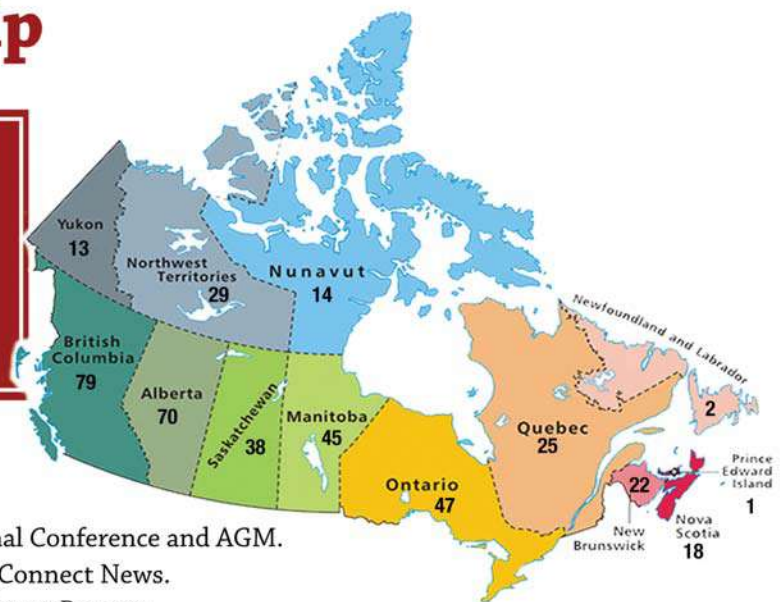
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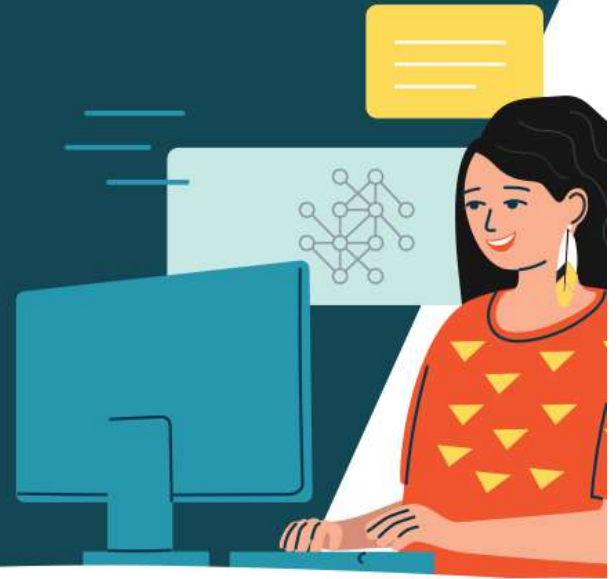
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# Métis woman keeps busy juggling three businesses



**Angie Saltman, who is a member of Métis Nation of Alberta, occasionally pauses to reflect and marvel at where she is now. Saltman is an entrepreneur who owns three businesses.**

**By Sam Laskaris  
Cando Contributor**

Angie Saltman has not had an easy life.

That's why Saltman, who is a member of Métis Nation of Alberta, occasionally pauses to reflect and marvel at where she is now.

Saltman, who is 46 and lives in the Alberta city of Grande Prairie, is an entrepreneur who owns three businesses.

Saltman is also one of four individuals that have been selected to be on the Women In Business panel for this year's Cando Conference. The conference will be held Oct. 21-24 in Calgary.

"I'm super happy to be part of it," Saltman said. "It's a real privilege and an honour to be there. But it's a little bit surreal to think that I'll be speaking there on business with the history that I do have."

Saltman's upbringing was challenging to say the least. When she was 12 her father took his own life. Shortly thereafter she was kicked out of her family home. That house was in turn burned to the ground.

Saltman was in foster care for a bit but dropped out of high school at age 15 and lived on the streets for several years.

Once she decided to turn her life around in her early 20s, Saltman returned to school. First, as a mature student, she fulfilled the requirements to obtain her high school diploma.

And then she went to college to earn a computer technician diploma. She worked in the technology industry for several years.

But once she was laid off from her position because she wanted to continue working in technology instead of accepting a management position, Saltman took matters into her own hands.

She started her first business, Saltmedia Inc., in 2010. The business started off by providing websites and graphic design work to businesses in and near Grande Prairie.

Saltman and her husband launched a second business, IT Managed Services, in 2015.

"Both of our businesses are now are doing a lot of national contracts, which is pretty mind blowing," Saltman said. "So, we're figuring out all the different avenues of doing national work."

And if Saltman wasn't already busy enough, she started a third business last year. She is hoping that one, which is under the Saltmedia umbrella, and is called Aanji, will become a successful Indigenous stock photography website.

Aanji is the Ojibwe word meaning changemaker and is also a play on Saltman's first name.

"It's been incredible over time when you look back on where I came from and all the steps that I've taken to get where I am today, how they can bring you to really amazing spaces," Saltman said. "You don't have to in the mindset and the lifestyle that was a previous lifestyle. I feel like I've been a thousand different women in my life."

Despite growing up in a home that suffered from generational trauma, Saltman has managed to rise up and have a successful work career.

**Continued on page 56.**

**2024 WOMEN IN BUSINESS PANEL**

**Cando Connect**

**30**

**OCT/NOV 2024**

# Actor/musician named to WIB panel for Cando Conference

Crystle Lightning has been in the spotlight since she was a child actor.

Lightning, a member of Enoch Cree Nation in Alberta who is now 42, continues to find success in the film and television industry.

Plus, she's also a member of an award-winning hip hop group with her husband. And her directorial debut of a musical has been an overwhelming success thus far.

And Lightning is also looking forward to sharing some details about her life experiences at this year's Cando Conference.

She is one of four individuals who have been selected to be part of the Women In Business panel at the conference, which will be held Oct. 21-24 in Calgary.

"Hopefully I can inspire some aspiring entrepreneurs and young ladies," Lightning said.

Lightning believes the Women In Business panelists will also be motivated themselves listening to others.

"It's also inspiring for us to hear about others' journeys, their ups and downs, their trials and tribulations," she said.

Those on the Women In Business panel, who all have Indigenous descent, were selected from nominees across the country.

Among those considered for nominations were entrepreneurs with plenty of experience who also overcame challenges or barriers on their way to success.

Women viewed as leaders in corporate positions who are improving Indigenous economies

and industry trailblazers who are opening career paths for other Indigenous women were also considered.

Rhonda Christine, who lives in Edmonton, nominated Lightning to be on the panel.

"It was a really beautiful thing she did," Lightning said. "She's been following my career for a very long time."

Lightning's first big break in the entertainment industry came when she was just nine. She was cast in the 1995 martial arts comedy film titled 3 Ninjas Knuckle Up.

She also had various other TV and film roles as a child. And then, when she was an adult, she took classes at the Beverley Hills Playhouse.

Since then she's compiled a lengthy list of credits in the business.

A highlight includes winning the Best Actress in a Drama Series for her role in Trickster at the 2021 Canadian Screen Awards.

Lightning also co-created, along with her husband Henry, a hit musical titled BEAR GREASE. This all-Indigenous production is a twist of the 1978 classic Grease, featuring John Travolta and the late Olivia Newton-John.

BEAR GREASE made its debut at the Edmonton Fringe Festival.

"In the last three years we've been touring with it and we've done 170 shows throughout Canada and the United States," Lightning said.



**Crystle Lightning has been in the spotlight since she was a child actor. Lightning is a member of Enoch Cree Nation in Alberta and continues to find success in the film and television industry.**

**By Sam Laskaris  
Cando Contributor**

**Continued on page 50.**

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# Indigenous advisor loves getting to work each morning



**Nadine Bernard, a member of We’kogma’q First Nation in Cape Breton, started her company Indigevisor five years ago.**

**By Sam Laskaris  
Cando Contributor**

Nadine Bernard already had a rather solid background, working in an Indigenous advisory position as a senior policy analyst with the Nova Scotia government.

Thus, it wasn’t much of a difference to her work when she decided to become the founder and CEO of her own business Indigevisor Ltd.

Indigevisor is an advisory corporation which aims to bridge clients and communities for economic reconciliation. This is achieved via equitable and strategic partnerships.

Bernard, a member of We’kogma’q First Nation in Cape Breton, started her company five years ago.

“I did it as a side hustle while I worked full-time,” she said. “I just decided I want to try this work on my own.”

And by 2022, Bernard had left her government job and was 100 per cent focused on Indigevisor.

“Two years ago in March I said I’m ready to jump in with two feet,” she said.

Bernard will be sharing her experiences at this year’s Cando Conference, which will be held from Oct. 21-24 in Calgary.

That’s because she is one of four individuals who have been selected for the Women In Business panel at the conference.

Bernard has been rather familiar with Cando for the past 10 years. Her father Louis Joe, who had served as his First Nation’s economic development officer for 25 years, received some prestigious recognition in 2014 as he was selected as Cando’s Economic Development Officer of the Year.

“I got introduced to Cando through him,” Bernard said of her father.

During this year’s Women In Business panel Bernard will in all likelihood touch about the fact that the COVID-19 pandemic turned out to be a blessing in disguise for her company.

That’s because while many other industries were forced to shut down for varying periods of time, the construction sector was deemed an essential service.

Thus, Indigevisor was able to land plenty of work advising various clients in the construction business.

“I guess it’s more of helping others who are looking to scale up beyond their province or region,” Bernard said of her company.

And it’s work that she thoroughly enjoys doing.

“I love getting up in the morning,” she said. “I can’t wait to turn on my computer.”

Besides construction companies, Bernard’s work has also helped other businesses on matters including governance and municipal affairs.

One of the projects she’s also assisted with is the Mi’kmaw Forestry Initiative Communications

Framework. This venture demonstrates her dedication to creating sustainable economic opportunities for Indigenous communities.

Bernard is also helping businesses land contracts via the federal government’s Indigenous procurement policies.

**Continued on page 56.**

**2024 WOMEN IN BUSINESS PANEL**

# Former social worker has become a successful artist

As it turned out one of the darkest periods in Tracey Metallic's life ended up being a blessing in disguise.

That's because Metallic, who was suffering from severe depression a decade ago, took time off from being a social worker to work on improving her own mental health.

"I've always been crafty," said Metallic, who is now 54. "I always wanted to paint."

And as part of her own therapy, that's exactly what Metallic started to do, creating some impressive artwork. At the start of her painting career she was making cartoon characters for her grandchildren.

"It made me feel amazing," she said. "And I started posting them on Facebook."

The responses were overwhelming as Metallic was frequently praised for her artistic talents. And then she received a request from a colleague to create an abstract painting.

"That was a real boost for me in my confidence," Metallic said, adding at first she was reluctant to take on the project feeling she was not capable enough to do so.

Fast forward to today and Metallic, a member of Listuguj Mi'gmaq First Nation in Quebec, is a rather successful artist.

She's often inundated with requests to take on other artistic projects.

Besides prints and posters, through her online company called Tracey Metallic Designs, she now also creates numerous items including handbags, wallets, backpacks, blankets, shirts, dresses and shoes.

"I'm completely swamped," Metallic said of her business.

On one recent day in particular she was awaiting more than 40 pallets of new leather handbags to be delivered to her home so that she could start selling and shipping them to customers.

"I don't have a store," Metallic said. "My home is my warehouse."

Despite her hectic days, Metallic will be flying to Alberta for a few days in October. That's because she is one of four individuals that have been named to the Women In Business panel for this year's Cando Conference.

The event will be staged Oct. 21-24 in Calgary. The Women In Business panel is one of the sessions at the conference where panelists will have an opportunity to discuss their companies.

"I'm excited because I get to get my story across to others," Metallic said.

After she returned to her social work job, Metallic continued her artistic career on the side. But then three years ago she decided to become an artist full-time.

"I'm just having the time of my life," she said. "I work day and night. But for me, it's not even work."

Metallic's work has been featured on television and was even shared by Canadian actor Ryan Reynolds on his social media. Earlier this year some of her artwork was gifted to Golden Globe nominees.

In her efforts to be an inspiration to others, Metallic frequently provides personal details of her own past, which included an attempt to take her own life at one point.



**Tracey Metallic, a member of Listuguj Mi'gmaq First Nation in Quebec, is a very successful artist.**

**By Sam Laskaris  
Cando Contributor**

**Continued on page 56.**

**2024 WOMEN IN BUSINESS PANEL**

**OCT/NOV 2024**

**35**

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# First Nations Princess selected to National Youth Panel

Margaret Holloway has put her academic career on hold.

But Holloway, a member of Stoney Nakoda First Nation in Alberta, is still learning plenty of valuable lessons in 2024 that she'll be able to continue using throughout her life.

Holloway was crowned as the First Nations Princess for the Calgary Stampede last October. She began fulfilling her requirements in this role on Jan. 1 and will continue to do so until the end of December.

Holloway anticipates she'll attend about 400 events during the year serving as a Stampede princess.

This hectic schedule is also the reason she decided it was best to take a break from school. Holloway was taking business and accounting classes at Calgary's Hamptons College last fall when she was crowned as the Stampede princess.

She decided to take both the ensuing winter and fall semesters off. She is now planning to return to school in September of 2025.

She's hoping she'll be accepted into either the University of Calgary or Mount Royal University, which is also located in Calgary. She's hoping to take business and accounting classes at one of those universities.

Holloway also has something else to look forward to. She has been named to the National Youth Panel for this year's Cando Conference, which is scheduled for Oct. 21-24 in Calgary.

"It's amazing," Holloway said. "I can't believe I was nominated for this panel."

A total of six individuals from across Canada were named to the panel. They were chosen in part based on their

accomplishments, initiatives, entrepreneurial spirit and participation within their communities.

Holloway is looking forward to sharing her story at the conference.

Those named to the panel must also be Indigenous and between the ages of 18-30. All of the youth panelists will share their stories at the same conference session.

"I'm hoping to inspire other youth and make my Nation proud as well," Holloway said of her goals while at the Cando Conference.

As the Stampede princess, Holloway is often sharing her culture with future generations.

Holloway, who turns 23 on Sept. 17, said she has greatly benefitted from being a Stampede princess this year.

"I think it has helped me gain some self-confidence," she said. "And it's really helped me with my public speaking."

This year's Calgary Stampede was held July 5-14. Holloway was especially busy these days as she said she would frequently appear at between 12-15 events per day, ranging from pancake breakfasts to gatherings with sponsors to meet-and-greet barbecues.

Holloway would have met countless visitors from around the world in what is billed as The Greatest Outdoor Show on Earth.

While she has thoroughly enjoyed her time serving as an ambassador for the Calgary Stampede,

Holloway hasn't lost track of what she eventually wants to do for a career.

"I'd like to go back to my Nation and be an accountant for them," she said. "Or I'd like to start a business with my family."



**Margaret Holloway has put her academic career on hold. But Holloway, a member of Stoney Nakoda First Nation in Alberta, is still learning plenty of valuable lessons in 2024 that she'll be able to continue using throughout her life.**

**By Sam Laskaris  
Cando Contributor**

**2024 NATIONAL YOUTH PANEL**

**OCT/NOV 2024**

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**edo.ca**

# Youth panelist is hoping her musical career allows her to tour internationally



**Ashley Ghostkeeper has chosen to become a professional singer/songwriter. Ghostkeeper was born in the Paddle Prairie Metis Settlement in Alberta. But her family moved to Red Deer, before she had even turned one.**

**By Sam Laskaris  
Cando Contributor**

It seems only logical that Ashley Ghostkeeper has chosen to become a professional singer/songwriter.

"I'm pretty sure I started singing before I could talk," said Ghostkeeper, a 26-year-old Métis, who is gaining a solid reputation in the country music industry.

Ghostkeeper was born in the Paddle Prairie Metis Settlement in Alberta. But her family moved to Red Deer, which is located about halfway between Calgary and Edmonton, before she had even turned one.

In efforts to advance her musical career, Ghostkeeper has been living in Calgary, however, for the past three years.

Being around music her whole life is something that came naturally for Ghostkeeper.

"Being Métis, music is a very integral part of my life," she said.

Ghostkeeper said her grandfather was also a talented musician. Besides being a singer, he also played the fiddle, guitar and mandolin.

And her aunt was in a country gospel duo named CreeActive Harmony, which recorded five studio albums.

Ghostkeeper said her parents gifted her a guitar when she was only eight. But it wasn't until she was 17 that she actually learned to play it properly.

"Around that time though I was singing a lot," Ghostkeeper said.

She started writing and singing her own songs when she was eight. And as she was growing up,

she was frequently asked to sign the national anthem at youth and junior hockey games as well as at professional rodeos.

One of her biggest musical successes came a couple of years ago when her

song titled Waitin' On A No cracked the Top 5 on the Canadian Indigenous music countdown.

Ghostkeeper has also been asked to share the story of her musical career at this year's Cando Conference.

That's because she is one of six youth that have been named to the National Youth Panel for this year's conference.

The panelists will all share their stories at a conference session.

"It's just an honour to be selected to share my story," Ghostkeeper said. "It's been quite the journey."

And she's more than happy to tell stories about her musical career.

"It kind of gives me that voice that I didn't have growing up," she said.

Ghostkeeper said she is eagerly anticipating this year's conference.

"I'm so excited to be a part of it," she said. "I'm hoping that I'll be able to connect with at least one person there with my music. And if I do so, I've done my job."

Ghostkeeper said one of the parts of her career that she enjoys the most is giving back to youth.

"I've done quite a few school visits and have gone to speak to them," she said.

Though music has been a part of her whole life, Ghostkeeper said a life-changing moment for her occurred when she was in Grade 9 and part of her school's Glee Club.

"That was my first experience being on a big stage," she said. "I caught the bug and I was hooked on it."

Ghostkeeper is still dreaming big.

"I want to take it internationally," she said of her career. "I want to tour the world. That's my dream."

**2024 NATIONAL YOUTH PANEL**



# McGill graduate student considered key Indigenous language revitalizer

Cameron Adams has certainly made significant strides since he began his post-secondary career.

Adams is a member of Berens River First Nation in Manitoba. And the 25-year-old is a graduate student at McGill University in Montreal, where he is pursuing a master's degree in Indigenous language revitalization.

Before he headed to McGill, Adams earned a pair of degrees from the University of Winnipeg.

He obtained a Bachelor of Arts with a double major in Indigenous languages and history. And he also got a Bachelor of Education, as he majored in history with a minor in Indigenous studies.

Though he is continuing his education now – he's expected to graduate from McGill next April – Adams is already regarded as a key member of Indigenous language revitalizers. He has been a speaker, panelist and presenter in education, linguistics and Indigenous language revitalization spaces.

Adams also spent portions of his spring and summer this year working as a research student with the Office of the Commissioner of Indigenous Languages in Ottawa.

He also attended the Canadian Association of Applied Linguistics annual conference in Montreal in June.

Adams delivered a workshop at that conference called Indigenous Language Revitalization and Academia: nitcimowin (my story).

During the conference's final day he was presented with the Indigenous Graduate Student Award for his Swampy Cree work and his efforts in Indigenous language revitalization.

Adams has certainly come a long way in recent years.

"When I started university I never spoke a word of Cree," said Adams, who taught himself the language.

But he realizes what he has accomplished thus far.

"It's taken a lot of hard work and a lot of folks have helped me along the way with it," he said.

Adams will be sharing his story this fall on a prestigious scale. He's one of six individuals who have been named to the National Youth Panel for this year's Cando Conference.

"It's an opportunity for me to showcase the real-life experiences I have in my life," Adams said.

Those selected to the National Youth Panel were picked partly based on their accomplishments, strengths and participation within their communities.

Besides sharing his own story at the conference, Adams said he is keen to listen to the success stories of others, especially the other five individuals who have been named to the National Youth Panel.

"I just want to learn about their stories and see if I can get a couple of tools that would be able to help me," he said.

Cameron also enjoys helping others. Since arriving at McGill he has been mentoring Indigenous undergraduate students. He helps to make sure they have the necessary resources for both academic and personal successes.

Once he graduates from McGill, Cameron would love to continue doing some type of work involving Indigenous languages.



**Cameron Adams has certainly made significant strides since he began his post-secondary career. Adams is a member of Berens River First Nation in Manitoba.**

**By Sam Laskaris  
Cando Contributor**

# Squamish Nation member has aspired for leadership positions since the age of six



**Crystal Lewis, who is a member of Squamish Nation in British Columbia. Lewis, who is now 30, has a lengthy list of accomplishments.**

**By Sam Laskaris  
Cando Contributor**

For some people it takes a rather long time to figure out what they want to do with their lives.

But then there are also individuals like Crystal Lewis, who is a member of Squamish Nation in British Columbia.

“From a young age I wanted to be a leader in some role,” said Lewis, who said she was just six years old when she decided that she was not only interested in having leadership positions but also chose to focus on living a life that was alcohol and drug free.

Lewis, who is now 30, has a lengthy list of accomplishments. For some, a couple of coffee breaks might be required just to completely read her resume, which details her life experiences thus far.

For quite some time now Lewis has been inspiring others. She has already run twice – the first time when she was just 19 - to be on her First Nation’s council.

Though she narrowly missed out on landing a council position, others took notice. Lewis was asked to run as an NDP candidate in the 2019 federal election.

But she declined the offer as she was dealing with the deaths of her mother, sister and uncle, all within that same year.

“At some point I do plan on running in another election,” Lewis said, adding that remains to be seen whether she will attempt once again to earn a position on the Squamish Nation council or if she will try to be elected in a position with the provincial or federal governments.

Though she did not seek a position in the 2019 Canadian election, Lewis did get to work in Ottawa.

That’s because she was a Parliament Hill intern for Mummilaaq Qaggaq, a former MP from Nunavut. One of her roles included be a consultant for the Indigenous Youth Parliamentary Stream.

As for one of her current positions, Lewis was elected, last September, to serve a three-year position as the female youth representative for the British Columbia Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN).

A mandate with this BCAFN role includes advancing the rights and interests of Indigenous peoples in her home province, specifically youth.

Lewis is also one of six individuals that have been chosen to be on this year’s National Youth Panel for the Cando Conference.

The half dozen panelists from across the country were selected in part for their accomplishments, participation within their communities and entrepreneurial spirit.

Lewis said she is keen to attend the conference and share her story so that she can continue to inspire others.

It remains to be seen what other roles Lewis will be taking on in the future.

“I’m just someone that is passionate and who is following my dreams and intuition,” she said.

Lewis’ fiancé Kevin Good has also been named to Cando’s National Youth Panel. The couple live in Port Coquitlam, B.C.

Good is currently working as the program lead for the Fraser Basin Council’s Energy Peers in Indigenous Communities (EPIC) program.

The EPIC program supports eight Indigenous communities in building capacity with energy efficiency.

# Indigenous youth advocate named to Cando's National Youth Panel

Early on in his employment career Kevin Good had various general labour positions and also worked in construction.

But Good, a member of Snuneymuxw First Nation in British Columbia, began gravitating in another direction about five years ago. He started attending conferences and events organized by the British Columbia Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN) and since then he's focused on advocacy and leadership roles.

His passions now include advocating for climate action, climate justice and social justice.

Good, who lives in Port Coquitlam, B.C., is currently working for the Fraser Basin Council. In May of this year he was promoted to be the program lead for the council's Energy Peers in Indigenous Communities (EPIC) program.

This program supports eight Indigenous communities in building capacity with energy efficiency by providing support, leadership and co-ordination of the Indigenous Renewable Energy and Electrification Network.

Prior to his current position Good worked for slightly more than a year with the Fraser Basin Council as a program co-ordinator on climate and energy resilience.

Another career highlight for him will occur in October. That's because Good has been selected as one of the six individuals for the National Youth Panel at this year's Cando Conference.

"I'm grateful and honoured the leaders believe in me and chose me for this," Good said of those responsible for selecting this year's panelists from across the country.

Those named to the Cando youth panel were chosen in part for their accomplishments, initiatives, participation within their communities and entrepreneurial spirit.

Good is rather familiar with one of the other panelists. His fiancée Crystal Lewis, who is the current BCAFN female youth representative, has also been named to the panel.

"I'm very excited," Good said of the fact he will be on the same panel as Lewis. "She has supported and mentored me with her leadership journey."

Besides attending numerous BCAFN events, Good also participated in the We Matter Conference staged in Winnipeg several years ago. He became a national ambassador in advocating and destigmatizing mental health and wellness while spreading messages of hope.

Good said that event proved to be rather inspirational for him and fueled his desire to create change in Indigenous communities throughout British Columbia.

Good is anticipating this year's Cando Conference to spread details of where life has taken him in recent years.

"I'm looking forward to sharing my experiences," he said.

Good is also hoping he will eventually be a leader for his First Nation. He has an eye on becoming either the Snuneymuxw chief or a councillor at some point in the future.

Snuneymuxw First Nation had its leadership election this year. Those that were elected are now serving three-year terms.

Thus, the First Nation's next election is not scheduled to be held until 2027.



**Kevin Good, a member of Snuneymuxw First Nation in British Columbia, began gravitating towards advocacy and leadership roles about 5 years ago.**

**By Sam Laskaris  
Cando Contributor**

# Trailblazing Indigenous engineer now pursuing her PhD



**Tiannie Paul already has an impressive resume. And Paul, a member of Eskasoni First Nation in Nova Scotia, will be adding to her list of accomplishments this fall.**

**By Sam Laskaris  
Cando Contributor**

Tiannie Paul already has an impressive resume.

And Paul, a member of Eskasoni First Nation in Nova Scotia, will be adding to her list of accomplishments this fall.

That's because she's one of the six individuals chosen to be on the National Youth Panel for this year's Cando Conference. The conference will be staged Oct. 21-24 in Calgary.

"I'm pretty honoured to be chosen for this," Paul said. "I'm very excited to meet other youth in leadership roles. And I'm pretty thankful I was selected."

Paul is quite the trailblazer herself.

She was the first Indigenous woman to graduate with an engineering diploma from Cape Breton University. And she was the first Indigenous graduate student from Dalhousie University's department of civil and resource engineering.

Paul grew up in Eskasoni, the largest Mi'kmaq Nation in her province. Her community had frequent boil water advisories and drinking water insecurity.

Seeing her Nation struggle with these issues inspired her to become a water engineer.

Paul went on to become the first operations engineer for the Atlantic First Nations Water Authority, which is the only water utility company in Canada that is Indigenous owned and operated.

Paul left that position, however, in order to work towards her PhD in environmental engineering at Dalhousie's Centre for Water Resources Studies.

Paul didn't mind putting her work career on hold in order to go back to school.

"I'd rather concentrate on my education and my educational journey," she said, adding it might be 2027 before she fulfills all of her requirements to obtain her PhD.

Though she is a trailblazer, Paul admitted it can at times be a tough role to have.

"It's very scary because a lot of people look up to you," she said. "There is pressure to succeed."

Yet she is forging ahead.

"I'm not only doing it for myself," she said. "I'm doing it for the other generations that are going to come."

Paul is also pleased to see other Indigenous women are keen to follow in her footsteps. She has two nieces that are currently enrolled now in post-secondary engineering programs.

"It's kind of amazing to see them go into something that they didn't know existed before," she said. "I'm very proud."

Paul is also thrilled that she will have the opportunity to share her story on a prestigious stage as part of Cando's National Youth Panel.

Paul said she is also keen to hear the stories of the other panelists. This year's panel also includes two individuals from British Columbia, two from Alberta and one from Manitoba.

"Basically learn from each other," she added.

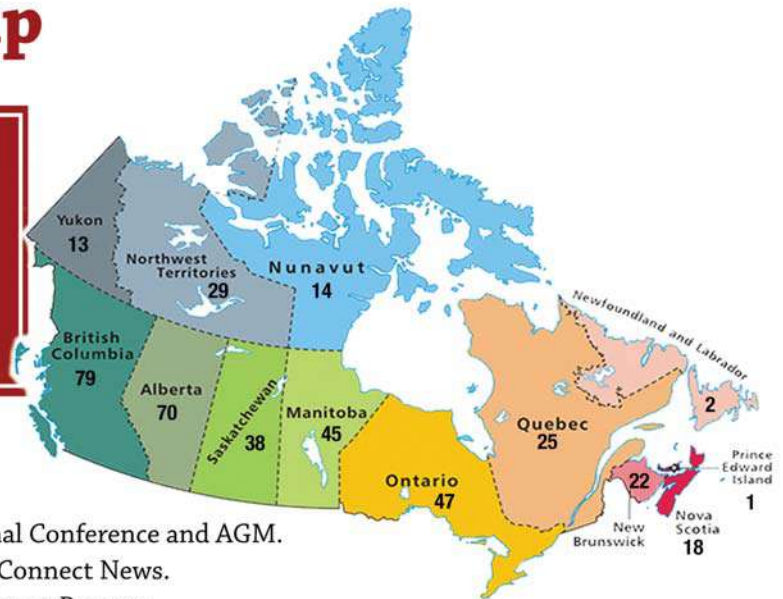
The youth panelists are aged 18-30. Paul is also hoping other parts of the conference will also be beneficial.

"I'm hoping to meet people, just to connect with them and maybe be inspired with the work they're doing," she said.

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# Haisla Nation member nominated for national award



**Lisa Grant has been serving as the business development manager in the Haisla Nation's economic development department since October of 2020.**

**By Sam Laskaris  
Cando Contributor**

## FINALIST INDIVIDUAL EDO

**This award proudly sponsored by:  
Joint Economic Development Initiative**

Lisa Grant is hoping to soon pad her resume with a rather impressive accolade.

Grant is one of two finalists this year for the Economic Development Officer (EDO) of the Year award, annually handed out by Cando.

Cando is the national organization which promotes and supports economic development in Indigenous communities across Canada.

Besides the EDO of the Year accolade, two other major awards will be presented at this year's Cando Conference, which is scheduled to be held Oct. 21-24 in Calgary.

There's also a Community of the Year award. And another award is for the Indigenous Private Business Sector category.

Grant has been serving as the business development manager in the Haisla Nation's economic development department since October of 2020.

Well, technically, Grant has been the business development manager of the y-qwa Development Corporation since April of this year. That's when the corporation, which is the business arm of Haisla Nation, was officially launched.

While juggling her responsibilities for this position, for a bit of an extended period Grant also took on some additional duties for her First Nation, based in British Columbia.

From June of 2022 until July of 2023, she was the interim deputy chief administration officer, handling administrative functions and key initiatives during a key transition period for her First Nation.

During her interim position, besides overseeing economic development, Grant was also overseeing Haisla Nation's forestry, environment, lands, culture, education and training departments for slightly more than one year.

These days Grant can focus on her one current job.

"As business development manager, I am passionate about connecting strategic planning with successful execution," she said on her LinkedIn page. "This allows me to use my knowledge of policy development, project management, budgeting and Indigenous administration to bring tangible change within the organization."

Grant is also looking for ways to continue getting better.

"My responsibility allows me to create innovative solutions that will further improve our operations and help us reach our strategic goals," she said. "I am passionate about creating a collaborative space where everyone can work together toward achieving sustainable, efficient outcomes."

Grant is also quick to deflect praise thrown her way.

"My accomplishments are the results of my amazing teams, and I am committed to ensuring their continued success," she said. "Together, we make a real difference."

Several factors were considered when choosing Grant as a finalist for the Cando EDO award.

**Continued on page 56.**

**2024 ECONOMIC DEVELOPER OF THE YEAR AWARDS**

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# Veteran CEO nominated for prestigious economic development award

Rob Shotclose has been rather instrumental in spearheading various successful initiatives for his First Nation.

And his accomplishments have not gone unnoticed.

Shotclose is the CEO for the Bears paw First Nation in Alberta. He has led numerous economic development projects for the First Nation, which is located in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains.

As a result, it's not surprising to discover that Shotclose is one of the two finalists for the Economic Development Officer (EDO) of the Year Award, which will be presented at this year's Cando Conference.

No doubt many members from Bears paw First Nation will be keeping close tabs on what transpires at this year's conference.

Besides Shotclose being a finalist for the EDO of the Year award, Bears paw is also one of the two finalists in the Community of the Year accolade.

The Cando awards annually also include a third category. That's for the Indigenous Private Sector Business award.

Each year the two finalists in each category are allotted time to make a presentation at the conference. And then conference delegates, through a secret ballot, determine the winners for each category.

Shotclose is thrilled that he's been nominated for the EDO award, in large part because he will be able to provide details of his First Nation's accomplishments.

"I think it's an honour," he said. "It's something where you see other Nations and what they're doing."

Shotclose is extremely pleased that Bears paw First Nation, which has about 1,900 members, will be thrust into the national spotlight at the Cando Conference. He's ecstatic Bears paw is up for a pair of awards, considering there are more than 600 First Nations across the country.

"There are very successful examples (of First Nations) across Canada and even in Alberta," he said.

Shotclose served as the band manager for Bears paw First Nation from 2005 through 2009.

He then returned to the University of Calgary to finish off a political science degree.

He also briefly worked as an event co-ordinator for the Aboriginal Futures Career & Training Centre in Calgary.

But he returned to Bears paw First Nation as its CEO in September of 2011 and has been in that position since then.

Shotclose was nominated for a Cando award this year as many of his responsibilities have centred around economic development for his First Nation.

For example, he took the lead in the design, construction and development of a two-acre retail site located in the First Nation's community of MÓnÓ ThnÓ (formerly known as Morley).

The facility includes an Esso cardlock, which sells gas, diesel and includes a retail store. And there are also 14 electric vehicle charging stations.

Bears paw also has partnerships in the Tim Hortons and Subway franchises located on the First Nation.

Continued on page 56.



**Rob Shotclose is the CEO for the Bears paw First Nation in Alberta. He has led numerous economic development projects for the First Nation, which is located in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains.**

**By Sam Laskaris  
Cando Contributor**

## FINALIST INDIVIDUAL EDO

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**2024 ECONOMIC DEVELOPER OF THE YEAR AWARDS**

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# Partnerships have led to economic growth for First Nation in Alberta



Larson Anderson has served as the chief for Norway House First Nation since 2018.

By Sam Laskaris  
Cando Contributor

## FINALIST COMMUNITY

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Teamwork is indeed making the dream work for Bearspaw First Nation, which is located in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains in Alberta.

"In the early 2000s we did have a few small businesses that catered to our community," said Darcy Dixon, the current Bearspaw chief.

Except for one term when he took some time off to deal with a health issue, Dixon, who is 60, has been the chief of his First Nation since the late 1990s.

And he has seen Bearspaw make some tremendous strides over the years.

So much so that the First Nation is one of two finalists for this year's Community of the Year Award, which will be handed out at the 2024 Cando Conference.

"I think it will give us a little bit exposure to outside businesses and outside entities," Dixon said of his community's nomination for a national Cando award.

The Community of the Year accolade is one of the three major awards that will be presented at the conference.

The two other award categories are for Economic Development Officer (EDO) of the Year and Indigenous Private Sector Business.

The Cando awards have been presented annually since 1995. The two nominees in each category this year will make presentations at the conference.

Conference delegates will then vote to determine the winners in all of the categories.

This is the first time during Dixon's tenure that Bearspaw First Nation, which has about 1,900 members, has been

nominated for Cando's Community of the Year Award.

Meanwhile, Rob Shotclose, the CEO of Bearspaw First Nation, is one of the two finalists for the EDO of the Year award.

"It came as a surprise in one sense," Dixon said of his First Nation's nomination in the community category. "But on the other side it doesn't surprise me because our administration has worked hard to promote economic development."

Dixon said a turning point for his First Nation came in 2004 when discussions began about building the Stoney Nakoda Resort & Casino in Kananaskis, Alta.

A few years later the facility was constructed. And Bearspaw First Nation owns one-third of the property.

The two other owners are Chiniki First Nation and Goodstoney First Nation.

"It's had its challenges like anything else," Dixon said of the three-way partnership deal. "It was challenging but we were able to do it collectively."

Bearspaw First Nation has also been involved in various other partnerships since then.

For example, there is now a Tim Hortons franchise as well as a Subway restaurant in the First Nation.

"They're not easy to be partners with," Dixon said of these well-known businesses. "You have to do your diligence to be partners with these big corporations."

Dixon is pleased where his First Nation is now.

"I am proud of what we've accomplished," he said, adding other partnerships are also currently in the works to further boost Bearspaw's profile.

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# First Nations in Yukon in running for national economic development award

Almost three decades ago Ron Bonnycastle started what was a rather small company with his father Rick.

That business, which is based in the Yukon capital of Whitehorse, is called Castle Rock Enterprises (CRE).

"We started off with eight guys in 1995," the younger Bonnycastle said of the company, which takes on various residential and commercial projects in different industries.

Well, CRE is no longer just a small business. It now has more than 120 employees.

The Bonnycastles, however, are no longer the ones calling all the shots. Around 2008, Bonnycastle's father was looking to retire.

So, the father-son combo started to market themselves to various Indigenous economic development corporations.

The Bonnycastles had some bargaining power in their corner. They were named as the businessmen of the year by the Yukon Chamber of Commerce.

And then, in 2010, the Dakwakada Capital Investments LP, which is the business arm for the

Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, became the sole owners of CRE.

Ron Bonnycastle though has remained as CRE's president ever since. Whenever possible, CRE hires workers from Champagne and Aishihik First Nations.

After selling the CRE ownership, Bonnycastle has still been responsible for helping to spearhead the company's many successes over the years.

That success has resulted in some prestigious recognition this year.

As owners of CRE, Champagne and Aishihik First Nations are one of the two

finalists in the Community of the Year distinction for this year's Cando awards.

Bonnycastle was rather surprised the company he helped launch is now paving the way for Champagne and Aishihik First Nations to possibly nab a national award.

"It's an honour," he said. "I didn't know anything about Cando. I was caught off guard by it."

But there's no denying the community of the year nomination is justified.

And Bonnycastle is obviously pleased to see how much his company, which will celebrate its 30<sup>th</sup> year of operations in 2025, has grown.

"That was our vision, to grow it into the company it has become," he said.

Though his father did retire when CRE was sold, Bonnycastle said he has not completely managed to stay away. Rick Bonnycastle is now a sub-contractor for the business. And he occasionally handles some driving for the company.

CRE has also managed to maintain excellent relationships with many of its employees. Bonnycastle said CRE has numerous workers who have been with the company for 20 or more years.

He believes that is one of the key reasons for CRE's successes.

"We have always taken care of the guys who are out there hustling things up for us," he said. "That's why we've been able to keep them around."

Even though he's approaching the three-decade mark with the company, Bonnycastle, who is 54, plans to stick around for a while as well.

"It keeps getting extended by five years," he said of the time he'll remain with the company. "So, it will be at least another five years. Just like my dad, I'll be around that way."



**Red Rock Indian Band is a finalists for the 2023 Cando community economic developer of the year.**

**By Sam Laskaris  
Cando Contributor**

## FINALIST COMMUNITY

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# Yukon entrepreneur nominated for national Cando business award



IRP Consulting was launched in 2020 and is based in Whitehorse. IRP stands for Inspire, Reconciliation, Potential.

By Sam Laskaris  
Cando Contributor

## FINALIST PRIVATE SECTOR BUSINESS

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Natasha Peter will have a key role at the Cando Conference for the second consecutive year.

Peter, a fashion designer, beader and clothing manufacturer who lives in the Yukon capital of Whitehorse, was a member of the Women In Business panel at the 2023 conference, which was held in Membertou, N.S.

Peter will also be attending this year's conference, which runs Oct. 21-24 in Calgary.

That's because her company, Kaska Dena Designs, is one of the two finalists for Cando's Indigenous Private Sector Business award.

The finalists in the three categories will all make presentations at the conference. And then delegates who are attending the event will be asked to choose the winners in each category via a secret ballot.

Peter was rather surprised to get the news her business is one of two from across the country that was selected as a finalist.

"It's super shocking," she said. "But exciting at the same time. Hopefully I can go there and bring home a national award."

Peter is a member of Kaska Nation, which is made up of First Nations in British Columbia as well as communities in Yukon.

Though she lives in Whitehorse now, Peter grew up in Ross River, an unincorporated community in Yukon.

Peter said she thoroughly enjoyed her experience at last year's Cando event.

"I loved it," she said. "I loved the environment. I loved the people. All the

information that was shared among the entrepreneurs really helps a lot."

Peter, who is 34, had worked at various Yukon mines early on in her adult life. But in 2017 she made the decision to do something that was more fulfilling for her.

She started a business called Creative Dena Designs. This company saw her designing, manufacturing and selling clothes and accessories at in-person events and also through Facebook.

In order to better reflect her First Nation, she changed the name of the company to Kaska Dena Designs in 2019.

Peter knew she was taking a chance when she gave up working in mines in order to launch her own business.

But the move has paid off as her company has become rather successful. Items she currently sells include Granny Hanky beaded denim jackets, women's high-fashion clothes and beaded heels that incorporate fur.

"I'm a very goal-oriented person," Peter said. "All the things I set out to do, I have done."

Peter is also keen to assist others.

"I want to find ways to give back to my community," she said of goals she is still aspiring to. "I want to help my community in a positive way. I want to show them you can do things outside of your community. And I want to be a positive role model."

While Peter was growing up, her grandparents were among those she looked up for inspiration.

Continued on page 56.

2024 ECONOMIC DEVELOPER OF THE YEAR AWARDS

# Former e-business now thriving with a pair of stores in Alberta

Nathan Rainy Chief's hugely successful business started off with a simple concept back in 2017.

Rainy Chief and his husband launched 49 Dzine by selling handmade goods online that empowered Indigenous people by providing contemporary apparel and merchandise which honoured their cultural heritage.

Their business, which they initially ran out of a garage, is booming these days and now features a pair of stores, one operating in Calgary and the other in Edmonton.

"We believed in the potential for success," said Rainy Chief, who is 49 Dzine's executive director and owner. "But the way our community has embraced us has been beyond anything we could have imagined."

Others have certainly taken notice. That's because 49 Dzine is one of the two finalists for this year's Indigenous Private Sector Business award, which will be presented at the Cando Conference.

"I am deeply honored to have been nominated for a national business award through Cando," Rainy Chief said. "This recognition feels especially meaningful because it reflects the enduring impact of the values and teachings passed down by my great-grandparents, Charlie and Rosie Davis."

Rainy Chief, a member of Kainai Nation in Alberta, said his great-grandparents instilled the importance of Blackfoot culture in him.

"And I believe they would be proud to see how these principles continue to guide and inspire the work we do," said Rainy Chief, who is 42 and now lives in

Edmonton. "Our business has become a pillar in the community, not only because of the services we provide but also because of the trust and belief we have fostered that as Indigenous people, we are more than capable of achieving success in our chosen fields."

Rainy Chief's business has continued to thrive even though both of 49 Dzine's physical stores opened up during the pandemic. The Calgary store opened in 2020 followed by the Edmonton one in 2021.

"The pandemic certainly had a profound effect on our business, but in an unexpected way," Rainy Chief said. "Since we already had an online presence, the industry shutdowns from March to May 2020 actually propelled our online sales into the stratosphere. The surge in demand allowed us to generate enough capital to finally open our storefronts, something we had been striving for and saving toward for years."

While numerous other businesses were forced to close their doors – many of them forever – 49 Dzine was able to enjoy plenty of success during the pandemic.

"The decision to open two stores during a time when most businesses were closing speaks to our resilience as Indigenous people," Rainy Chief said. "Our history has taught us to remain strong and adaptable, even in the face of adversity. The challenges brought by the pandemic only reinforced our determination to not just survive, but to thrive, and we felt it was the right time to take that leap forward."

Continued on page 56.



Rainy Chief and his husband launched 49 Dzine by selling handmade goods online that empowered Indigenous people by providing contemporary apparel and merchandise which honoured their cultural heritage.

By Sam Laskaris  
Cando Contributor

## FINALIST PRIVATE SECTOR BUSINESS

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## Nathan Rainy Chief

From page 55.

Rainy Chief also gets another tremendous sense of pride with another aspect of his business.

"It's incredibly humbling to witness grandmothers visiting our stores, with a glimmer in their eyes, knowing that their sacrifices to survive the residential school system weren't in vain," he said. "They see members of their own community achieving success. Reflecting on the impact of our business, especially through the Indigenous designs we bring to life in our fabrics and clothing, has been deeply moving."

## Lisa Grant

From page 50.

For example, those on the awards selection committee were impressed she collaborated with Royal Roads University officials to co-develop a graduate certificate in Indigenous economic development.

This program is a rather unique one as it enables graduates to have the necessary skills and knowledge to advance economic growth in their communities.

Other accomplishments for Grant including helping to shape six new policies which have been implemented to support records information management with her First Nation.

## Rob Shot Close

From page 51.

Shotclose also led with the organization, construction and development of Stoney Nakoda Telecom, an internet service provider which now has more than 800 customers.

Shotclose was also part of the Bears paw team that negotiated and established a trust in 2022 for royalty monies from the production of non-renewable oil and gas. The trust has more than \$60 million in capital assets now.

"Now our future is assured," Shotclose said. "It will always be in trust."

## Angie Saltman

From page 30.

"Sometimes it's pretty surreal what can be accomplished when you just show up for other people and yourself every day," she said.

Saltman's businesses currently have eight employees. But she's looking to hire more in the near future.

"We're going to keep on moving nationally and supporting our local community, too," she said. "We're not going to forget where we come from."

## Crystle Lightning

From page 31.

BEAR GREASE will also be hitting the Broadway stage in New York next June and July.

Lightning and her husband also a part of a hip hop group called LightningCloud.

"We've had so much fun with the hip hop group," Lightning said.

Among those that Lightning has been fortunate to record with include Cypress Hill and Timbaland. And she's toured with Kendrick Lamar, Nicki Minaj and A\$AP Rocky.

## Nadine Bernard

From page 34.

Bernard began Indigevisor by primarily working with businesses on Cape Breton Island. She then expanded her company to work with others throughout Atlantic Canada.

And this year she has expanded once again, this time by drumming up some business in Ontario.

Indigevisor currently has nine employees working in three offices. And yes, Bernard's goal is to expand across the country.

"I'm thinking it will take a couple of more years," she said. "It's in my five-year plan."

## Tracey Metallic

From page 35.

Metallic said her artwork not only helped her through difficult times but it has also assisted many others.

"I receive a lot of messages from people who are depressed and they say they want to go on," she said.

And that is one of the main reasons she will continue on with her artistic abilities.

"I get to reach people like my past self and provide hope that it's not too late for them (to get better)," she said.

## Natasha Peters

From page 54.

"My grandparents were always helping the youth when I was growing up," she said. "Now that my grandparents aren't around, I'm willing to pass it on. And hopefully someone will be inspired to keep the tradition skills alive."





**tansi/taanishi/taa haanach'e/do'h nih dih**

Hello/Bonjour!



## What Does CEDI Do?

CEDI supports First Nation-Municipal partnerships across Canada to build sustainable relationships and to engage in joint long-term land use and community economic development planning and initiatives.

8

Current  
Partnerships

15

Graduated  
Partnerships

36

First Nation  
Partners

31

Municipal  
Partners

Since 2013, CEDI has helped First Nations and municipalities develop partnerships that establish and support mutually beneficial community economic development. Over this time, CEDI has worked with fifteen formal partnerships, including twenty-four First Nations and twenty-two municipalities and economic development organizations.

These partnerships have successfully co-created respectful and sustainable government-to-government partnerships and joint-led community economic development initiatives and plans.



**Engaging First Nations and neighbouring municipalities**



**Community economic development initiatives and land use**



**Develop capacity to implement long-term joint planning**



**Building respectful and sustainable partnerships**

# Check out the all new cedi website: [www.cedipartnerships.ca](http://www.cedipartnerships.ca)

The First Nations-Municipal Community Economic Development Initiative (CEDI) is jointly delivered by the Council for the Advancement of Native Development Officers (CANDO) and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM).

**cando**  
Inspiring Success

**FCM** FEDERATION OF CANADIAN MUNICIPALITIES FÉDÉRATION CANADIENNE DES MUNICIPALITÉS

**CEDI is funded by the government of Canada through Indigenous Services Canada.**



# building brighter futures

Bursaries, Scholarships, and Awards



## CIBC NIEEF Scholarships

This award will be distributed annually to a first-year Indigenous student who is studying in a four-year degree program studying in the fields of: Business Administration/Economics, Business Finance, Business Management, Natural Resources or Community Economic Development.

## CIBC NIEEF Scholarships

This award will be distributed annually to Indigenous students who are studying in a two-year diploma program studying in the fields of: Business Administration/Economics, Business Finance, Business Management, Natural Resources or CED.

## CIBC NIEEF Scholarships

This award will be distributed annually to an Indigenous student who is studying in any year of a two-year diploma or four-year degree program studying in the fields of: Business Administration/Economics, Business

Finance, Business Management, Natural Resources or CED. This student will receive the CANDO funds and the matched funds and the successful candidate will only be eligible for this specific award once.



**Program of Study:** Business Administration/Economics, Business Finance, Business Management, Natural Resources or Community Economic Development  
**Level of Study:** Entering first year of a four-year degree program

**Two Awards: \$10,000 per year for up to 4 years per student**

**Program of Study:** Business Administration/Economics, Business Finance, Business Management, Natural Resources or CED

**Level of Study:** Two-year or four-year program.

**Four Awards: \$5,000 per year for up to 2 years per student**

**Program of Study:** Business Administration/Economics, Business Finance, Business Management, Natural Resources or CED

**Level of Study:** Any year of a two-year or four-year program.

**One Award: \$4,000 for one year**

**Application Deadlines:** February 1  
August 1  
November 1

**NEXT:  
NOVEMBER 1**

**[indspirefunding.ca/cando](http://indspirefunding.ca/cando)**