

NACCA and AFIs Celebrate International Women’s Day with the Launch of the Indigenous Women Entrepreneurship (IWE) Program

March 8, 2022, Ottawa, ON – The National Aboriginal Capital Corporations Association and the Aboriginal Financial Institutions they represent are announcing the launch of the Indigenous Women Entrepreneurship Program.

Developed in partnership with Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), the newly launched program provides First Nations, Inuit, and Métis women with distinctions-based and targeted support.

The announcement coincides with International Women’s Day, and NACCA and the AFIs hope Canada and all our Nations will help celebrate the Indigenous women making a difference in our communities, including those pursuing their entrepreneurial dreams.

“We’re excited for our potential clients in the Yukon and anticipate being able to help more Indigenous women in business than ever before given the dedicated staff, training, and micro-lending that has been made available to Indigenous women through NACCA,” says dāna Nāye Ventures General Manager, Elaine Chambers.

In 2020, NACCA committed to increasing the number of Indigenous women entrepreneurs accessing financing through the AFIs by 50 percent. In NACCA’s latest annual report, 30 percent of the businesses supported by the network are owned or co-owned by women, with 24 percent being fully-owned.

The development of the program builds on the activities supported by the Women’s Entrepreneurship Strategy Ecosystem Fund, including workshops delivered by AFIs to over 300 Indigenous women entrepreneurs across Canada and the creation of a micro-finance framework. Now, with the additional \$22 million committed from ISC over the next two and a half years, AFIs will have enough resources to offer training and micro-lending to even more Indigenous women.

“Indigenous Services Canada is pleased to work in partnership with NACCA as the new Indigenous Women’s Entrepreneurship Program launches. By providing training, resources and capital to Indigenous businesses owned by women, NACCA and the network of AFIs are reducing barriers for women entrepreneurs and supporting the economic prosperity of Indigenous businesses across the country” says the Honourable Patty Hajdu, Minister of Indigenous Services.

This March, 32 of our Aboriginal Financial Institutions, will begin offering the program, which includes access to dedicated Business Support Officers, workshops and training, and a new micro-loan fund.

“Being able to offer tailored programs and financing to Indigenous women is an important step for NACCA and the network to ensure women have access to equitable services. Our hope is that we can continue to offer this new program for generations to come,” says NACCA Chief Executive Officer Shannin Metatawabin.

Saskatchewan Métis Brittney Langan, a client of Clarence Campeau Development Fund, is one of the first Indigenous women to access a micro-loan under the new IWE Program. She started BB Beautique, which is a full-service beauty and cosmetic treatment business, to help other women feel more confident in their skin.

“Starting my own business has been a dream of mine for a long time. I have been doing beauty and cosmetic treatments as a passion project for a while but now with the support from Clarence Campeau Development Fund, I have accessed a micro-loan and I am now taking my side hustle full-time,” says Langan.

For more information, please visit nacca.ca/resources/iwe or contact:

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