



*MEDIA RELEASE*

Thursday, February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**KIIKENOMAGA KIKENJIGEWEN EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING SERVICES WELCOME \$4.5M IN NUTRITION NORTH CANADA INVESTMENTS TO SUPPORT EXPANSION OF HARVESTERS SUPPORT PROGRAM IN FIVE REMOTE FIRST NATIONS IN THE MATAWA REGION**

**THUNDER BAY, ON:** Kiikenomaga Kikenjigewen Employment & Training Services (KKETS) welcomed \$4.5 million in Nutrition North Canada investments announced today on behalf of The Honourable Dan Vandal, Minister of Northern Affairs, PrairiesCan and CanNor.

The investments will allow for the expansion of the KKETS Harvesters Support Program which is aimed at increasing community members' access to food security initiatives. The investments will enhance local community food systems, restore cultural traditions, and increase access to traditional foods and knowledge in five northern First Nations in the Matawa region. The \$4.5 million funding will run over 18 months to 2024. The funding will allow enhancement of the current Harvesters Support Grant to include food transported into the community by developing partnerships for food distribution to the communities to build on food sovereignty and food security. This enhancement would help to restore the loss of knowledge, encourage more eating off the land and provide conservation awareness.

The KKETS Harvesters Support Program will continue to foster partnerships between northern and isolated communities, major food banks and charities as well as continue efforts in strengthening food security. Partnerships between isolated communities and food banks and other charitable organizations mark an important step towards seeding food sovereignty and reducing food insecurity in the North.

**QUOTES**

"One of the biggest barriers to health for community members is food security. With the ever-increasing costs of bringing food into fly-in communities such as Neskantaga First Nation, we welcome new initiatives such as the Harvesters Support Program. We look forward to seeing new employment opportunities for skilled workers to help build food storage and harvesting facilities. Being more self-sustainable with harvesting, growing, preparing, and storing our own food will alleviate the costs of inflation, and cost of fuel when flying up groceries from the south. Our community will benefit from knowledge sharing, community land-based programming, training, and preservation of the traditional way of life that will improve community members' access to food security."

—*Chief Wayne Moonias, Neskantaga First Nation*

"With food security playing a vital role in the health and wellbeing for the Matawa First Nations, KKETS welcomes the contribution from the Nutrition North Canada Program. The program will go a long way to reduce the cost of healthy foods in our First Nations making good nutrition affordable and sustainable."

—*David Neegan, Executive Director, KKETS*

“Our government is proud to support KKETS in training workers for better jobs and bigger paycheques close to home. We commend Nutrition North Canada on their investment in KKETS’ Harvester Program. We will continue working with and making investments in organizations like KKETS to ensure people can gain the skills they need for the jobs of tomorrow.”

—*The Honourable Monte McNaughton, Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development*

“Our government knows that every community has unique harvesting needs and priorities. That is why working with northern and Indigenous partners is essential to supporting food security priorities in the North and Arctic. This investment for Kiikenomaga Kikenjigewen Employment & Training Services will support residents in five communities in the Matawa region to help bolster local food systems, restore traditional hunting and harvesting, and support local food production. It is an important step in strengthening food sovereignty in the North and Arctic.”

—*The Honourable Dan Vandal, Minister of Northern Affairs, PrairiesCan and CanNor*

## Quick Facts

Nutrition North Canada is a program through the through the Government of Canada that supports residents in eligible northern isolated communities in the following ways:

- Nutrition North Canada Subsidy: By subsidizing a list of perishable foods and essential items flown in by air, and non-perishable foods and essential items brought in by seasonal sealift, barge, or winter road.
- Harvesters Support Grant: By increasing Northerners’ access to traditional foods by supporting hunting, harvesting, and food sharing.
- The Community Food Programs Fund: By directly supporting culturally appropriate community-led food security activities.
- Nutrition Education Initiatives: By delivering community-based nutrition education activities and building on existing activities to increase access to healthy food (led by Indigenous Services Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada).
- The Nutrition North Food Security Research Grant: By supporting Indigenous-led research on food access and the cost of living in the North.
- There are currently 122 isolated northern communities benefiting from the Nutrition North Canada program. These communities are located in Yukon, Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, and Labrador.
- Harvest Manitoba (formerly Winnipeg Harvest) has been serving hungry Manitobans since 1985 through the distribution of over 1 million pounds of food each month to over 350 food banks and other agency partners across the province. Harvest currently supports over 80,000 Manitobans each month through its partners and programs. Harvest is the fourth largest food distribution organization of its kind in Canada.

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For more information, please contact Ila Beaver, Executive Assistant, Kiikenomaga Kikenjigewen Employment & Training Services (KKETS) at [ibeaver@matawa.on.ca](mailto:ibeaver@matawa.on.ca) or by cellular at: 807-631-6740.

Established in 2012, **KKETS** is an Indigenous Skills Employment Training Holder for Matawa First Nations. It assists Matawa members in attaining trades skills and other training including independent programming, employment integration, employment readiness/life skills training, basic employment certifications, and academic upgrading. Like them on Facebook (Kiikenomaga Kikenjigewen Employment and Training Services – KKETS).

**Matawa First Nations Management** is a Tribal Council providing a variety of advisory services and programs to 8 Ojibway and Cree First Nations in James Bay Treaty No. 9 and 1 First Nation in the Robinson-Superior (RS) Treaty area (non-signatory). Follow them on Facebook or Twitter at: @MatawaFN

**Kiikenomaga Kikenjigewen Employment & Training Services**  
Matawa First Nations Inc. | 523 Algoma St. N 3rd Floor Thunder Bay, ON P7A 5C2  
Tel: (807)768-4470 | Fax: (807)768-4471 | Toll Free: 1-888-688-4652  
[www.kkets.ca](http://www.kkets.ca)