



**North Superior**  
Workforce Planning Board

# On the Road to Recovery:

## Becoming A Superior Workforce post COVID-19

2020-2021 Local Labour Market Plan

2021 Update  
Visit us online at [www.nswpb.ca](http://www.nswpb.ca)

## LIMITATIONS:

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For further information please contact:

Madge Richardson

Executive Director

North Superior Workforce Planning

600 Hewitson Street

Thunder Bay, ON, P7B 6E4

[mrichardson@nswpb.ca](mailto:mrichardson@nswpb.ca) | 807.346.2940



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## **ABOUT NORTH SUPERIOR WORKFORCE PLANNING BOARD:**

The North Superior Workforce Planning Board (NSWPB) is one of twenty-six Workforce Planning zones across Ontario, mandated by the province of Ontario to identify, assess and prioritize the skills and knowledge needs of community, employers and individual participants/learners in the local labour market through a collaborative, local labour market planning process.

An active and broadly-based volunteer Board of Directors governs its affairs. First established in 1996, NSWPB is recognized by community, economic and municipal leaders as a “partner of choice” in the identification and implementation of local solutions to local labour market issues.

Workforce Planning Boards play a key role in the provinces goal of integrating its programs and services. Part of the ongoing strategy to achieve this goal is to first identify and then respond to the diverse regional and local labour market needs through the province.

### **VISION:**

Our human resource pool will be strategically aligned, competitively positioned, and progressively developed to meet future social and economic demands across Northwestern Ontario.

### **MISSION:**

Connecting community partners to improve the quality of life in our communities through workforce development.

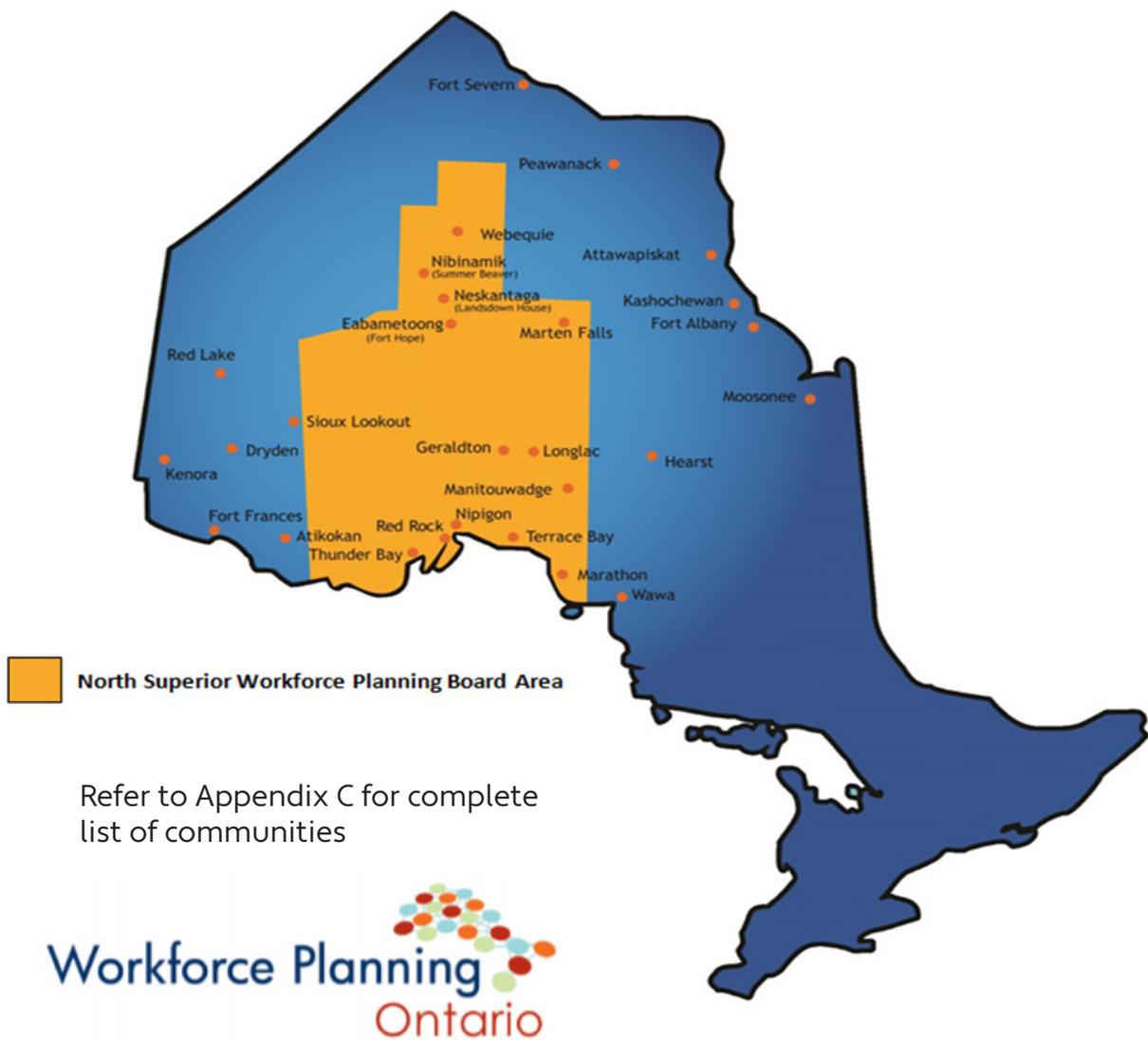
The North Superior Workforce Planning Board will:

- Build a strategic workforce readiness plan
- Create a dynamic, responsive process to satisfy current needs and prepare people for emerging labour market opportunities within a global economy
- Leverage community alliances to maximize labour market capacity and competitiveness

## MANDATE:

Leading in the creation of innovative labour market solutions by:

- Providing authoritative and evidence-based research
- Identifying employment trends
- Targeting workforce opportunities
- Initiating workforce development strategies



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Development of the 2021-2022 Local Labour Market Plan for the North Superior Workforce Planning Board catchment area has been made possible by the collaborative efforts of the many stakeholders engaged in NSWPB initiatives. We greatly appreciate the individual and collective contributions of time, talent, perspectives, and insights in creating our local plan that is representative of our current realities in the ever changing social and economic landscape.

We gratefully acknowledge the leadership of the North Superior Workforce Planning Board (NSWPB) Board of Directors and Workforce Recovery Team (WRT) and the many contributions of the Subject Matter Working Groups (SMWG). Their passion, commitment, vision and subject-matter expertise contributed to this local plan that has been made by and on behalf of local stakeholders in our region.

We would also like to acknowledge the author of this report, Anthony Noga, former NSWPB Labour Market Analyst, for his skills, knowledge and expertise in analysis of our labour market data, and for his tireless efforts in devising this report for our community.

We will also acknowledge our funder, the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development (MLTSD) for supporting us in our efforts to address local labour market challenges and opportunities.

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Thunder Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre
Thunder Bay Multicultural Association
Thunder Bay Ventures
YES Employment Services

## Subject Matter Working Group (SMWG) Members

Anishinabek Employment and Training Services (AETS)

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Thunder Bay Literacy Group
Thunder Bay Multicultural Association
U2 Fasteners
White Lake Limited Partnership
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## INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 changed everything. 2020 ushered in hopes for growth, reconciliation, and sustainable workforce development in Canada and Northwestern Ontario. Instead, less than four months after ringing in the new decade, economies were plunged into cryostasis by governments desperate to contain the spread of the novel coronavirus. The pandemic's impact on the workforce is unfathomable. Canada lost more total jobs between March and April 2020 than it did in the three previous recessions *combined*.<sup>1</sup> The country shed 1.8 million jobs in a single month, nearly 1.5 million more than during the entirety of the Great Recession of 2008-2009.

Unlike the downturns of 1981-82, 1990-92, and 2008-09, this one extends beyond the workforce. With schools, daycares, recreation activities, and retailers all shuttered, many Canadians found their worlds turned upside down by the order to stay at home. The new reality forced a scramble for new technologies and new ways of doing things. In short, the COVID-19 pandemic hurled Canada across the map into uncharted waters.

And yet – despite changing everything – COVID-19 really did not create any new systemic problems for the economy. The fault lines were already there, it just took this tectonic shift to expose them. The difficulties that parents, particularly mothers, face in the workforce is not new; the lower educational and employment outcomes for Indigenous peoples has a history stretching back decades; the vulnerability of precarious and part-time, low-wage workers did not suddenly emerge in March 2020; calls for improved access to rural broadband began well before the first confirmed COVID-19 case; people struggled with food insecurity before the economy was intentionally frozen; and calls for more responsive income support policies have waxed and waned since last century. It took a once-in-a-century pandemic to thrust these issues, and more, into the spotlight like never before and have inspired a global call to “build back better.”<sup>2</sup>

This Local Labour Market Plan (LLMP) is part of North Superior Workforce Planning Board's (NSWPB) plan to do just that, en route to a prosperous and thriving region. It charts NSWPB's strategy to respond to the pandemic in a way that will develop a better, stronger, more inclusive, and resilient local economy. Objectives for the next three years will be laid out with planned actions to achieve each. The strategies have been informed through an analysis of data in the local labour market, along with surveys of, and conversations

<sup>1</sup> Author's calculations from Statistics Canada. Table 14-10-0022-01 Labour force characteristics by industry, monthly, unadjusted for seasonality (x1,000). The recessions defined here are, 1) June 1981 to October 1982; 2) March 1990 to April 1992; and 3) October 2008 to May 2009

<sup>2</sup> See, for example: <http://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/building-back-better-a-sustainable-resilient-recovery-after-covid-19-52b869f5/>

with regional employers, workers, service providers, education institutes, labour groups, interested observers, and more.

The LLMP outlines how NSWPB will address key topics to activate Northwestern Ontario's workforce as part of the push to build back better. Specifically, it will speak to several needs:

- Promoting geographically distributed population growth that involves migration, retention, and natural growth
- Closing the impending skills gap as large swaths of the workforce near retirement age
- Ensuring a 'she-covery' by focusing on facilitating women's transition back into the workforce
- Advancing economic reconciliation by improving the educational and employment outcomes of Indigenous peoples
- Identifying workforce needs and developing collaborative solutions by leading the Workforce Recovery Team and subject matter working groups as well as participating in efforts led by community partners
- Supporting existing businesses and encouraging new ones
- Identifying potential growth sectors, as well as those at risk

Given that the issues exposed by the pandemic are not new, it is no surprise that these priorities do not diverge greatly from the planning board's previous objectives. Some have certainly taken on greater urgency, but they were always essential to the region's prosperity. Discussions with community members emphasized that short- and medium-term recovery objectives must be nested in the longer-term priorities for Northwestern Ontario. These have not changed; they still revolve around addressing impending skills gaps, labour shortages, infrastructure gaps, and barriers in people's personal lives that are curtailing the region's economic potential. Thus, the plan is to recover by redoubling efforts and finding new ways to address the issues that have plagued the Thunder Bay District since before the pandemic hit.

NSWPB will draw upon its existing network of community partners to refine and enhance this plan on an annual basis. One of the key responses NSWPB has led was the formation of the Workforce Recovery Team (WRT), comprised of representatives from local businesses, service providers, labour, and other informed observers. The WRT meets regularly to discuss pressing issues in the recovery. A number of issues have already been identified, and steps taken to begin addressing them.

Many local organizations have struggled with being forced to use unfamiliar technology in their daily operations. Thanks to a grant from the Ontario Trillium Fund's Resilient Communities program, NSWPB will hire a digital platform specialist whose responsibilities will be to provide training and troubleshooting on the new digital tools that members of the WRT are now using. This will build the WRT's collective capacity to navigate the accelerating shift to digital workspaces. Pivoting to the new reality will be an essential first step to recovering and rebuilding.

In the same vein, NSWPB will continue searching for professional development opportunities that will bolster the capacity of organizations across Northwestern Ontario. In September 2020, NSWPB invited groups throughout the region to participate in a change management seminar that honed their ability to navigate disruptions and successfully implement change in their own organizations. Participants in community discussions stated that similar opportunities would be among the most valuable resources that NSWPB could offer. As such, the planning board will continue pursuing ways to enhance the abilities of community partners to do their jobs during and after the pandemic, so that the region is well suited to develop collaborative solutions.

The planning board will prioritize topics for research from discussions with the WRT and other outreach efforts. One of the issues at the top of the list is to finish workforce projections for the resource sector in Northwestern Ontario. The mining timeline projection is complete, the forestry projection is nearly finished, and an energy sector initiative is underway. These projections complement broader research into workforce development on issues such as the impact of automation and impending retirements. At the same time, NSWPB will leverage the work done by community partners to amplify its impact. The recent release of Thunder Bay Community Economic Development Commission's (CEDC) Mining Readiness Strategy dovetails nicely with NSWPB's mining timeline. Other partners regularly generate relevant research and analysis that augments NSWPB's mandate and vice versa. The planning board will continue to facilitate and convene forums for partners to reinforce the work others are doing, as well as identify pressing topics upon which to focus.

Issues that have grown in prominence, and may figure into the planning board's future work, include efforts to make broadband internet accessible to everyone in the region, including remote mine and forestry operations, some of which are hampered by a lack of connectivity; begin addressing the shortage of housing, especially in the smaller communities in the district, with tailored solutions for the unique needs of First Nations; prepare for the lifelong learning that people will need to keep pace with technological advancements in their work and daily lives; smoothing the transitions from education/

training to work; re-establishing the informal networking opportunities that were inherent in in-person conferences but have dwindled during the age of web conferencing; and diversifying the economy, especially in downstream, value-added sectors of pillar industries.

Another asset at NSWPB's disposal is the recently launched suite of labour market tools named WorkSCAPE Northwest. These digital tools include the region's largest job board, a jobs map that geolocates job postings along with a host of community resources, a career explorer that provides information on local job conditions, a sector map that shows which employers have hired for specific occupations, as well as industry concentrations, a talent map that employers and recruiters can use to identify where the talent pools they need are located, and monthly reports on job posting demand and job searches. WorkSCAPE Northwest will be continually updated with new tools and improvements to the existing set. A particular focus raised during community discussions will be to develop tools that will smooth out the transitions between leaving education/training and entering the workforce.

Lastly, NSWPB is providing the Northwest Connector Program, an intentional networking initiative to connect people – especially newcomers and youth – to work in the region. This program has proven to be successful in more than 30 communities across Canada and will provide a hands-on component to talent retention that will complement the research that NSWPB does.

NSWPB will leverage these and other discussion forums, tools, research, analysis, labour market information, and programs to drive a sustainable, equitable, and inclusive economic recovery in Northwestern Ontario. Engaging with partners, conducting research, developing tools, and delivering programs will be four pillars of NSWPB's action plan that will identify challenges and opportunities and devise collaborative solutions for the region.



## OVERVIEW

NSWPB's region includes the Thunder Bay District<sup>3</sup> – excluding Osnaburgh First Nation and the Ojibway Nation of Saugeen – as well as five First Nations communities in the Kenora District: Marten Falls; Eabametoong (Fort Hope); Webequie; Nibinamik (Summer Beaver); and Neskantaga (Lansdowne House). It falls into land originally inhabited by Anishinaabe and Cree peoples, and is covered by the Robinson-Superior Treaty of 1850, Treaty 3 of 1873, Treaty 9 of 1905-1906 as well as Treaty 9's 1929 adhesion, and overlaps with Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Regions 1, 2, and 3.

There are more than 40 communities in the Planning Board's service area, including 17 First Nations, 3 MNO communities, 15 municipalities, and more than a dozen unincorporated communities. The five First Nations in Kenora District are not connected to permanent highway or rail networks, and so travel to and from these communities depends on flights, water travel, and winter roads. As part of the Northwestern Ontario economy, the NSWPB region is inextricably linked to communities represented by sister planning boards to the west, east, and north.

The region has a justified reputation as being dependent on natural resource extraction, though the reality is that sectors such as healthcare, education, social services, and public administration tend to employ the largest number of people. Northwestern Ontario's economy, as a whole, was not as badly disrupted as many parts of the country. Statistics Canada devised a new indicator called the underutilization rate to gauge COVID-19's impact. This indicator combines the population that is unemployed with those that want a job but were not actively working and those that lost a majority of their working hours. Northwestern Ontario's monthly labour underutilization rates in 2019 were among the highest in the province – in 2020 it was the opposite. From March 2019 to February 2020, Northwestern Ontario's underutilization rate was higher than Ontario's and Canada's in all but one month. On the other hand, Northwestern Ontario had a better rate in every month from April to September 2020.<sup>4</sup> Of course, that does not mean the impact was negligible. The monthly participation, employment, unemployment, and underutilization rates in 2020 were all much worse than in 2019. A strong recovery for Northwestern Ontario will mean these rates do not return to being significantly higher than the province's or the country's.

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<sup>3</sup> Where possible, data calculations involving the Thunder Bay District will omit Osnaburgh and Saugeen First Nation.

<sup>4</sup> Community Data custom tabulation from Labour Force Survey data

# Population



One of the most pressing barriers to a thriving economy in Northwestern Ontario has to do with demographics. Over the past two decades, the region's population has shrunk and aged, leaving a dwindling supply of available labour, as well as potential savings, consumption, and tax base – all of which herald slowing economic growth, or even decline (Helfand-Green 2016). A great deal of research has shown the need for population growth strategies that will address this topic (Helfand-Green 2016, Cuddy and Moazzami 2016, North Superior Workforce Planning Board 2018, Moazzami 2019, Zefi 2019, Ross 2020). Finding ways to continue population growth initiatives during and after the pandemic will be extra difficult but will be essential for Northwestern Ontario.

### **ACTION PLAN ITEM: GOAL AND 3 NSWPB ACTIONS:**

Goal: A growing and geographically distributed population that meets the diverse needs of our communities. Specifically, a regional population that is higher in 2023 than it is in 2020.

NSWPB's actions:

1. Generate, collect, and analyze data and information on population trends, components of population growth, and the local labour market to make an evidence-informed case for population growth through migration, immigration, and natural growth.
2. Engage with employers, workers, education institutes, industry groups and associations and other partners through the WRT, Subject Matter Working Groups, roundtables, and other ventures to understand local needs, share resources, and develop plans that create work opportunities.
3. Deliver and support programming such as the Northwest Connector and Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot to connect jobseekers with opportunities in the region.

The good news is that - contrary to popular opinion - the population in North Superior Workforce Planning Board's area is growing again. As of 2019, there was approximately 154,000 people, about 98 per cent of which are in the Thunder Bay District.

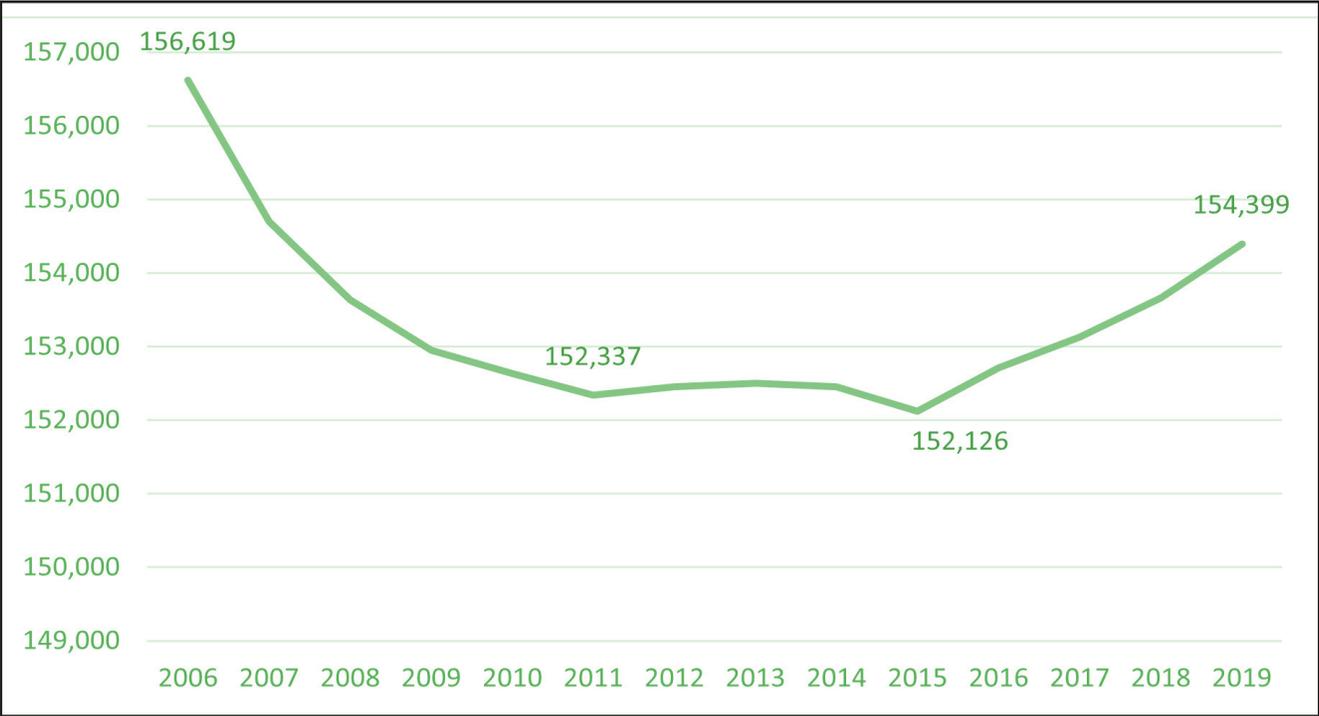
Statistics Canada's annual population estimates – which adjust for net under-coverage in the census and approximate annual population change based on births, deaths, and migration – list the population in the NSWPB region of the Thunder Bay District at 151,556 in 2019, with another 2,843 in the five Ring of Fire communities.<sup>5</sup>

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5 Counts for the individual communities came from a custom table from Community Data

Figure 1 shows that the region appears to be growing, after a decade of decline. The population shrank by just over 2.8 per cent from 2006 to when it bottomed out in 2015 but has since rebounded by 1.5 per cent.

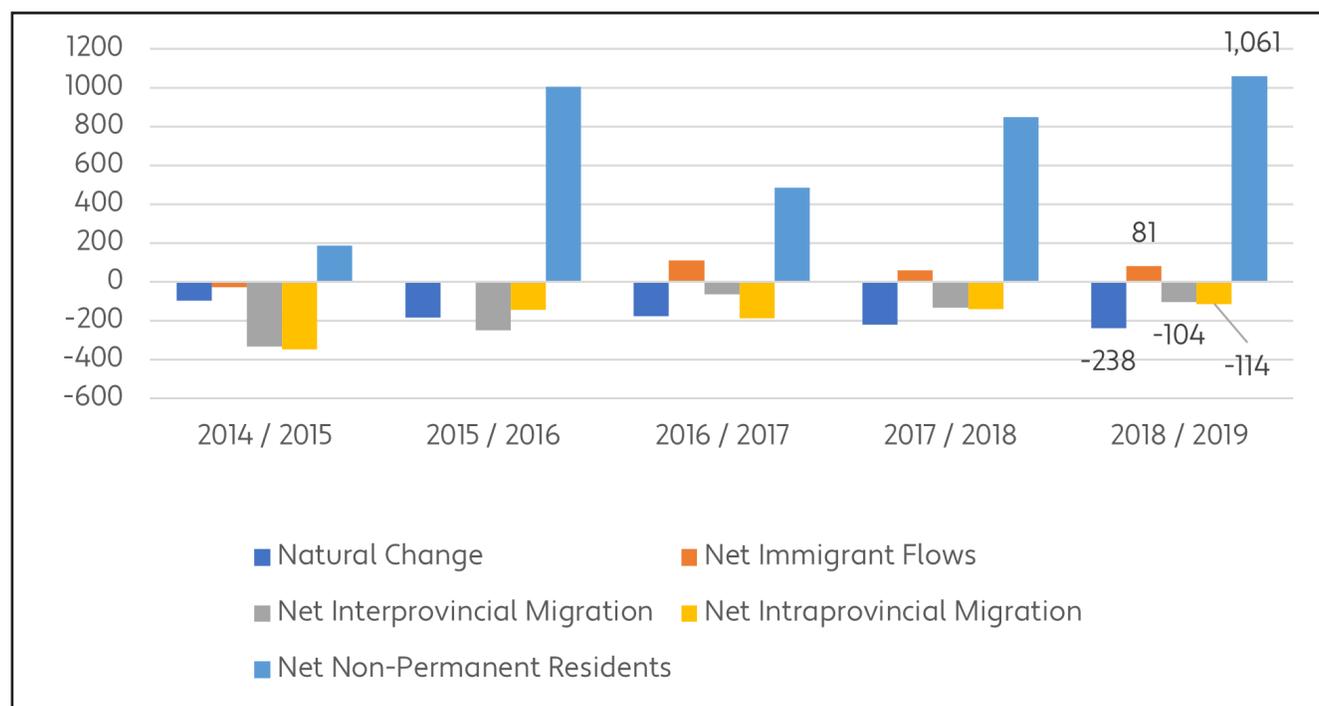
Figure 1: Annual Population Estimates of the NSWPB Region (Thunder Bay District minus Osnaburgh and Ojibway Nation of Saugeen plus Ring of Fire Communities) 2006-2019



Source: Statistics Canada Population Estimates, July 1, by Census Division Table: 17-10-0139-01

These figures are a shock, as they buck both long-term trends and common perceptions. It appears that efforts to attract and retain newcomers from other countries are beginning to pay off, as Figure 2 shows that this demographic was responsible for the growth.

Figure 2: Components of Population Growth, Thunder Bay District 2014-2019



Source: Statistics Canada Components of Population Change by Census Division Table: 17-10-0149-01

The growth beginning in 2015 coincided with a massive spike in the number of non-permanent residents (PR) in the district. Despite the rapidly growing Indigenous population, the NSWPB region saw more deaths than births, and more Canadian born people moved out of the district than moved in in each of the past four years. The population still grew however, due mainly to the increase in international students, temporary foreign workers, and other temporary visa holders. Better still, these newcomers are young. Between 2015 and 2018, Thunder Bay District added roughly 2,109 non-permanent residents between the ages of 15 and 24 (Statistics Canada 2020f).

This situation births three new challenges; first, transitioning visa holders, particularly students, to permanent residency; second, addressing the fact that natural growth (births minus deaths) and net migration within Canada are both negative; and third, distributing newcomers across the region.

Non-PRs, by definition, are limited in their ability to work and live in Canada. Two key elements in this regard are a job that can support a candidate's immigration and a desire to stay. NSWPB and its community partners have been working to engage employers in retaining talent through efforts such as the International and Community Matchmaker Program, the Community Connector Program, the Local Immigration Partnership, and the Talent Retention Roundtable. International migration was the difference between the NSWPB region growing and shrinking, a situation that is not sustainable.

COVID-19 will virtually eliminate the most significant component of the region's population growth, at least in the short term. It could very easily reach the point that the population will begin shrinking again. This ably demonstrates that, as crucial as immigration is, it cannot be the sole source of population growth. The region also needs to attract people from other parts of Canada and address the low birth rate.

Figure 1 above also shows a gradual reversal of migration within Canada. In 2014-2015, 687 more people moved from Thunder Bay Districts to other parts of Canada; a year later, that number was under 400 and has since shrunk further to just over 200. It is still a net loss to the region's population but is trending in the right direction. Turning these numbers to a positive is a crucial second component of the population growth strategy and that requires increased efforts to attract people from outside Northern Ontario.



*O'Connor Lookout, photo courtesy of the Township of O'Connor*

Rural Canada is the second largest source of newcomers to Thunder Bay District, behind international migration. Table 1 shows the 20 regions of Canada that sent the most migrants to the NSWPB region, along with the number that each sent from 2013-18. Regions with a higher population than Thunder Bay District are highlighted. Those five larger urban centres account for 200 of the total 1,467 migrants (14 per cent) to the district during this time. On the other hand, Kenora and Rainy River Districts sent roughly 52 per cent of the total, and another five per cent came from Cochrane District. This means that most of the domestic migration to the District of Thunder Bay is not growing Northwestern Ontario's population.

*Table 1: Top Migrant Source Census Divisions 2013-2018*

<b>Region</b>	<b>2013-2018 net</b>	<b>Region</b>	<b>2013-2018 net</b>
Kenora	560	Montréal	16
Rainy River	196	NW Alberta	16
Cochrane	88	Huron	16
Winnipeg	71	Gimli	13
Peel	44	Churchill	12
Durham	37	Peace River	10
East of Edmonton	34	Northern Rockies	10
York, ON	32	Baffin	9
La Vallée e-de-L'or	18	Prescott and Russell	9
York, NB	18	Morden	9

*Source: Author's calculations based on custom data from Ministry of Labour, Training, and Skills Development*

Table 2, meanwhile, shows the top 20 regions in Canada that people from the Thunder Bay District have migrated to. This time, regions that are roughly equal to, or smaller than Thunder Bay are highlighted. All told, roughly 62 per cent of out migrants went to regions with a higher population than Thunder Bay District. There is a clear trend where this region attracts in-migrants primarily from more rural areas and sends out-migrants to more populous ones.

Table 2: Top Migrant Destination Census Divisions 2013-2018

Region	2013-2018 net	Region	2013-2018 net
Toronto	-330	Nipissing	-90
Ottawa	-307	Calgary	-74
Middlesex	-168	Halifax	-60
Algoma	-141	Nanaimo	-60
Waterloo	-138	Thompson-Nicola	-53
Greater Vancouver	-127	Hastings	-52
Capital Region, BC	-116	Fort McMurray	-50
Central Okanagan	-100	Canmore	-42
Edmonton	-98	Wellington	-40
Essex	-98	Frontenac	-39

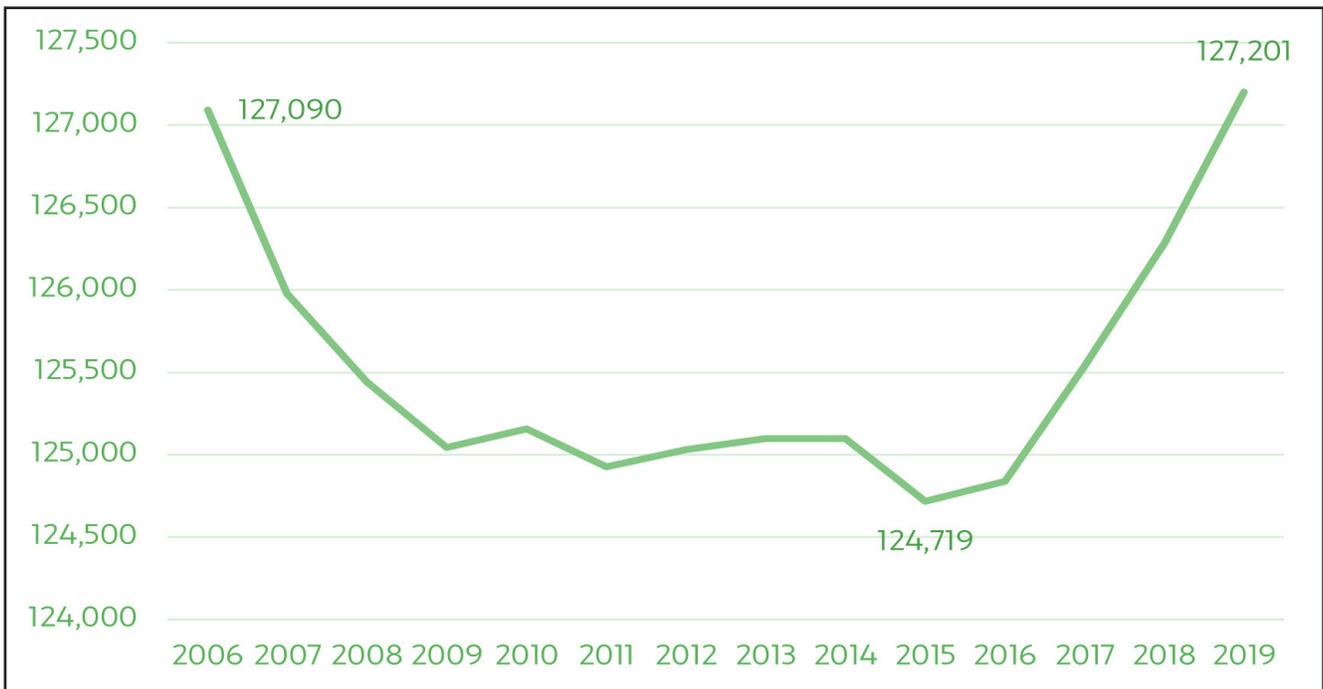
Source: Author's calculations based on custom data from Ministry of Labour, Training, and Skills Development

Efforts to change this and attract newcomers from larger centres are yet to bear fruit. Thunder Bay attracted more migrants from rural areas in every year from 2013-18 than from Toronto in that entire timeframe (Statistics Canada 2019). Rural Canada remains the largest domestic source of migrants to Thunder Bay District but, as Figure 1 shows, migration within Canada remains a net negative for Thunder Bay District. The region will need similar success attracting and retaining Canadian-born individuals as it has had with international students to meet its population growth objectives.

NSWPB will continue to work on initiatives such as the Community Connector Program that attract and retain people born in Canada and provide them opportunities to come or stay here. The region's young and growing Indigenous population has incredible potential to narrow the skills gap. NSWPB will work to improve employment outcomes for Indigenous peoples by working with community partners to bolster cultural inclusion and dedicating a stream of the Connector program to helping Indigenous peoples find jobs in the region. However, it is not enough to simply attract people to the region, the benefits of population growth need to be distributed among the communities.

Most of the region’s young newcomers appear to have found a home in the district’s largest centre. The Thunder Bay Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) includes the City of Thunder Bay, Oliver-Paipoonge, Shuniah, Neebing, Fort William First Nation, Conmee, O’Connor, and Gillies. Figure 3 shows that the CMA has grown substantially from 2015 on, with 2019 marking its highest level since 2006.

Figure 3: Annual Population Estimates of Thunder Bay Census Metropolitan Area



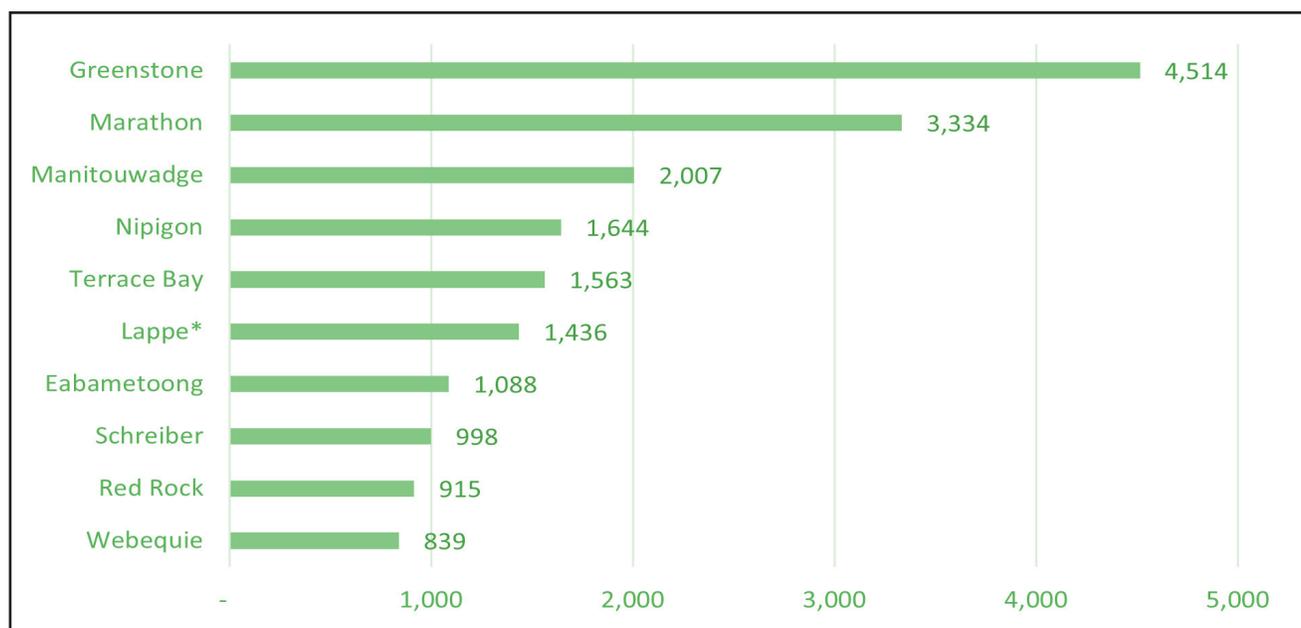
Source: Statistics Canada Population Estimates, July 1, by Census Metropolitan Area and Census Agglomeration Table 17-10-0135-01

Although the CMA has posted positive net intraprovincial migration each of the past 14 years, newcomers from other countries once again appear to be the driving force behind the increase. Migration within Canada added an estimated 40 people to the CMA population in 2018-19, whereas migration of immigrants and non-permanent residents added 1,065. Meanwhile, there were approximately 251 more deaths than births (Statistics Canada 2020e). It is also worth noting that another 5,000 people or so reside in nearby unincorporated territory but are not included in the CMA totals. This means roughly 85 per cent of the region’s population is in, or adjacent to, the City of Thunder Bay.

The growing population in the CMA seems to mask declines outside of it. While the CMA added an estimated 2,482 people from 2015 to 2018, the district grew by roughly 2,292. This means the population outside the CMA shrunk by approximately 190. Part of the reason could be that there have never been more than 30 immigrants to communities outside the CMA in any given year.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, Statistics Canada says that the Thunder Bay CMA is one of the five slowest growing CMAs in the country, a distinction it has held every year since the data was first tracked in 2006.

Part of building back better will mean population growth that meets the needs of the eight municipalities, 19 First Nations, two distinct Métis Nation of Ontario communities and several individual communities in unincorporated territory that are not within the region’s largest hub. Figure 4 shows the population of the ten largest communities in this category.

Figure 4: 10 Largest Geographic Communities Outside the CMA, 2019



Source: Statistics Canada Annual Population Estimates of Sub-Provincial Areas custom tabulation. \*Lappe is from Statistics Canada 2016 census of population

<sup>6</sup> Author’s calculations based on Statistics Canada’s Components of Population Growth Tables, 17-10-0140-01 and 17-10-0136-01

Nearly all these communities were smaller in 2019 than in 2006. This trend cannot continue if Northwestern Ontario is to prosper. Population growth strategies must also tend to the needs of smaller communities, which is why the Northwest Connector Program will expand to areas outside the CMA, to ensure they can meet their workforce needs. Other areas such as housing will need to be addressed, so that smaller communities in particular can accommodate the workers they need to attract.

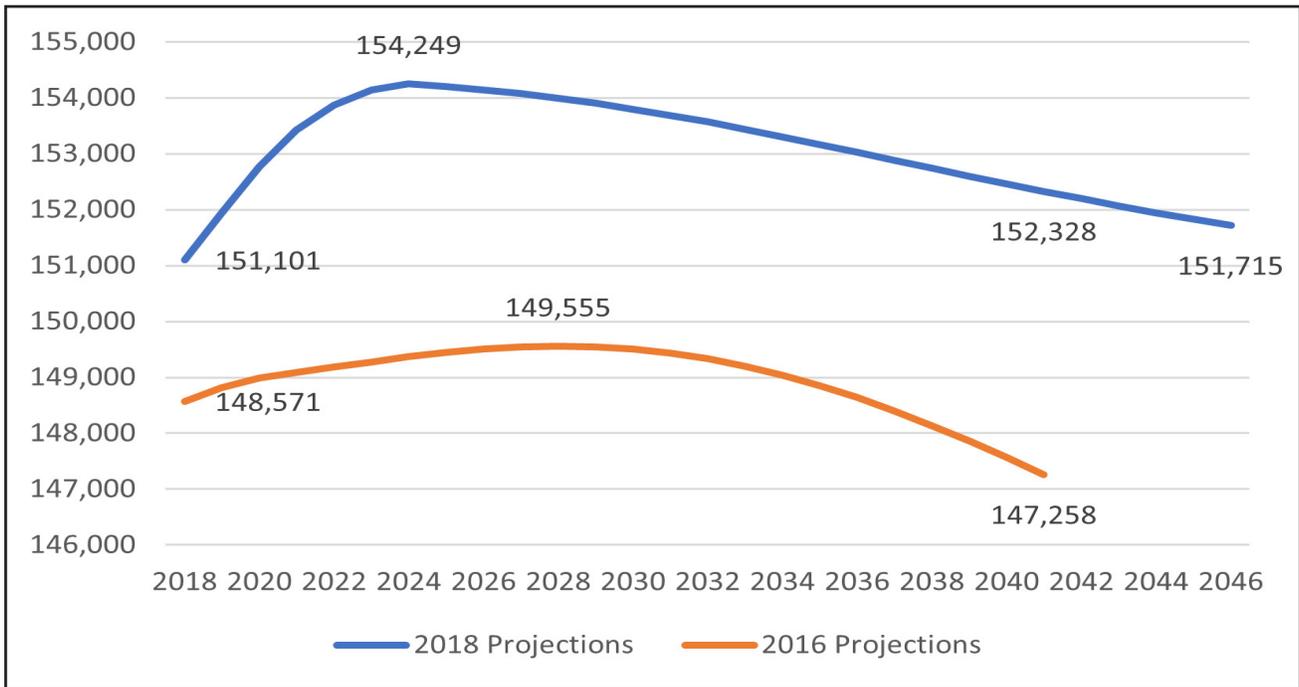
The sky has been buttressed and is no longer falling. Thanks to continued growth in the Indigenous population and strong and sustained efforts by regional institutions to attract students and workers from other countries, the NSWPB region appears to have finally reversed a decade of population decline. Now the goal will be to maintain that success in the age of COVID and to expand the benefits to communities outside the CMA. This will remain a top priority for NSWPB.

## **POPULATION PROJECTIONS:**

Ontario's Ministry of Finance (MoF) produces annual population projections for all districts in the province, offering a glimpse into the size of the future labour pool. These district forecasts unfortunately do not align perfectly with the NSWPB boundaries – they include Osnaburgh and the Ojibway Nation of Saugeen and omit the five communities in the Kenora District - but since they accounted for less than three per cent of the total population in the NSWPB region in 2016, they are unlikely to sway the results much.

The population projections estimate annual changes in each component of population growth (births, deaths, in migration, out migration, net change in non-permanent residents) based on Statistics Canada's population estimates for the most recent base year, in this case, 2018. Figure 5 shows the population projections from the previous Community Labour Market Plan compared to the updated forecasts. Of course, these were from before the pandemic, and are liable to have shifted dramatically given the role that international migration plays in the region's population trends.

Figure 5: Thunder Bay District Population Projections



Source: Ontario Ministry of Finance Population Projections 2018-2046 and 2016-2046

The growth since 2015 has had a profound impact on population projections. The inverted U-shape from the 2016 forecasts has morphed, and the population is projected to peak much higher and much sooner. Surprisingly, the district is now expected to grow over the next 28 years, albeit by less than half a percentage point. Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada data corroborates that non-permanent residents are keying this growth.

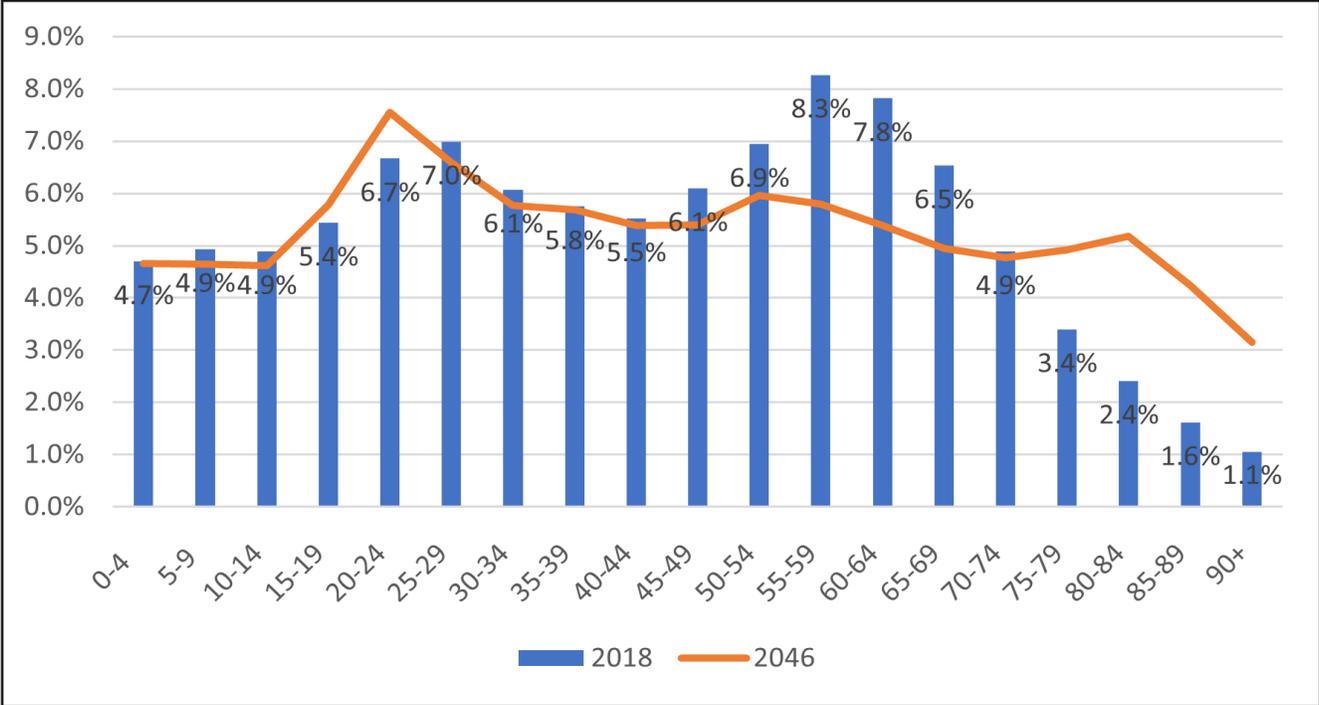
There were 1,400 study permit holders in the CMA in 2015, and 3,020 in 2017. That is 115 per cent growth over two years. Data was only tracked for the first four months of 2018, but if it followed trends from previous years, there would have been roughly 3,700 study permit holders in 2018, another 22.5 per cent growth (Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada 2019a). In the same vein, there were 110 Temporary Foreign Workers in post-graduate employment in 2015, compared to 310 in 2017 and 485 in 2018 (Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada 2019b).

While these projections provide some optimism, they may prove illusory if communities are unable to retain the non-permanent residents that are driving the region’s growth. These residents’ temporary status significantly curtails their labour force potential, meaning much of the growing population can only contribute to the economy in limited fashions. The Northwestern Connector Program, Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot, and the Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program could prove to be valuable tools in helping retain this key demographic and drive sustainable population growth. The influx of young non-permanent residents appears to make a dent, albeit a small one, in another pressing demographic trend: an ageing population.

**SUSTAINABILITY:**

A large share of the Thunder Bay District’s population already is, or soon will be, retirement aged. Figure 6 shows that 16.1 per cent of the district population is set to reach the age of 65 in the next decade, while roughly one-fifth of people are already there.

Figure 6: Distribution of Thunder Bay District Population by Five-Year Age Cohort, 2018 and 2046



Source: Author’s calculations from Ontario Ministry of Finance Population Projections 2018-2046

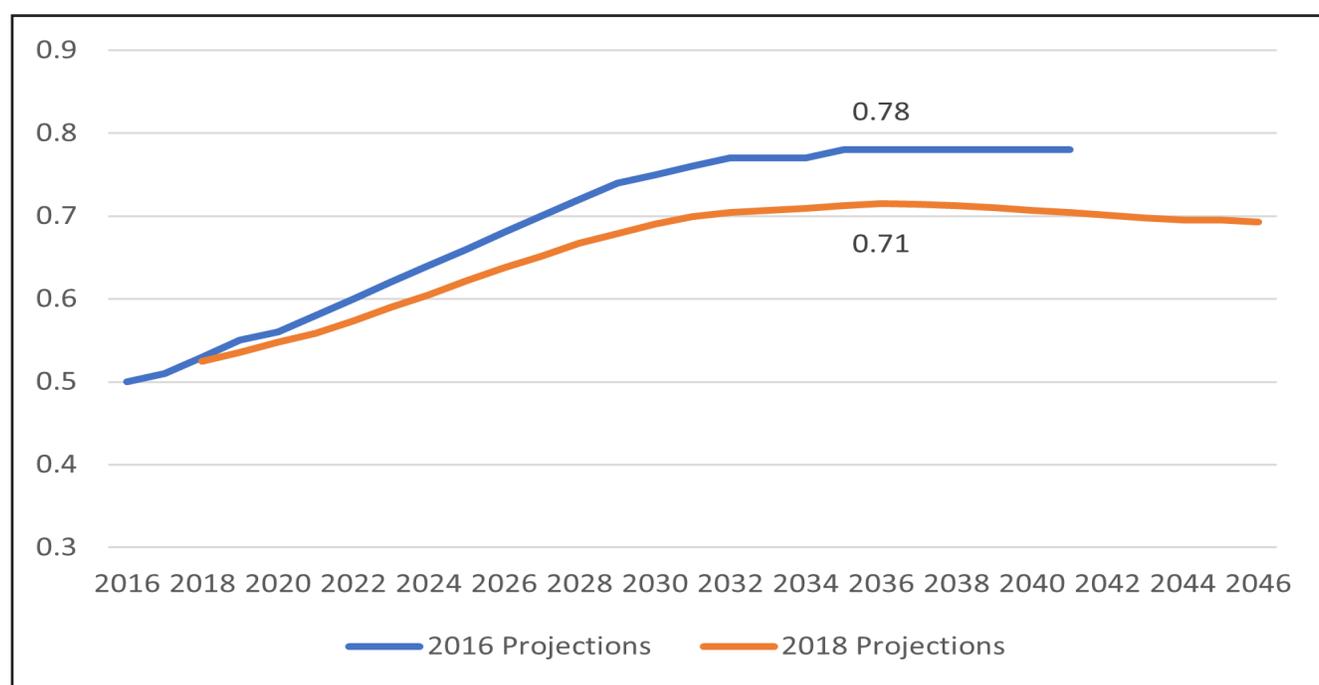
The line representing the forecasts for 2046 shows that the 20-24 age group is projected to have the largest individual share of the total population in 2046, supplanting the 55-59 group that held the top spot in 2018. This is likely a result of the surge in 15 to 24-year-old non-permanent residents over the last three years. It may not be reasonable to expect similar growth rates in this cohort going forward, so these projections should be viewed with some skepticism. At the same time, those over the age of 75 are projected to more than double, collectively accounting for 17.5 per cent of the whole. The 45-64 group – those most likely to have many years of work experience – is expected to decline significantly. Replenishing the thousands of workers slated to transition to retirement age is a key consideration in keeping the region sustainable.

NSWPB has worked with partners to estimate the impact of the ageing population on individual sectors, notably through a partnership with Northern Policy Institute that led to the publication of the March 2020 briefing note *Assessing Labour Market Shortages in the City of Thunder Bay*. This is part of a larger analysis NSWPB has taken part in to track the ratio of workers to dependents in the region.



The Demographic Dependency Ratio (DDR) helps gauge community sustainability. It divides the number of dependent-aged (0 to 14 and 65 and over) by working-aged people (15-64) to produce a decimal representation of the population's age distribution. A DDR of 0.5 is widely viewed as optimal and indicates that there are two working-aged individuals for each person outside typical working ages. A higher value indicates more dependent-aged people, and lower values mean fewer potential dependents per working-aged person. It is a crude metric, but it provides a glimpse into the labour force potential of a community or region. Figure 7 shows the district's DDR based on the MoF projections and compares it to the anticipated DDR highlighted in the last community labour market plan.

Figure 7: Annual Projected DDR of Thunder Bay District, 2016 vs 2018 Population Projections



Source: Author's Calculations from Ontario Ministry of Finance Population Projections 2018-2046 and 2016-2046

Two years ago, Thunder Bay District was anticipated to reach its worst DDR value of 0.78 in 2036. The updated value based on the new projections is 0.71. That 0.07 difference may seem insignificant, but it means that, by the time the district reaches its least sustainable point, there are projected to be 140 working-aged people for every 100 dependents, rather than 128 based on 2016 projections. That is noticeably better, but still well shy of the optimal 2:1 ratio.

However, studies on population growth in low-fertility countries are nearly universal in their agreement that ‘replacement migration’ – attracting newcomers from other countries to meet a demographic objective – by itself cannot sustain the ratio of working-age people to dependents (United Nations Population Division 2000, Craveiro, et al. 2019, Coleman 2002, Bijak, Kupiszewska and Kupiszewski 2008). Replacement migration can grow the population and slow the population ageing but not maintain a region’s DDR – at least not without wholly unrealistic immigration targets.

The NSWPB region will need to find similar success attracting and retaining other groups as it has had with international students. . Specifically, a successful population growth strategy will involve retaining the working-aged people in the region and attracting workers from other parts of Canada to reverse the net loss of population to intranational migration.

Of course, a major factor in attracting and retaining people is a thriving economy with plenty of opportunities – which is a second component of NSWPB’s recovery plan.

# Labour Force Characteristics



Inextricably linked to the declining population in the region has been a lack of opportunities – or at least that perception. As the population has shrunk, important indicators such as the participation rate and employment rate have also trended downward (Statistics Canada 2020). This means that a lower proportion of the dwindling population are engaged in work. Recent years saw some improvement, which will need to continue in the coming years.

### **ACTION PLAN ITEM: GOAL AND 3 NSWPB ACTIONS:**

**Goal: Abundant work opportunities in communities across the NSWPB region in a variety of traditional and new sectors and a workforce with the skills to excel in them. Specifically, a 2023 labour force that is larger than 2020, a 2023 participation rate higher than 2020, and participation and employment rates for females and Indigenous peoples that are higher than in 2020.**

#### **NSWPB's Actions:**

- 1. Generate, collect, analyze, and share data and information on the regional economy including on job demand, labour supply, sector outlooks, and skills inventories and gaps to enable evidence-informed decisions regarding education and training and attraction and retention.**
- 2. Engage with employers, workers, education institutes, industry groups and associations and other partners through the WRT, Subject Matter Working Groups, roundtables, and other ventures to understand local needs, share resources, and develop plans that create work opportunities.**
- 3. Deliver and support programming such as WorkSCAPE Northwest and I Spy with my LMI to make timely and relevant labour market information accessible to community partners.**

The cautiously optimistic trends that emerge from the population profile extend into the labour force. Prior to the pandemic, the region was seeing improvement in all the major labour force indicators, with a participation rate that reached levels not seen since the Great Recession of 2008.

As Table 3 shows, all the most important available indicators in the CMA’s labour force improved alongside the population figures – at least until 2019. Unfortunately, these data are not released at the district or community level.

*Table 3: Key Labour Force Statistics, Thunder Bay CMA 2008 and 2015-2019*

	2008	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Population 15 and Over	103,800	104,600	104,700	104,800	104,800	104,700
Labour Force	66,200	62,900	64,500	65,200	67,100	65,400
Not in Labour Force	37,600	41,700	40,200	39,600	37,700	39,400
Participation Rate (%)	63.8	60.1	61.6	62.2	64	62.5
Employment Rate (%)	60	57.1	57.4	58.7	60.8	58.9
Unemployment Rate (%)	5.9	5.2	6.8	5.7	5.1	5.5

*Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Characteristics by Census Metropolitan Area, Annual Table 14-10-0096-01. Numbers are rounded to the nearest 100.*

Not only are there more people in the CMA than at any point in the last decade, but in 2018 more of them were in the labour force, a greater share of them were either working or looking for work, and a higher percentage were employed than at any point in recent history. The last time the CMA saw comparable, albeit slightly worse, values in each of the participation, employment, and unemployment rates was 2008. Both the labour force and the number of people employed in 2018 were 6.7 per cent larger than in 2015, while the number of those not in the labour force shrank by 9.6 per cent.

Likewise, median incomes have risen in the CMA over the past five years. Table 4 shows that the median income for all individuals in the CMA climbed 11 per cent between 2014 and 2018, for an average annual increase of 2.2 per cent. This is driven largely by 16 per cent growth in median earnings for women. In actual terms, the median income of women grew by over \$4,700 over five years, allowing them to narrow the gap with their male counterparts. However, they still earn considerably less than men in the NSWPB area.

*Table 4: Median and Average Total Income (\$) of Individuals in Thunder Bay CMA, by Sex 2014-2018*

NSWPB Region	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Median Income	35,840	36,940	37,350	38,600	39,790
Median Income (males)	43,250	44,260	44,500	45,580	46,590
Median Income (females)	29,650	31,140	31,700	33,160	34,360
Average Income	44,699	45,916	45,997	47,569	48,677
Average Income (males)	52,616	53,539	53,440	54,805	56,139
Average Income (females)	37,324	38,817	39,101	40,822	41,700

Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Labour Income Profile of Tax Filers by Sex, Annual. Table 11-10-0031-01

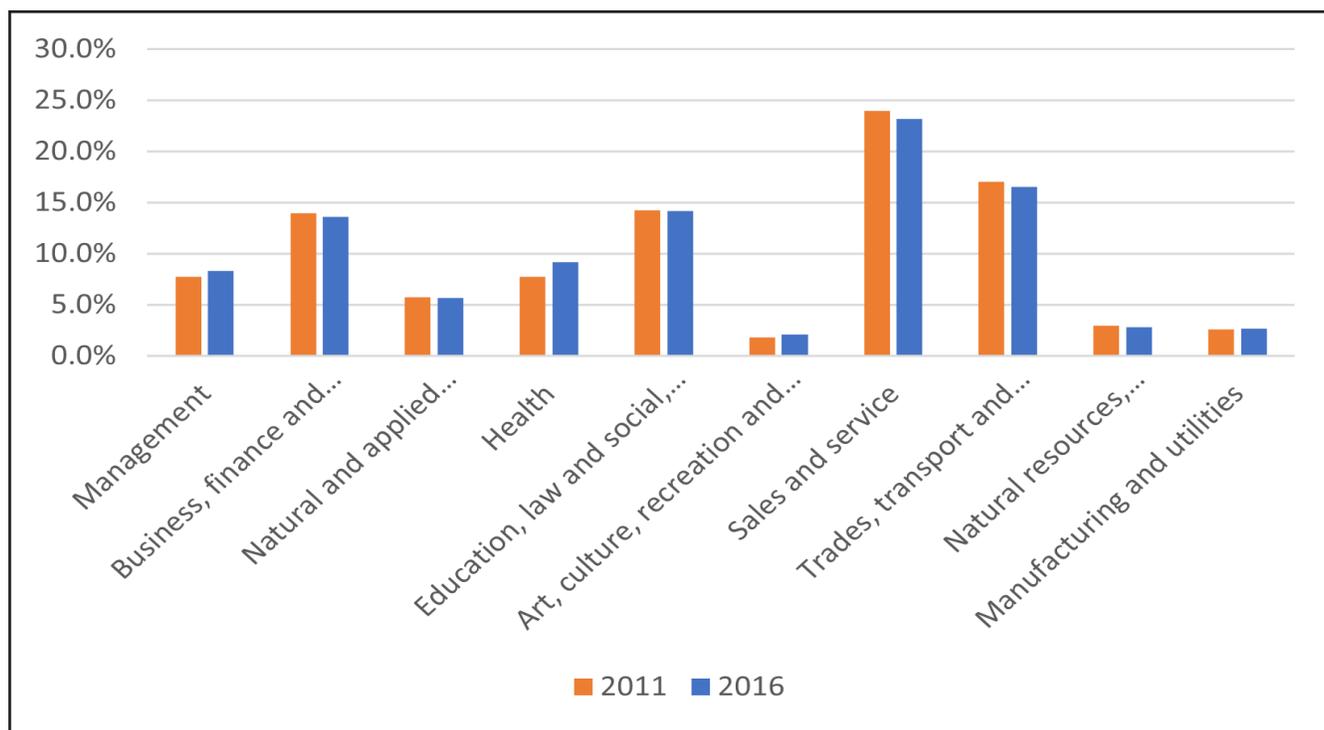


Men in the region made, on average, about 14,000 dollars more per year than women. This data does not include the type of jobs or hours worked, so cannot shed light on 'equal pay for equal work' discussions, but it does demonstrate the gap in earnings more generally. Whether due to the fact that women are more likely to work part-time (discussed below), work in jobs with lower earning potential, or are not compensated the same as a male colleague, they still earn considerably less.

While women do not make as much as men in the region, both groups earn more than their counterparts in Ontario and Canada. The median income in the CMA has been at least seven per cent higher than the provincial and national medians every year since 2014. The gap is shrinking, however; the local median was nearly 11 per cent higher than the province in 2014, while the difference in 2018 was 7.4 per cent (Statistics Canada 2020g). The strong earning potential, combined with the relatively low cost of living (Noga 2020) represent incredible material to market the Thunder Bay District as a great place to live, with abundant well-paying job opportunities.

Figure 8 shows the distribution of employment by occupation type. Unsurprisingly, the composition of work in the region did not change much between 2011 and 2016. Occupations in health were the only group that fluctuated by more than one percentage point, growing by 1.4 per cent to comprise roughly one in every 11 jobs in the region. COVID-19 may throw this into disarray, given the immense toll it has taken on service jobs. Coupled with automation, many of the more than 17,000 people in these jobs may be forced into other occupations.

Figure 8: Share of the Workforce, By National Occupation Classification (NOC), NSWPB Region. 2011 and 2016



Source: Statistics Canada Census Data, Custom Tabulation

The Brookfield Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship out of Ryerson University has launched a major project to identify pathways that lead from these types of jobs - specifically when it comes to food and grocery businesses - to new jobs in in-demand fields. The results may be incorporated into WorkSCAPE Northwest’s Career Explorer Tool, which will make it easier for those at risk to transition to new opportunities. Discussions with community partners have highlighted the need to smooth transitions, not only between careers but also from education/training to the workforce. Lowering or eliminating these barriers will improve the flow of talent to in-demand industries, which will build upon the momentum the region had been developing prior to the pandemic.

This topic was highlighted in the CEDC’s Mining Readiness Strategy, which emphasized the need for a steady pipeline of talent into careers in mining (TBCEDC 2021). There are various potential labour pools to fill this gap, from those currently in the forestry and construction sectors, to high-school students set to enter the workforce, to those that have been or will be displaced by COVID-related disruptions, to women looking to transition into non-traditional sectors, and, perhaps most notably, the Indigenous population in the communities that will be most directly impacted by mining operations. Identifying the

unique barriers each group faces and the supports they need can help the region proactively address the expected need for thousands of workers in the mining sector. Success in these initiatives can build on and reinforce the positive trends the region was experiencing in the growth of quality jobs.

Full-time workers are accounting for a larger share of all workers, which Table 5 demonstrates. However, the pandemic could disrupt this trend. The rise of digital platforms was opening a new avenue to an age-old reality – the gig economy (Ziegler, et al. 2020). COVID forced more people online to various platforms while simultaneously displacing one and half million Canadian workers from their jobs, potentially accelerating this trend. There are profound implications on how to align the labour market to this new reality.

*Table 5: Key Employment Status Statistics, Thunder Bay CMA 2008 and 2015-2019*

	2008	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Employed	62,300	59,700	60,100	61,500	63,700	61,700
Employed Males	30,300	29,600	30,000	30,100	32,300	31,600
Employed Females	32,000	30,100	30,200	31,400	31,400	30,200
Employed Full-Time	47,400	45,900	46,600	47,400	49,500	49,300
Employed Part-Time	14,900	13,700	13,500	14,100	14,200	12,500
Full-Time as Percent of all Employment	76.1%	73.7%	74.8%	76.1%	79.5%	79.9%

*Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Characteristics by Census Metropolitan Area, Annual Table 14-10-0096-01*

Table 6, meanwhile, shows that a large majority of those working part-time are females. Of note, 86.7 per cent of working males worked full-time in 2019, compared to 72.5 for employed females. And, as Table 6 indicates, there are roughly two females working part-time for every male in the CMA.

Table 6: Employment Status by Gender, Thunder Bay CMA 2008 and 2015-2019

	2008	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Males in Full-Time Employment	25,500	25,200	25,400	25,600	27,200	27,400
Females in Full-Time Employment	21,900	20,700	21,200	21,900	22,300	21,900
Males in Part-Time Employment	4,800	4,400	4,500	4,600	5,100	4,200
Females in Part-Time Employment	10,100	9,400	9,000	9,500	9,100	8,300
Males as Percent of Full-Time Employment	53.8%	54.9%	54.5%	54.0%	54.9%	55.6%
Females as Percent of Full-Time Employment	46.2%	45.1%	45.5%	46.2%	45.1%	44.4%
Males as Percent of Part-Time Employment	32.2%	32.1%	33.3%	32.6%	35.9%	33.6%
Females as Percent of Part-Time Employment	67.8%	68.6%	66.7%	67.4%	64.1%	66.4%

Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Characteristics by Census Metropolitan Area, Annual Table 14-10-0096-01

This is especially relevant during the pandemic, which has been widely termed a ‘shecession’ for the disproportionate impact it has had on women at work and at home. By June 2020, when the economic ramifications of the pandemic were at their worst in the Thunder Bay CMA (as of time of writing), the employment rate for females dropped under 50 per cent (Statistics Canada 2020b). In other words, fewer than half the female population aged 15 years or older was employed. In June 2019, the rate was over 57 per cent. Women are traditionally employed in sectors that were hit hardest by the pandemic, such as services that could not be carried out remotely.

Women with young children were exceptionally hard hit. Table 7 explores the difference in actual hours worked versus usual hours for a variety of household types. Those women that remained in the workforce while having a youngest child under the age of six – a number that was approximately 2,000 lower in October than in March – report losing at least one-third of their typical hours in every month of the pandemic. Men with children of the same age report far less drastic losses. In fact, men with young children typically lost a smaller share of their hours than women with no children, or whose youngest child was 25 or older.

*Table 7: Percentage Change in Average Actual vs Usual Hours Worked per Week by Age of Youngest Child, Northwestern Ontario, March to October 2020*

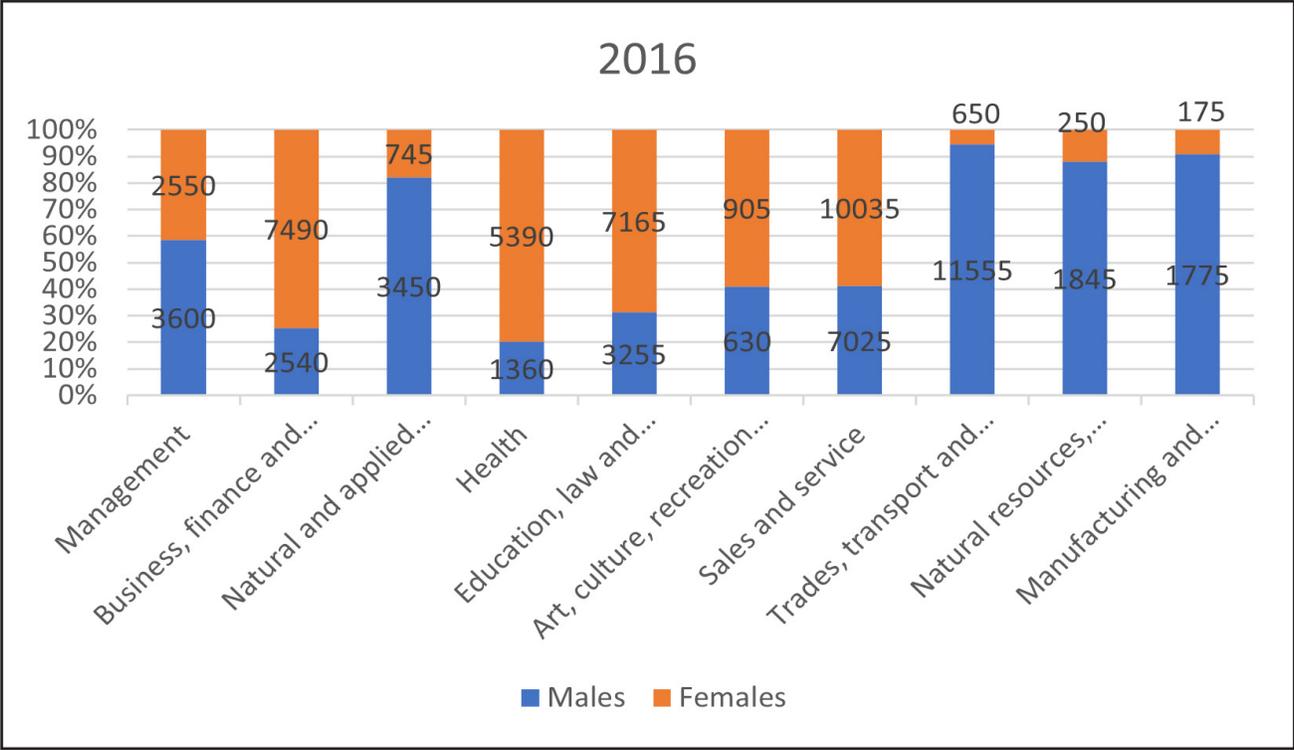
	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct
Women with youngest child under 6	-37.3	-39.8	-42.5	-33.1	-36.8	-37.1	-39.4	-34.1
Men with youngest child under 6	-14.4	-18.2	-20.5	-18	-19.9	-17.1	-14.4	-7.7
Women with youngest child 6-11	-20.6	-25.8	-29.8	-18.7	-19.1	-23.4	-20.3	-17.1
Men with youngest child 6-11	-12.7	-18.7	-21.1	-13.1	-5.9	-3.3	-1.9	-2
Women with no children under 25	-14.5	-21.3	-26.5	-21.8	-17.8	-16.1	-15.7	-16.1

*Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey Custom Tabulation*

There are a couple of caveats to the data. First, parents with young children typically reported a drop in their hours worked in 2018 and 19 as well, however the magnitude of hours lost is much higher in 2020. Women with a child under the age of six typically reported a loss of 20-30 per cent. This indicates yet again that these issues were not birthed by the pandemic, but it certainly exacerbated them. Second, the fact that men’s actual hours tend to be higher mean their percentage of hours lost will inherently be smaller.

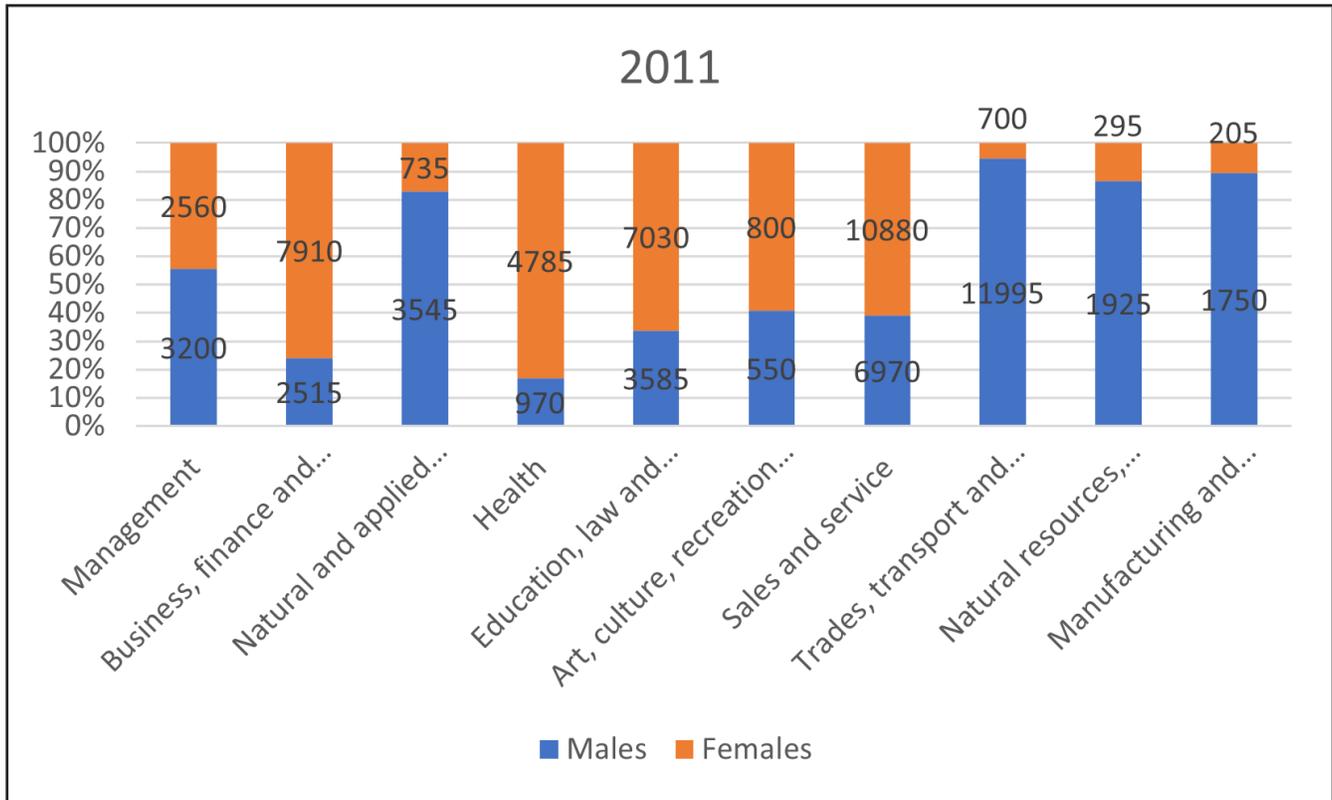
Figures 9 and 10 show the occupations that males and females in the region had during the past two censuses. Management occupations form the only category that is close to an equal split, with many groups containing a 4:1 ratio one way or the other. Health occupations grew by nearly 1,000 positions in the five years, while sales and service jobs declined by roughly 800.

Figure 9: Gender Breakdown of Occupations, NSWPB Region. 2016



Source: Statistics Canada 2016 Census Custom Tabulation

Figure 10: Gender Breakdown of Occupations, NSWPB Region. 2011



Source: Statistics Canada 2011 National Household Survey Custom Tabulation

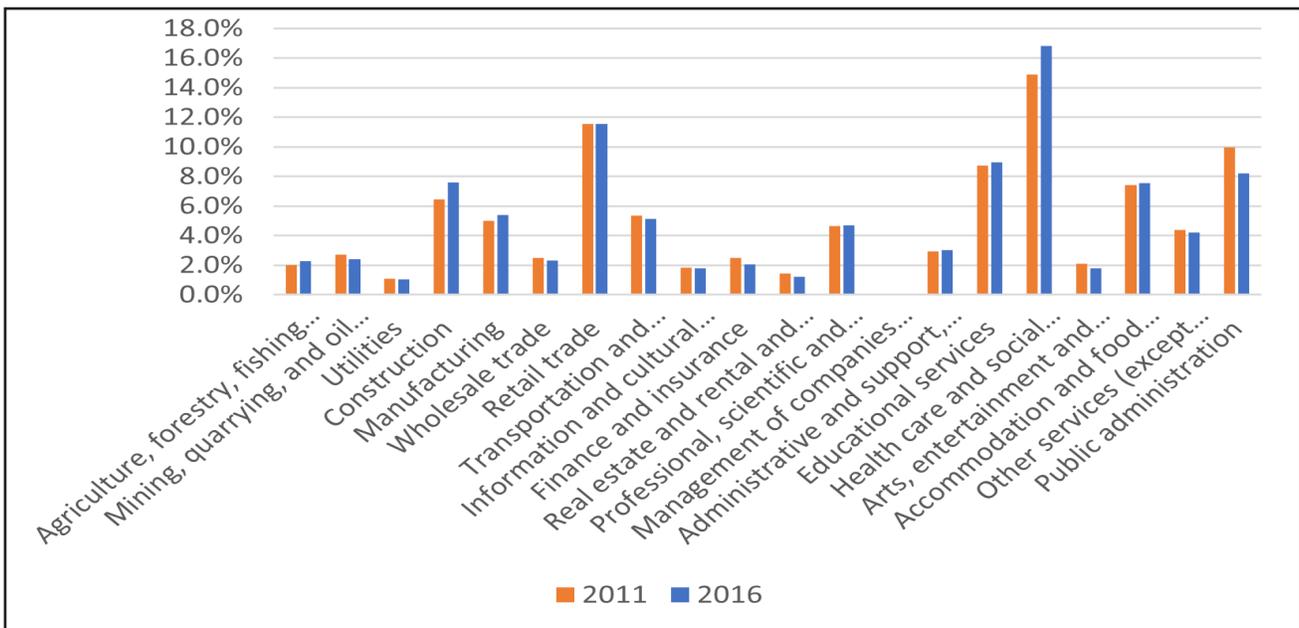
The last three columns could be potential destinations for displaced workers, as there is likely to be massive investments that will create opportunities in these types of occupations. Expected investments in transit across the globe could lead to large orders for the local rail plant, the promised investment in broadband infrastructure, home retrofits, and housing in First Nations are likely to spawn thousands of new trades jobs and shortening supply lines and the demise of just-in-time delivery could lead to growth in transportation and warehousing type occupations. The large number of people, particularly women, that could be displaced from service type jobs represent a potential labour pool for these other occupations that are expected to grow. Navigating the transitions to new jobs may be one of the most important elements to a successful workforce recovery.

Three in ten respondents to NSWPB’s workforce impact survey said they would or might change careers if they lost their job due to COVID-19, while an equal number expected to need more education to replace the jobs they were in. This impending disruption has

sharpened NSWPB’s focus on classifying and measuring in-demand skills in Northwestern Ontario, in order to better target education and training programming. NSWPB’s WorkSCAPE Northwest Career Explorer tool lists in-demand jobs in the region, as well as the skills required for them. Planned enhancements to the tool will highlight opportunities to acquire these skills locally.

Figure 11 tells a similar story to Figure 8, in that there was not much change in the distribution of employees among industries between 2011 and 2016. Of note, 28 per cent of females were working in the health care and social assistance sector in 2016 (which includes things like medical clinics, and dental/chiropractor/optometrist/massage therapy offices). Another 12.8 and 12.6 per cent were working in education and retail, respectively. This means there were more women employed in these three sectors than in the remaining 17 sectors combined. By comparison, the top three industries employing male workers accounted for less than one-third of the total. Canadian businesses in healthcare, education, and retail were among those with the highest risk from COVID-19 (Statistics Canada 2020c), demonstrating yet again the heavy impacts COVID-19 has had, particularly on women.

Figure 11: Employment Share by Sector, North American Industry Classification System, NSWPB Region. 2011 and 2016



Source: Statistics Canada Census Custom Tabulation

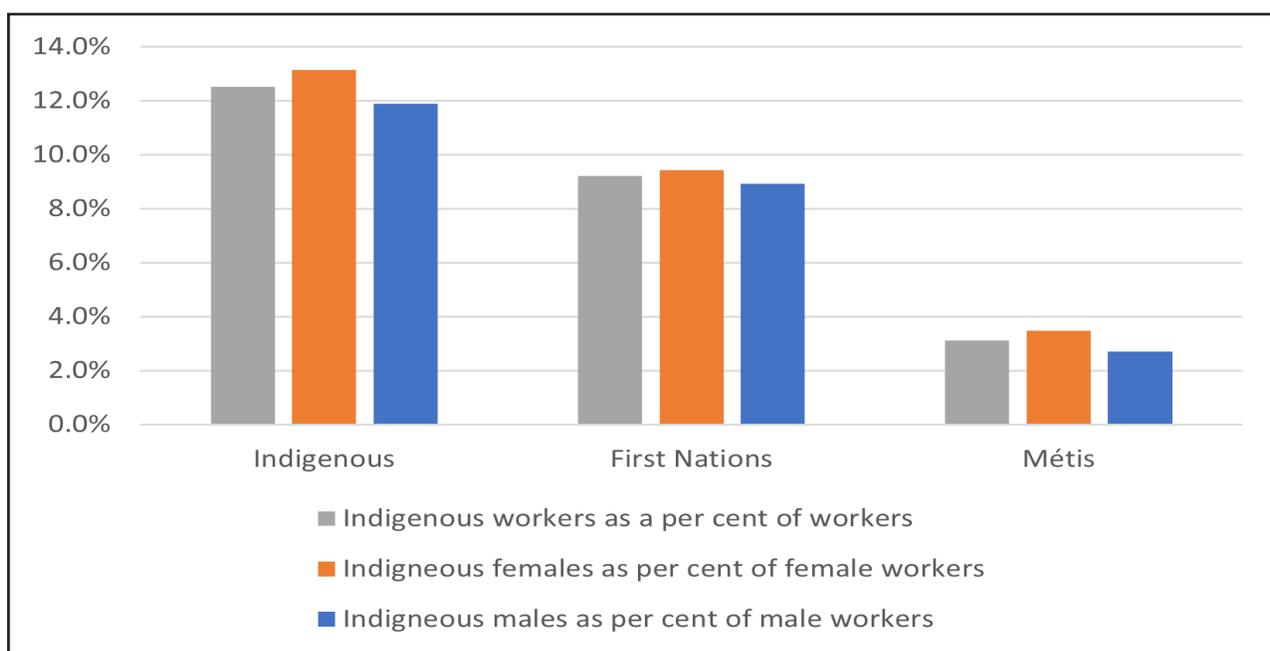
The impact on employment was only one part of the story, arguably a smaller part. Many respondents to NSWPB's workforce impact survey noted a marked increase in the amount of work women had to do in the household, with many stating they were physically and mentally exhausted. These findings reflect broader findings across Canada and other countries and point to the tremendous need to ensure a 'she-covery' that gets women back into the workforce quickly. There is a clear need to ease the burden of care on women, and it cannot only happen outside the home. Increased access to childcare and long-term care, along with a more equitable distribution of these responsibilities between men and women, will go a long way toward unlocking the labour market potential of women.

Working with community partners on this topic will be one of NSWPB's priorities. Data from WorkSCAPE Northwest - NSWPB's recently launched suite of labour market - can help shed light on the types of jobs that women are looking for. This data is publicly available and will be shared with education and training providers. The Planning Board will also continue to pursue efforts to attract more females to sectors where they are typically under-represented, such as the skilled trades. Lastly, NSWPB will work with community partners on the Workforce Recovery Team to pursue opportunities to improve daycare and long-term care in the region, two factors that have been identified as crucial to maximizing the ability of women to participate in the workforce.

Another hugely important - and growing - segment of the workforce is the Indigenous population. Like international students and women, Indigenous peoples face substantial barriers to full and meaningful workforce inclusion. In this case, major obstacles include relatively lower education levels, barriers to work-readiness, and a lack of inclusiveness among some employers. All of these must be addressed as part of reconciliation. One of NSWPB's core priorities will be to work with Indigenous partners to collaboratively develop solutions that will see Indigenous peoples enter and remain in the workforce.

Figure 12 shows that 12.5 per cent of the labour force in the NSWPB region in 2016 was Indigenous, disproportionately low for a group that accounted for about 16.6 per cent of the total population. Among those, 73 per cent were First Nations, 25 per cent were Métis and 1 per cent self-declared multiple Indigenous identities. The chart below also demonstrates that the Indigenous share of the female labour force was higher than for the male cohort.

Figure 12: Indigenous Share of the Labour Force in the NSWPB Region, by Indigenous Identity and Gender, 2015



Source: Statistics Canada 2016 Census Custom Tabulation

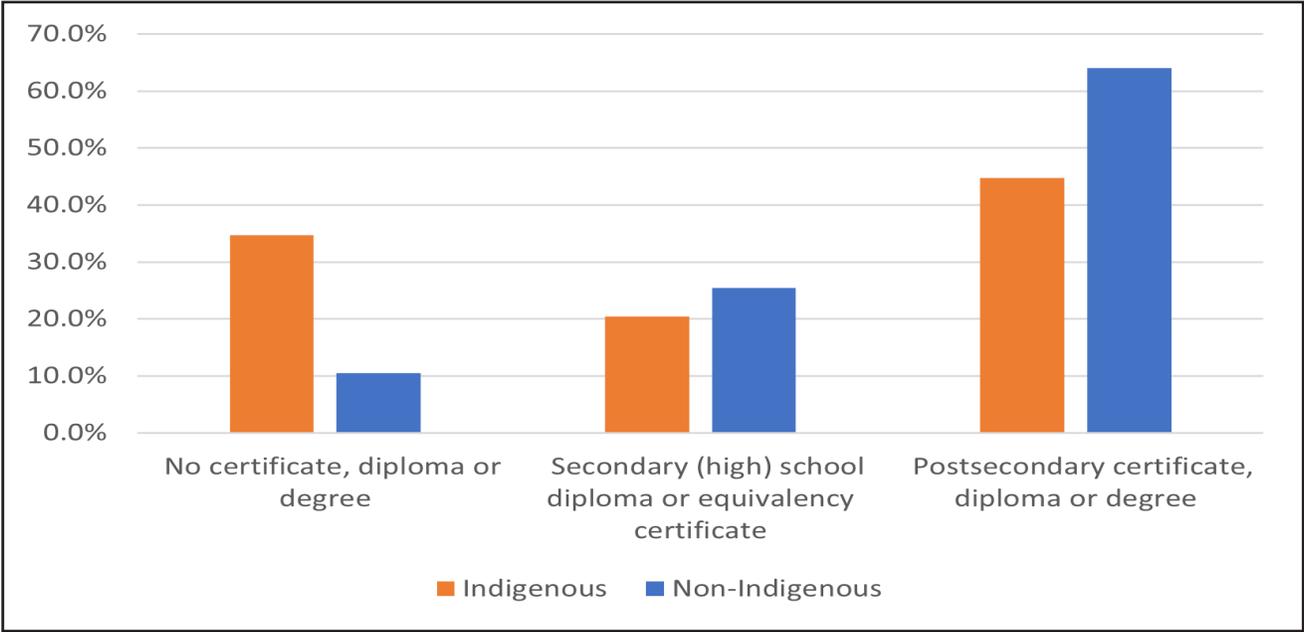
The relative youthfulness and rapid growth rate of Indigenous peoples in the region will make it even more important to improve their labour force outcomes. While 56.5 per cent of the non-Indigenous population worked in 2015, only 40.7 per cent of Indigenous peoples did.<sup>7</sup> Combined with the limited labour force potential of international students, two of the youngest and fastest growing demographics face major barriers to labour force engagement. Unlike with international students, one of the main barriers to Indigenous participation remains relatively low levels of education. This is nothing new, and the urgency with which it needs to be rectified only continues to grow the longer it remains. As Moazzami (2019) argues, the number one priority for the region should be improving Indigenous education and training.

7 Statistics Canada 2016 Census Custom Tabulation

The Mining Readiness Strategy points to the role that the burgeoning mining sector can have in this area. The mining industry is the largest private employer of Indigenous peoples in Canada and with the number of active mines in Northwestern Ontario set to potentially triple in the coming decade, there are ample opportunities to simultaneously address the shortage of skilled workers and jobs for Indigenous peoples in Northwestern Ontario. Some great recent work done by Minodahmun Development once again demonstrates the success that training programs for and by First Nations have in growing Indigenous participation in the labour force. Training programs are certainly one aspect of improving employment outcomes for Indigenous peoples, though it does not remove the need to also address the educational gap in Northwestern Ontario.

Figure 13 shows the comparative levels of highest educational achievement in the Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations aged 25-64 in the NSWPB region in 2016. More than one in three Indigenous peoples has no official education credential, compared to one in nine non-Indigenous people. There was no significant change in the education levels of the entire population from 2011 to 2016. Calls to address these discrepancies are not new, and are only growing in urgency the longer they go unresolved.

Figure 13: Comparative Education Levels of the Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Populations Aged 25-64 in NSWPB Region, 2015



Source: Statistics Canada 2016 Census Custom Tabulation

The pandemic has had a substantial impact on employment among Indigenous peoples. At the worst point in Northwestern Ontario – June 2020 as of the time of writing – the participation rate for Indigenous people dropped to 52.8 per cent (compared to 57.4 per cent among non-Indigenous people) and the employment rate reached a three-year low of 45.2 per cent (51.6 per cent among non-Indigenous).<sup>8</sup>

The data from WorkSCAPE Northwest can once again be of help by identifying in-demand jobs and listing the skills required for them. NSWPB will continue to work with Indigenous Skills and Employment Training providers, communities, employment services, and literacy and basic skills providers to get accurate and timely information on the skills levels and gaps in Indigenous communities. Where appropriate, and where permission has been granted, this information will be shared with local school boards and higher education institutes to enable them to continue delivering culturally appropriate and relevant curricula. NSWPB will continually seek out feedback on ways to make WorkSCAPE Northwest's data and functionality better suited to the needs of Indigenous communities, peoples, and partners.

At the same time, programs that NSWPB delivers like the Northwest Connector and Baakaakonaanan Ishkwaandemonan (BI) will continue to link local Indigenous peoples with job opportunities. The Connector program will have an intake stream dedicated to Indigenous peoples, while BI promotes existing resources for employers that want to hire Indigenous job seekers, and to celebrate the efforts of employers that make an effort to hire Indigenous workers. Lastly, NSWPB will continue developing resources that foster cultural inclusivity in the workplace, such as the 2018 Guide to Developing Indigenous Inclusion Policies publication and the Changing the Dialogue: Indigenous Cultural Awareness Training Program that the planning board initiated, as well as supporting efforts by community partners, such as Wake the Giant.

The success of the rebuild will hinge, to a great extent, on how well it integrates newcomers, women, and Indigenous peoples into the labour force. They tend to be underrepresented for a variety of reasons, sometimes overlapping, sometimes distinct. Addressing these reasons will be a top priority for NSWPB over the coming years.

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8 Author's calculations from Labour Force Survey custom data tabulation

# Employer Characteristics



A thriving Northwestern Ontario will depend on the vitality of the business community. Unsurprisingly, the improvement in the labour force statistics coincided with growth in the number of businesses in the region. While traditional pillar industries such as mining, forestry, and manufacturing are viewed as bedrock industries for the region, the reality is that they do not provide as much employment as other sectors. However, jobs in these sectors tend to pay well. These workers' disposable income, along with the significant contribution large industries make to local tax bases, can often spur the development of other businesses.

## **ACTION PLAN ITEM: GOAL AND 4 NSWPB ACTIONS:**

**Goal: A robust and geographically distributed business sector that emerges from COVID-19 more resilient and diverse, with the tools to meet their skills gaps. Specifically, growth in the total number of businesses as well as key industries.**

### **NSWPB actions**

- 1. Generate, collect, analyze, and share data and information on the regional business sector including employment and business counts by sector, historical hiring demand, and industry share of the local labour force to enable evidence informed decisions regarding investment and growth opportunities.**
- 2. Conduct workforce and industry projections, such as the Mining and Forestry Sector Timelines to provide empirical data on the demand for labour in economic sectors that are vital to Northwestern Ontario's continued prosperity.**
- 3. Engage with employers, workers, education institutes, industry groups and associations and other partners through the WRT, Subject Matter Working Groups, roundtables, and other ventures to understand local needs, share resources, identify growing and at-risk sectors, and develop plans that create work opportunities.**
- 4. Deliver and support programming such as WorkSCAPE Northwest and employer consultations to make timely and relevant labour market information accessible to community partners.**

The number of employers in the district grew from 2017 to 2019 before waning slightly in 2020, as shown in Table 8. Note that these counts do not include businesses that were forced to close as a result of COVID-19. Formally closing a business can take months, meaning some businesses that were in the process of closing were still counted as being operational.

There were more businesses of nearly all sizes in 2020 compared to 2017. Three years of strong growth in businesses with fewer than five employees ended in 2020 and the group dropped to a four-year low. On the other hand, there were heartening increases in the number of employers with more than 10 employees. Especially notable, there were 48 more businesses with 10-99 workers in 2020 than there were in 2017. Nearly three out of every five businesses in the region had no employees, roughly 10 percentage points below the provincial rate. Both rates are virtually unchanged from 2017.

**Table 8: Counts of Employers by the Number of Employees, June 2017-2020**

Year	0	1-4	5-9	10-19	20-49	50-99	100-199	200-499	500+	Total
2017	6404	2019	951	726	442	151	64	19	13	10789
2018	6595	2011	924	758	445	148	65	21	12	10979
2019	6621	2052	940	751	460	159	66	22	14	11085
2020	6439	1986	925	740	465	162	65	21	13	10816
2017-2020 Difference	35	-33	-26	14	23	11	1	2	0	27
2017-2020 Percent Change	0.5%	-1.6%	-2.7%	1.9%	5.2%	7.3%	1.6%	10.5%	0%	0.3%

*Source: Statistics Canada Canadian Business Counts June 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020*

Of course, COVID-19 and the related mitigation measures ravaged businesses across the country, and Northwestern Ontario is no different. Statistics Canada estimates that 208 businesses in the Thunder Bay CMA closed in April 2020, nearly two and a half times more than the year prior; Likewise, they estimate that the number of active businesses declined from 2,548 in February 2020 to 2,153 in July – a 16 per cent drop (Statistics Canada 2020d). Unfortunately, the small sample size means there is no data on individual industries. NSWPB has carried out regular business impact surveys with Northern Policy Institute, Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce, and Thunder Bay Community Economic Development Commission to close this data gap.

The survey has a small, non-representative sample, meaning that data should be used with caution, however the surveys noted severe losses along with growing optimism – at least prior to the autumn. More than one-third of respondents said they lost half their expected revenue and three of five said they had lost a quarter. On the other hand, one in five respondents to the August survey said the pandemic had a positive impact on their revenue. Businesses listed several innovations and adaptations that allowed them to remain open, including delivering new services or creating new products (i.e., hand sanitizer, ventilator parts, masks) or the same services in new ways (online ordering, curbside pickup, restaurant patios). 10 per cent of respondents said they re-tooled to manufacture in-demand supplies.<sup>9</sup> Still, roughly one in five respondents said that the pandemic could put them out of business, and that was prior to the winter and potential second wave.

NSWPB will continue to work with community partners to understand the impact of COVID-19 on local businesses, and relay that information to local, provincial, and national decision-makers. Efforts will also ramp up to identify the skills gap that employers face and ensure locals can receive the requisite education and training, while simultaneously attracting newcomers with the necessary skills.

WorkSCAPE Northwest once again offers tools that could be of use. The Sector Map categorizes employers by their NAICS code, which employers can use to identify economic clusters or potential upstream or downstream business partners. The Talent Map can guide employers to parts of Canada and six other countries that have a high proportion of workers in the field they are looking for. Lastly, the Job Demand report will shed light on what jobs employers are posting, which can guide programs such as the Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot and the Northwest Connector.

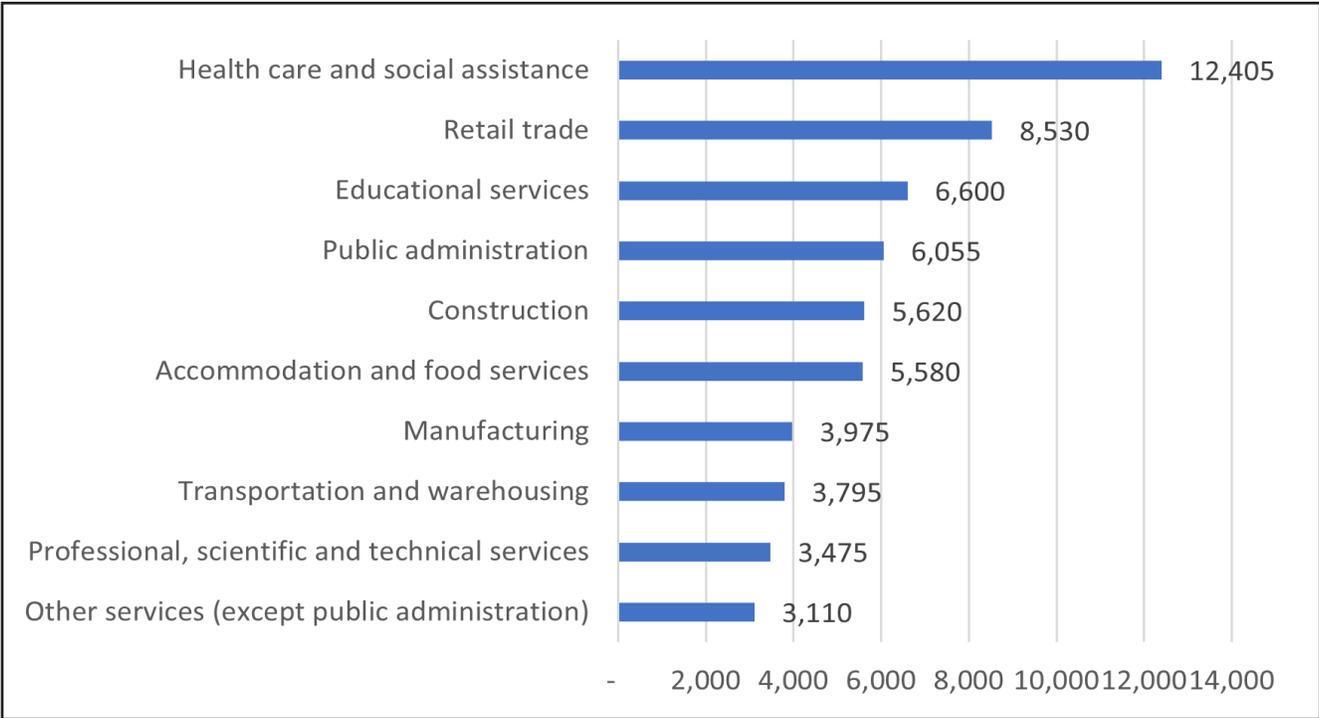
At the same time, NSWPB will engage with businesses and community partners to identify potential growth sectors. The types of employers operating in Northwestern Ontario in 2023 is likely to be markedly different from what has historically been the case.

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<sup>9</sup> Author's calculations based on the series published by Northern Policy Institute, available at [www.northern-policy.ca](http://www.northern-policy.ca)

Figure 14 shows the top-10 industries in the region, based on the number of employees. Given the stability in employment by NOC and NAICS, the below figures are unlikely to have changed pre-pandemic, but there could be major disruptions over the coming years. For example, manufacturing could rise if the local railcar plant secures contracts for multiple transit trains; mining seems poised for significant employment growth as upwards of 15 new mines come online; construction could also grow if promised investments in rural broadband and other infrastructure materialize; transportation and warehousing could potentially also be on the rise, given the push to shorten supply chains and move away from just-in-time delivery. On the other hand, the food and accommodation sector has been hit immensely hard by the pandemic, while retail trade appears to be on the cusp of an automation revolution that could force workers to shift to other jobs.

*Figure 14: Top-10 NAICS Industries by Number of Employees in the NSWPB Region, 2015*



*Source: Statistics Canada 2016 Census Custom Tabulation*

Table 9 shows the number of businesses in the ten largest industry sectors, arranged by their share of all businesses. These ten industries account for over 61 per cent of businesses in the Thunder Bay District. The final column shows where each industry ranks in the province as a whole, for comparative purposes. The order is rearranged but the top-10 is almost entirely intact. Unsurprisingly, the distribution of businesses across sectors in the Thunder Bay District since the last CLMP in 2018 has seen only minor changes.

*Table 9: Number of Businesses by 3 Digit NAICS, Thunder Bay District June 2020*

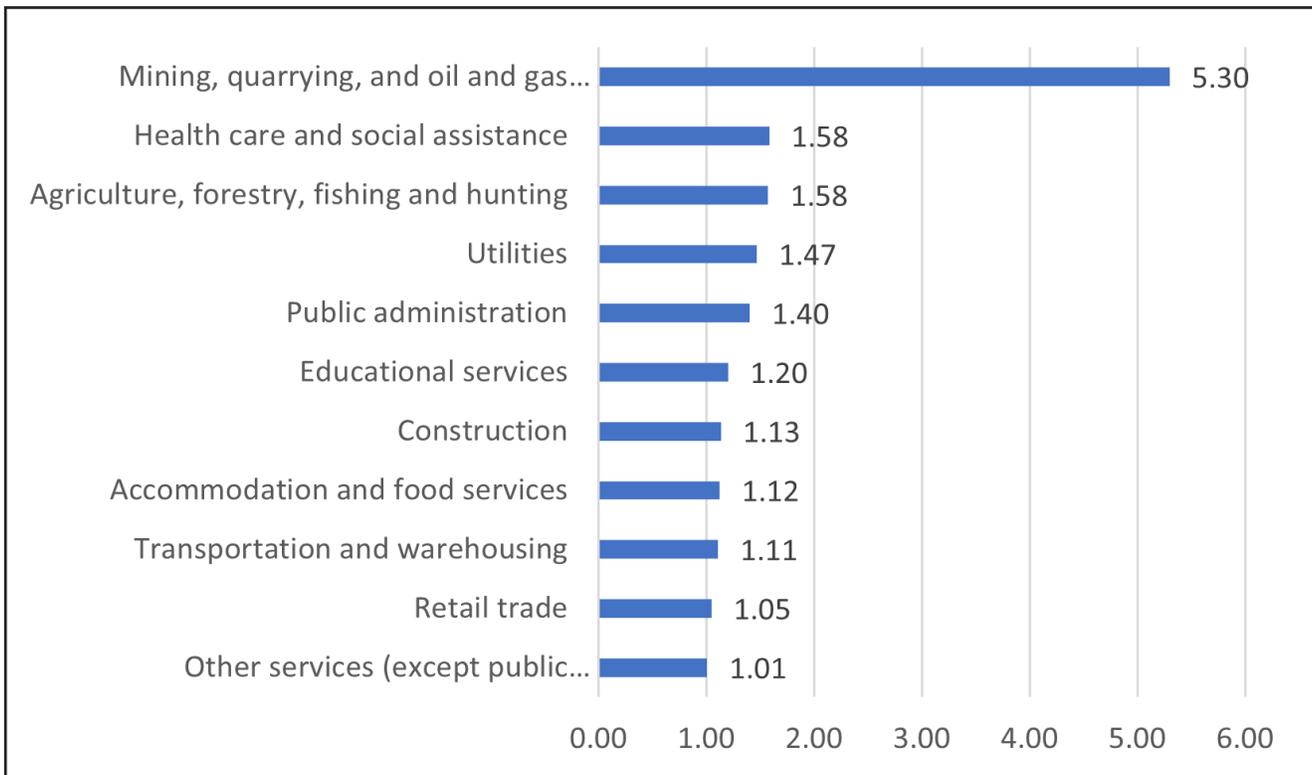
<b>3-Digit NAICS</b>	<b>Number of Business</b>	<b>Percent Distribution</b>	<b>2017 NSWPB Rank</b>	<b>2020 Ontario Rank</b>
531 - Real Estate	1,907	19.21	1	1
621 - Ambulatory Health Care Services	839	8.45	3	4
541 - Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	801	8.07	2	2
238 - Specialty Trade Contractors	543	5.47	4	3
523 - Securities, Commodity Contracts, and Other Financial Investment and Related Activities	471	4.74	5	5
813 - Religious, Grant-Making, Civic, and Professional and Similar Organizations	337	3.39	7	10
722 - Food Services and Drinking Places	323	3.25	6	9
561 - Administrative and Support Services	316	3.18	9	6
236 - Construction of Buildings	298	3.00	8	8
811 - Repair and Maintenance	276	2.78	10	13

*Source: Data provided by MLTSD*

While some of these industries employ the largest number of workers, their share of local employment is relatively low compared to provincial averages. Figure 15 shows those industries with a location quotient equal to, or greater than the province. The location quotient compares the share of each industry's job totals in the local economy to that

industry’s share of the provincial total. A value of one means the two are equal, anything above one means that industry represents a larger share of the local economy than the provincial one, and vice versa. Location quotients are used to identify areas of both specialization and vulnerability in local economies.

**Figure 15: Location Quotient of Industries in NSWPB Region with Employment Concentration Equal to or Greater than Ontario, 2015**



*Source: Statistics Canada 2016 Census Custom Tabulation*

For example, professional, scientific, and technical services and manufacturing employ the seventh and ninth most people in NSWPB’s region, but their share of the local workforce is just over half what it is across the province. On the other hand, mining and forestry related activities employ the twelfth and fourteenth most people in the region, respectively, but have relatively high concentrations in the local economy. Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction’s share of the local economy is over five times more concentrated than in the provincial economy. There is certainly opportunity in having a strong concentration of jobs in a single sector, but also potential vulnerability, especially when it is prone to boom-and-bust cycles.

Participants in the community discussions repeatedly raised the importance of a diversified regional economy. There is certainly a need to continue expanding industries such as forestry, mining, and tourism, but communities throughout the northwest can testify to the hardships that emerge when one of those industries faces a severe downturn.

NSWPB will use this information on local business and labour force characteristics to work alongside local employment, Indigenous Skills and Employment Training, and literacy and basic skills providers to create responsive and relevant programming that helps people find and keep work in the NSWPB region.

There is no doubt that how well small and medium businesses in the region recover from COVID-19 will play a deciding role in the region's success over the next three years. Nearly 80 per cent of the businesses in the region have fewer than five employees and these small enterprises have been hit particularly hard by the pandemic. Retaining and rebuilding a resilient and diverse business sector will be crucial and that remains a core tenet of the planning board's strategy. Efforts to attract and retain talent, to foster greater participation, eliminate barriers, and promote work readiness and cultural inclusion are all geared at improving the operating environment for businesses in Northwestern Ontario. The pandemic will not change that. NSWPB will continue to work with community partners to learn the supports that businesses need and convey those needs to government so that local businesses emerge poised to thrive.

# Employment Ontario Data Review<sup>10</sup>



<sup>10</sup> Unless otherwise stated, data in this section is from the data provided by MLTSD.

*Marathon Lookout, photo courtesy of the Township of Marathon*

Data provided by the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development (MLTSD) sheds light on how Employment Ontario's (EO) six programs are being used in the NSWPB area, the northern region, and the province as a whole. Comparisons to previous years and to other territories highlight the changes over time as well as disparities from the provincial rates, which will help identify issue areas to focus on. These data were validated through discussions with local EO service providers. While many noted, during the session and or during conversations with the Workforce Recovery Team, the challenges presented by COVID-19, there was also a sense of optimism that the shift to more digital services could allow some providers to service even more clients. The caveat, of course, is that many people in the region cannot access services online, due to a lack of broadband infrastructure in their community and/or a lack of access to wi-fi enabled hardware. Senior levels of government have promised to tackle the infrastructure issue, while NSWPB will continue to partner on initiatives such as the Thunder Bay Public Library's *Help Bridge the Digital Divide* initiative. This project loans people technology that they themselves could not afford to own but is necessary to access wi-fi and digital services, including EO programming.

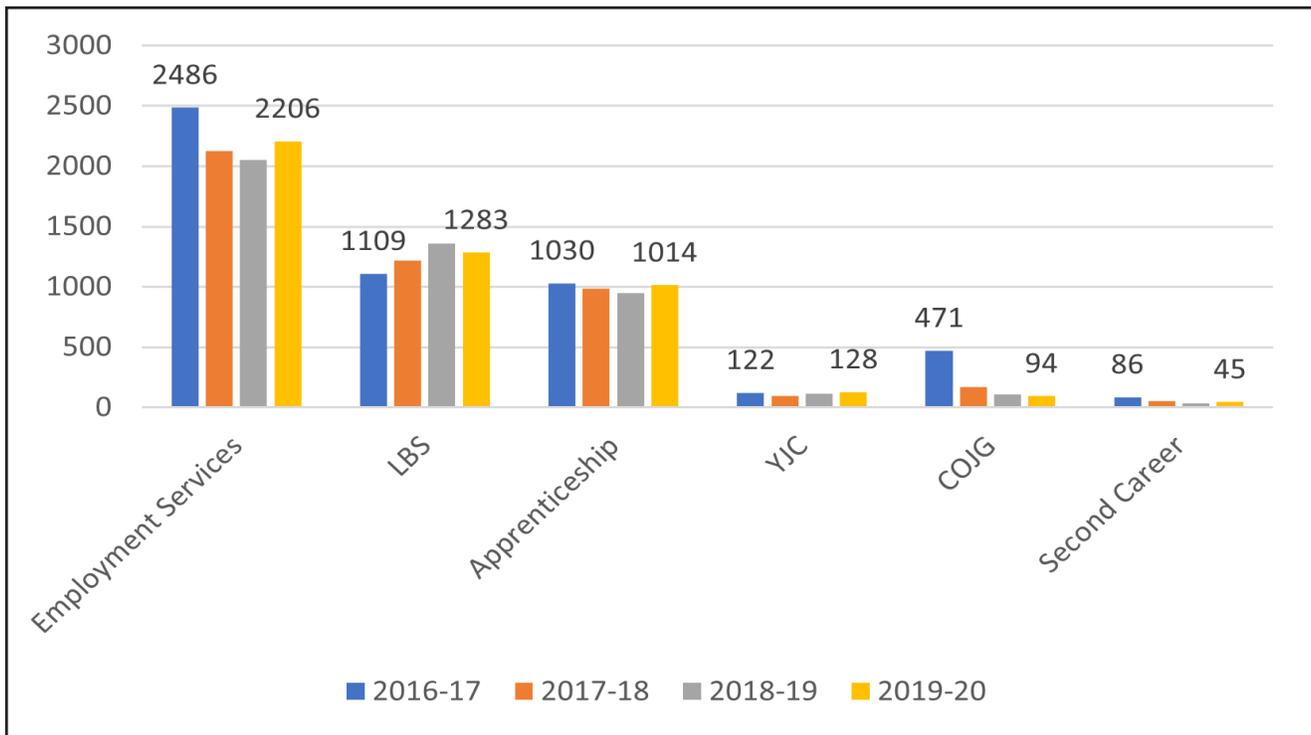
The EO programs are Apprenticeships; the Canada-Ontario Job Grant (COJG); Employment Assistance (EA); Employment Services (ES); Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS); Second Career (SC); and Youth Job Connection (YJC). Data for EA, SC, and YJC were unreliable and/or suppressed due to small sample sizes, and there was limited data on COJG, so the focus is primarily on Apprenticeships, ES, and LBS. These three programs accounted for 94.4 per cent of all clients in the NSWPB region in 2019-20.



*Neebing Lookout, photo taken by Courtney Lanthier, courtesy of the Municipality of Neebing*

Figure 16 shows the number of clients in each program over the past three years. Every program except for LBS and YJC had fewer clients in 2019-20 than 2016-17, a trend that is reflected across the northern region and Ontario more generally. NSWPB's decreases have been more dramatic, however. The total client load in the NSWPB region shrank 10.1 per cent since 2016-17, a much larger change than the 7.5 per cent decline in the north, and two per cent drop across Ontario. Fiscal years 2016-17 to 2017-18 tended to see the most dramatic drops, with most programs holding fairly steady the next year before climbing in 2019-20.

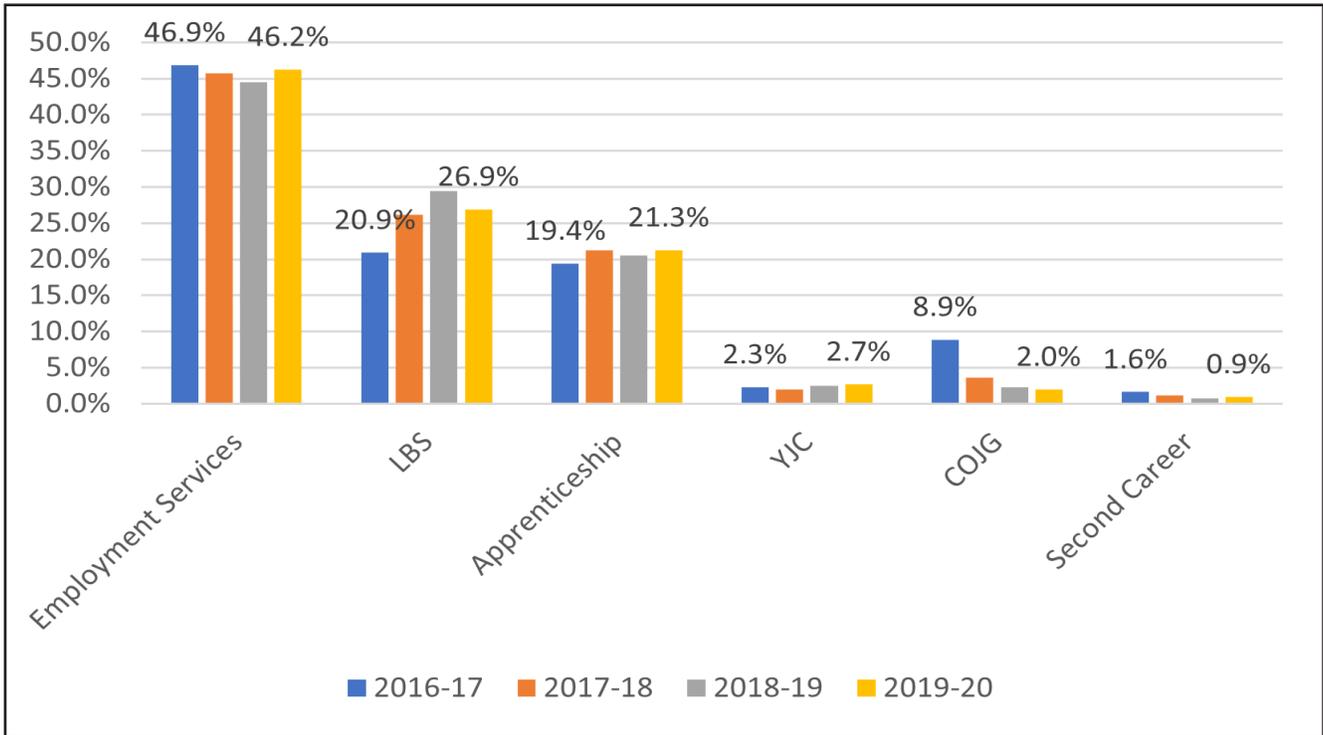
Figure 16: Number of Clients in EO Programs in NSWPB Region 2016-2020



One result of the greater decreases in the NSWPB region is that its share of the provincial client load is declining. In 2014-15, roughly 1.6 per cent of all EO clients were in the NSWPB region, a number that has gradually declined to about 1.37 per cent. The Thunder Bay District possesses roughly one per cent of the provincial population, so it appears that local EO programs are attracting slightly more than their share, at least based on demographics. All told, the province had 7,209 fewer EO clients in 2019-20 than three years prior, whereas NSWPB's client load shrank by 534. In other words, 7.4 per cent of the net provincial decrease came from within NSWPB's area.

Figure 17 breaks down the client base by the program with which they are associated. While ES retains the heaviest load, LBS has increased by six points, and now has more than one quarter of all clients. The largest relative decline was COJG, which shed over 350 clients to become the second smallest EO program in the area.

Figure 17: Proportion of Client Enrolment by EO Program in NSWPB Region, 2016-2020



## EMPLOYMENT SERVICES:

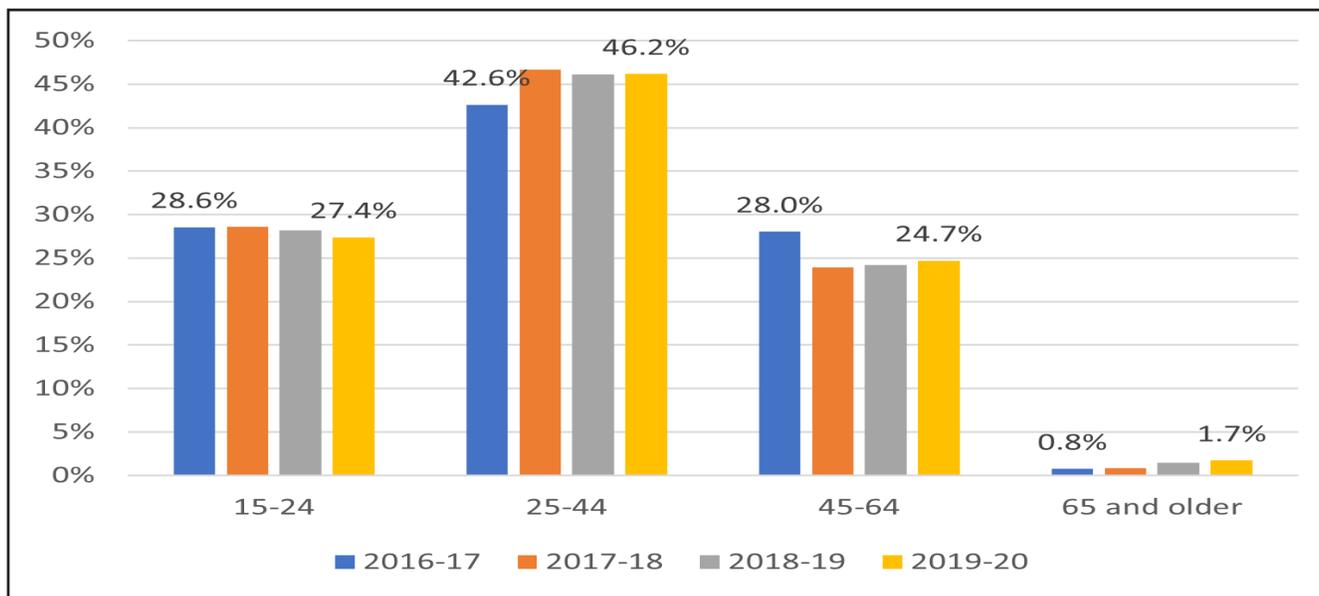
ES provides a range of resources to help individuals find work and employers find the labour they need. It tends to be the most subscribed EO program in the NSWPB area, across the north, and in Ontario more generally. It is worth noting that the data guide that MLTSD attaches to the data states that apprenticeship, LBS, and SC data are often input as ES data if a client pursues any of those avenues as part of the ES program, which partially explains the high totals.

The number of clients accessing ES in the NSWPB area decreased by 431 (14.7 per cent) from 2016-17 to 2018-19 before rebounding to 2,206 in the past year. The result is 280 fewer clients accessing ES services in the region. This 11.3 per cent decrease is well out of line with the larger comparators. The northern region dropped 1.6 per cent, while the entire province shed 3.6 per cent of its ES clients. Interestingly, the provincial totals barely shrank from 2016-17 to 2018-19, hovering around roughly 190,000 for three years before dropping by over 6,000 in 2019-20. In other words, while the client load in NSWPB region was shrinking, the province's was staying level; when NSWPB's numbers began growing again, Ontario's dropped.

Across Ontario, the ES client load shrank by 6,936 since 2016-17, meaning the NSWPB region was responsible for four per cent of the net provincial decrease. The dramatic improvement in labour force statistics in the NSWPB region since 2015 may be largely responsible for this decline. Regardless of the reason, local ES clients now represent about 1.2 per cent of the provincial total, a number almost perfectly aligned with the region's share of the population.

As the client load has decreased, it has also grown younger. The last community labour market plan identified that the 25-44 age cohort was growing as a share of the total, and this trend has continued, as shown in Figure 18.

Figure 18: Age Cohorts as a Share of ES Client Load in NSWPB Region, 2016-2020



Despite shrinking by 42 clients, this cohort climbed 3.6 percentage points to roughly 46 per cent of all ES users. This finding was in line with the EO providers that attended the data discussions. The youngest cohort – those aged 15-24 – stayed fairly constant, while those 45-64 dropped more than three points. The only age group that grew in absolute terms was both the oldest and the smallest, those 65 and over. It is worth noting that the number of employed 25-44-year-olds in the Thunder Bay CMA dropped more than 10 per cent from February to October, the largest change for any age group (Statistics Canada 2020b). This could herald more growth in this age bracket accessing ES, if these workers require assistance returning to work. Curiously, the number of employed people aged 45-64 grew marginally from February to October, while employment among those aged 55-64 grew nearly 17 per cent.



*Red Rock Lookout, photo taken by Ashley Davis, courtesy of the Township of Red Rock*

Figure 19 shows that the NSWPB client load is predominantly male, in contrast to the virtually equal distribution between males and females at the provincial level. This is curious considering that females have lower participation and employment rates than their male counterparts, and it may be worth examining why females are not accessing ES at the same rate as elsewhere. Discussions with local providers came up with some theories but no definite answers.

The daycare related barriers that COVID-19 amplified reared their heads again. One possible factor is that most, if not all, local daycares do not operate outside of typical business hours. If a parent needs daycare during evening or weekend shifts, their already limited options become virtually non-existent. Further potential barriers include the perception that entry-level jobs that local women and girls tend to be interested in pursuing are often low-wage and paying for daycare can be more than a worker earns in her shift. Another possibility was a lack of awareness of ES programs among women and there was some discussion of conducting more targeted marketing and outreach to women to encourage greater engagement with ES. The heavily skewed gender distribution in the NSWPB region is nothing new, in fact it is almost identical to what it was each of the past years. This is one of the few facets of the client base that has remained unchanged.

Figure 19: Gender Distribution of ES Clients in NSWPB Region, Northern Ontario, and Ontario, 2019-2020

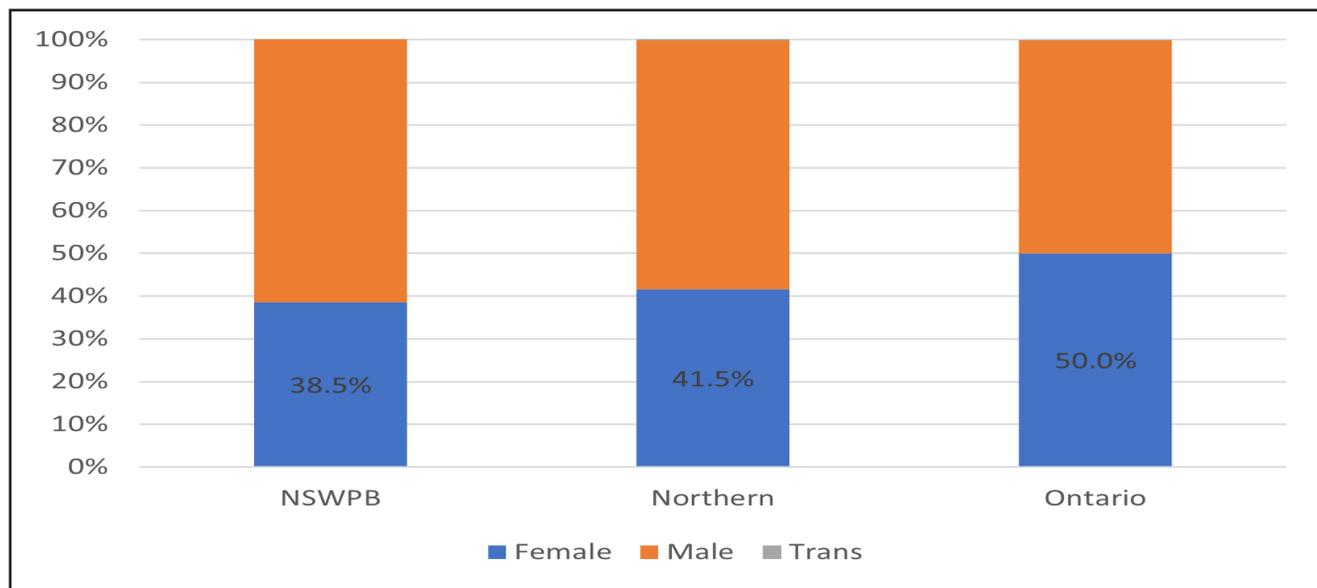
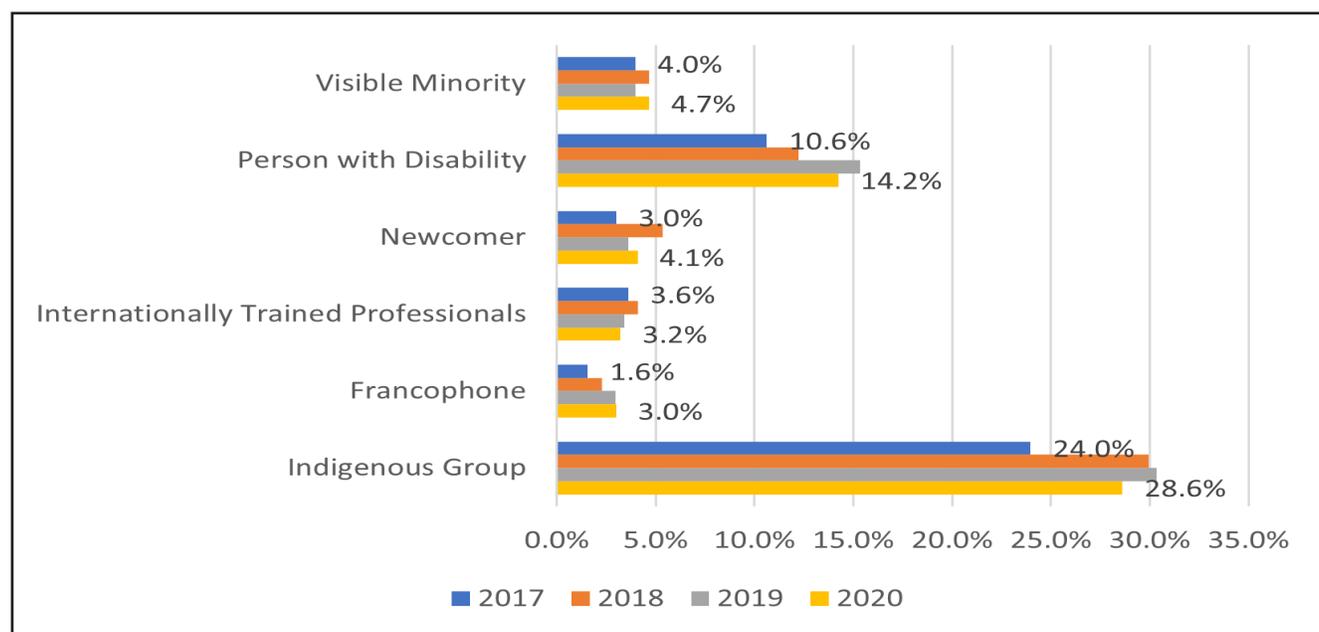


Figure 20 demonstrates that a large and growing majority of ES clients self-identify as belonging to a designated group. 46.8 per cent of all clients fell into one of these categories

in 2016-17, a number that jumped to at least 57 per cent each of the next three years. However, those who do not associate with any designated group remained the largest individual cohort, at just over 42 per cent of all ES clients. It is not clear to what extent the change is due to people choosing to self-identify more often versus individuals in these designated groups actually making greater use of these services. Conversations with service providers suggest that they have spent more time training case workers and are making an enhanced effort to build up a trusting personal relationship with clients. This was posited as a reason that people may be more comfortable self-identifying as belonging to a designated group.

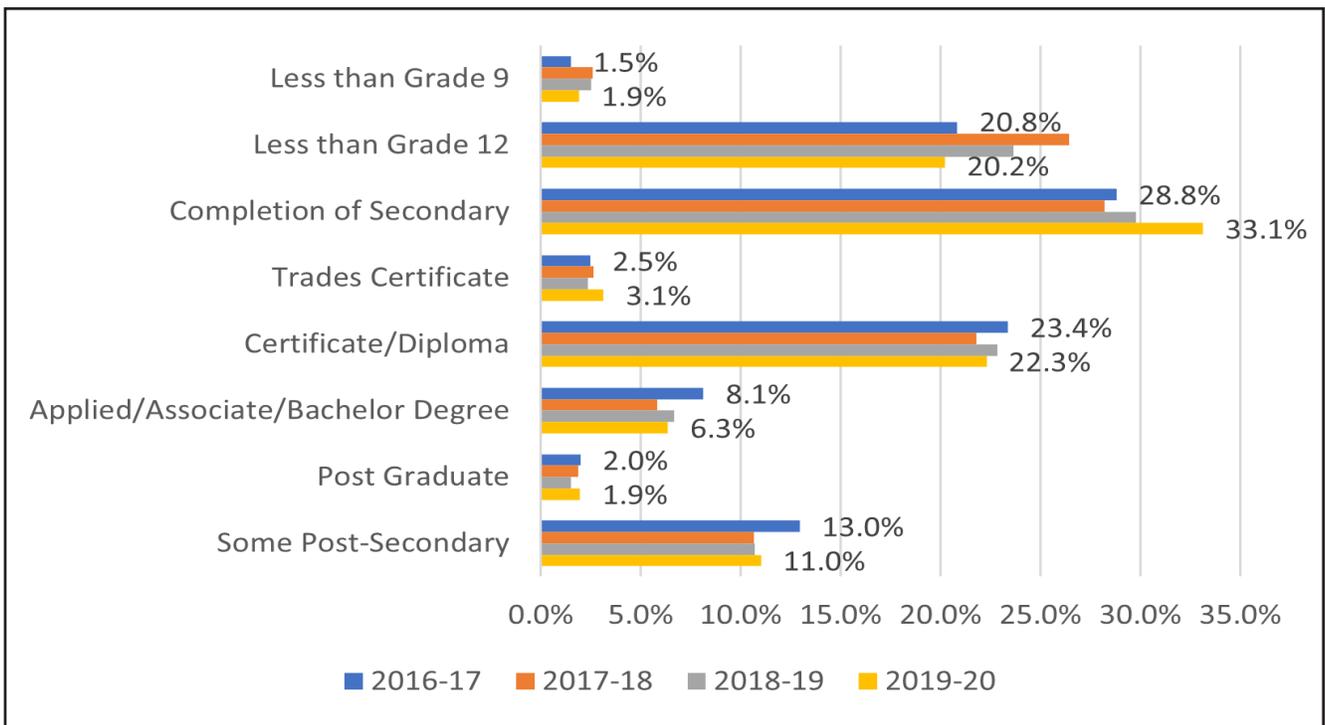
Figure 20: Proportion of ES Clients in NSWPB Region by Designated Group, 2016-2020



Two things are clear, however: first, there is a growing need for services tailored to these designated groups; and second, the area has a significant share of the province's Indigenous client base. Eight per cent of Ontario's Indigenous ES clients hailed from the NSWPB region, which held roughly 6.5 per cent of the province's Indigenous peoples as of the 2016 census. This is an important factor for both reconciliation efforts and the COVID-19 recovery. Service providers acknowledged the importance of delivering culturally relevant services that produce positive outcomes for Indigenous peoples. The pandemic has been more damaging to Indigenous employment than non-Indigenous people and the enduring large gap in employment outcomes very obviously needs to be addressed. ES providers can play a key role in that effort by prioritizing the delivery of programming that meets the needs of Indigenous clients.

Another emerging trend is that people with lower educational achievement are becoming a larger share of the client load, as outlined in Figure 21. While virtually all groups are shrinking, the share of those with some sort of post-secondary education – including an incomplete program or apprenticeship training – shrank much more rapidly than those with a high school diploma or less. The latter group was 51 per cent of the total in 2016-17, then jumped to 57.2 per cent the next year, and settled back to 55 per cent in 2019-20. These values diverge greatly from the province’s, which have been between 40.7 and 40.9 per cent the past three years. The gap might be a result of the NSWPB population generally having less education compared to Ontario as a whole.

Figure 21: Education Credentials of ES Clients in NSWPB Region, 2016-2020



Clearly, the client base has evolved since 2016, though what impact these changes are having on outcomes is unclear.

Figure 22: Outcomes of ES Clients in NSWPB Region, 2016-2020

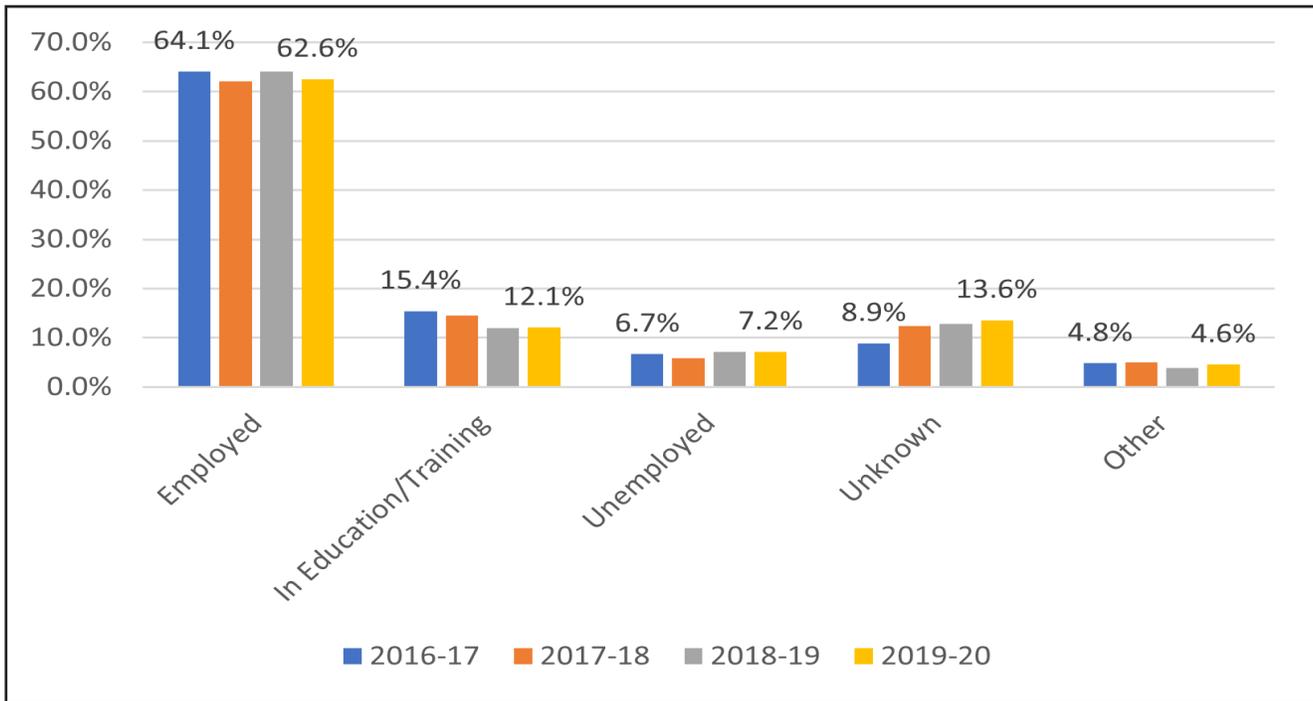


Figure 22 shows that the share of clients that are employed or in education or training dropped, while there was a jump in the number of unknown results. Roughly three out of every four clients were either employed or in education after utilizing ES, which is about five percentage points lower than the rates for the northern region and the province. The difference is almost entirely the result of lower employed outcomes in the NSWPB region. Meanwhile, the NSWPB’s four-year average unemployment rate was better than the province’s, despite having a slightly worse rate in 2018-19. The main difference from 2016-17 is the relatively high number of unknown results in the NSWPB region.

ES providers stated a few reasons that may explain why unknown outcomes tend to be higher in the NSWPB region. First, there are a number of clients that do not have access to cellular or internet service in their home community, making it difficult to contact them. Another is that many lack access to phones or computers and/or have unstable housing, meaning their contact info is unreliable and prone to change quickly. Lastly, the providers lack the capacity to perform endless follow-ups, especially if their client is in a community far from the ES provider’s office. They have gotten creative by using social media or other non-traditional avenues to try and contact clients, with limited success. These barriers reinforce the intense need to improve broadband connectivity in the region, as the lack

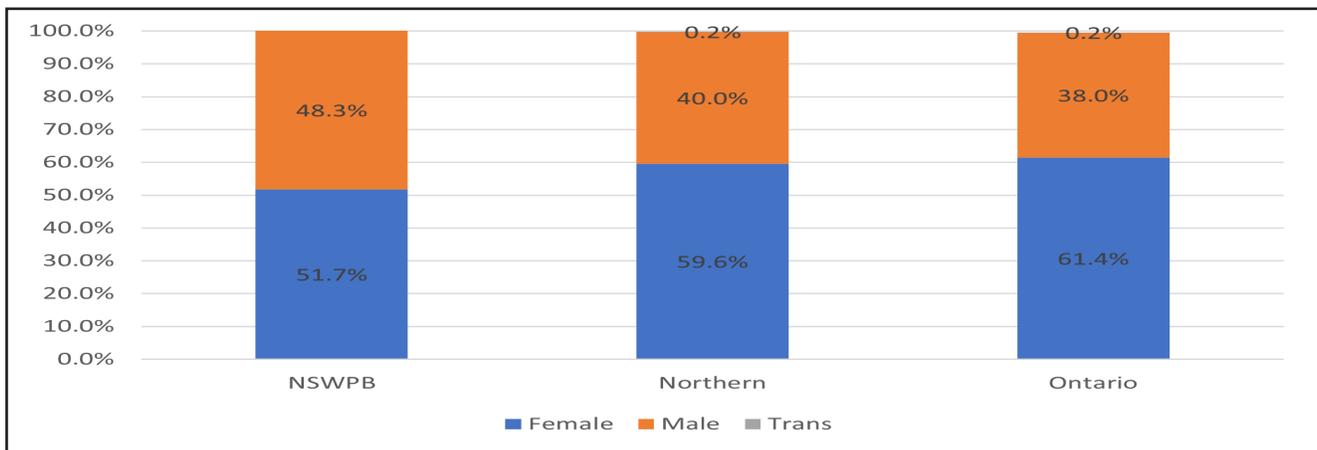
of it is a major barrier in myriad aspects of people’s lives, as well as in service delivery. Improving the availability, affordability, and accessibility of broadband in the region could have an incredible positive impact on the ability of the population to find and keep work and for ES providers to be more efficient and effective in their work.

## LITERACY AND BASIC SKILLS:

LBS programs help adults improve their literacy, numeracy, communication, interpersonal, and/or digital skills in order to achieve their goals. This was one of two EO programs in the NSWPB geography to have a larger client base in 2019-20 than in 2016-17. The number of clients increased by 107 (9.6 per cent) from 2016-17 to 2017-18, and another 145 (11.9 per cent) the following year before dropping 78 (-5.7 per cent). That equates to 174 more clients over three years, a 13.6 per cent increase that dwarfs the 2.1 per cent growth across Northern Ontario and is just ahead of the 12.3 per cent increase that the province experienced. As a result, NSWPB clients now comprise 3.1 per cent of the Ontario total, in a region that holds only about one per cent of the population.<sup>11</sup>

The NSWPB region again defies the gender distribution of the north and the province. Local LBS users were nearly equally divided between males and females in 2018-19, as Figure 23 shows. This is in rather stark contrast to the larger geographies, which have a roughly 3:2 female to male ratio. Not only that, but the male share is increasing locally, while it is decreasing overall. The local proportion of males climbed 1.5 points, while the provincial rate declined by 1.1 points. The reasons behind these discrepancies may warrant further investigation.

Figure 23: Gender Distribution of LBS Clients in NSWPB Region, Northern Ontario, and Ontario, 2019-2020

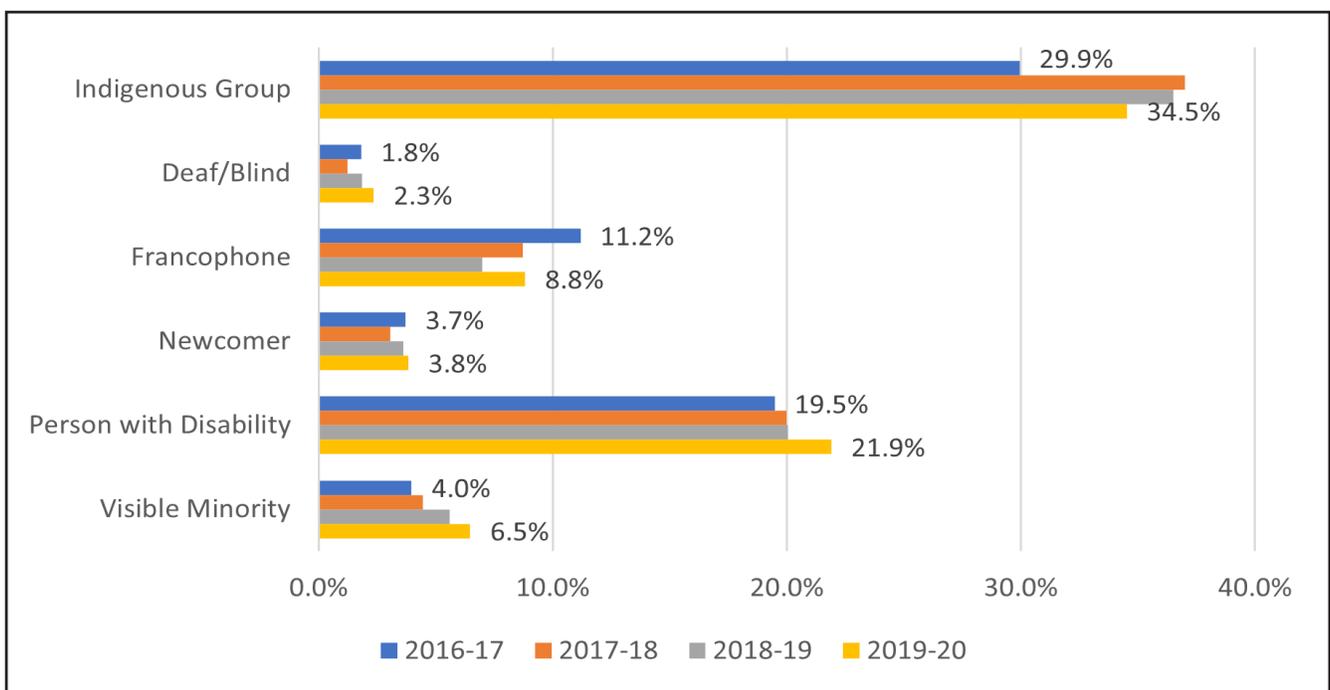


<sup>11</sup> This calculation excludes E-Channel learners, as the data does not reveal from where in the province they accessed LBS services. With E-Channel learners included, the value is 2.6 per cent.

Regardless, the overwhelming majority of learners are enrolled in the Anglophone Learning Stream, with roughly three of four users learning and accessing materials in the English language. The Native Stream and the Francophone Stream have gone back and forth for a distant second over the four years of data, both generally around 10 per cent. The Deaf Stream has been consistently around 1.5 per cent each year.

While Anglophones are a dominant share of learners, there is much greater diversity among other facets of individual identity, as roughly three-quarters of the client base identified with one of the designated groups in 2019-20. Figure 24 shows the breakdown of the share that each group represented in each year.

Figure 24: Proportion of LBS Clients in NSWPB Region by Designated Group, 2016-2020



The Indigenous and Person with Disability groups once again have the largest number of people, and both have grown since 2016-17. Interestingly, the Francophone share has dropped quite a bit, compared to the growing Visible Minority group, and the mostly constant Deaf/Blind and Newcomer groups.<sup>12</sup> Indigenous peoples were the single largest group, and more than 10 per cent of all Indigenous LBS clients in Ontario were in the

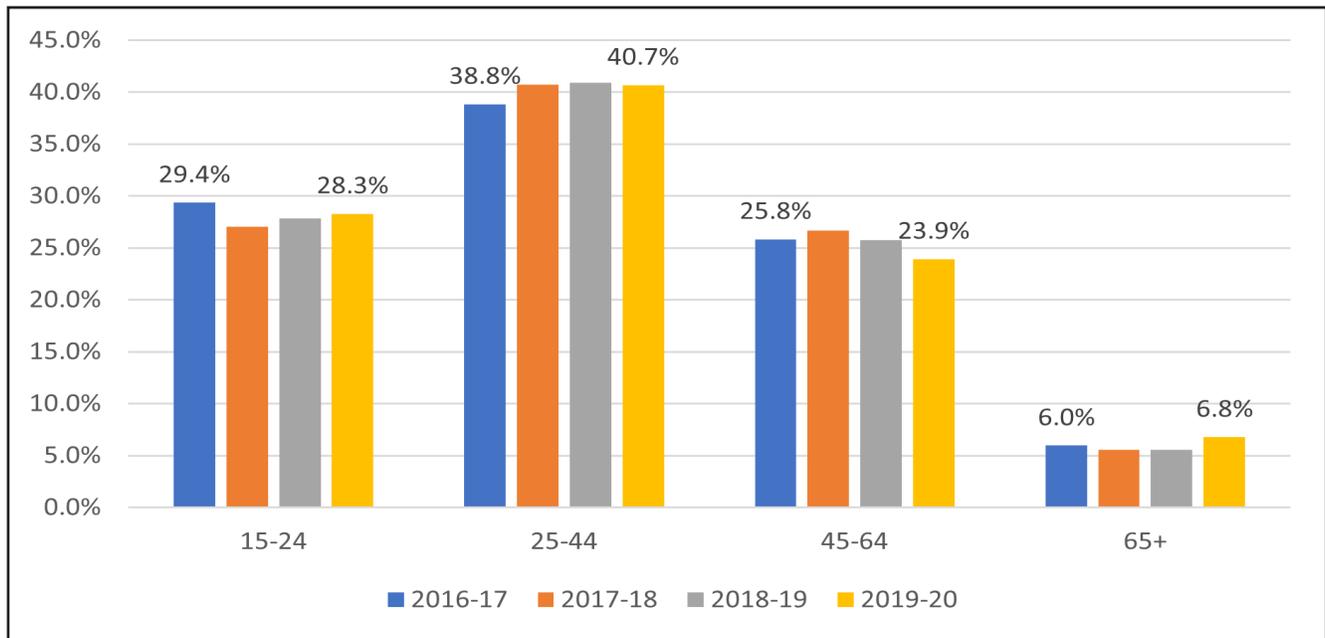
<sup>12</sup> While there are separate categories for Deaf and Deaf/Blind peoples, they were consolidated here due to the small size of each. Another group for Internationally Trained Professionals was omitted since there were none.

NSWPB area, demonstrating how important these services are to the local Indigenous population. There was a small decline in Indigenous enrolment in the past year, and LBS service providers posited an interesting reason for this.

There has been a rise of federally funded programs for Indigenous peoples being delivered in the region that may be siphoning off some EO clients. Programs that offer subsidies and/or work placements may be especially attractive to clients. If the entities providing these federally administered programs are using CaMS, there may be a way to track if it is the case that clients are shifting to other programs but there is no evidence one way or another at the moment. This may be one reason; another could be that Indigenous peoples may not feel adequately supported by the EO programming. Providers in the region are currently investigating both options. Regardless, there was agreement that individual agencies need to continue identifying these gaps and communicating them to their support organizations to ensure they are addressed. This was always a priority, but the pandemic has brought it into sharp focus. There is no doubt that these designated groups will be a major component of the region's recovery, and there is a strong need to ensure LBS providers are delivering their services in a way that is welcoming to all and provides meaningful outcomes. Fortunately, ES and LBS providers can share knowledge on this front, as distribution of designated groups accessing LBS services is very similar to the ES clients, as is the age breakdown.

The 25-44 age group is the largest cohort, comprising over 40 per cent of the total in 2019-20. This aligns with trends identified in the data and confirmed with service providers in the last labour market plan: the LBS client base is getting younger. While each age category has grown in absolute terms since 2016-17, the share of the 25-44 and 65+ groups grew while the 15-24 and 46-64 groups shrank, as demonstrated in Figure 25. Recall that this group also saw the largest decrease in employment, meaning there could be a large number of people in this age group looking to upgrade their employability skills.

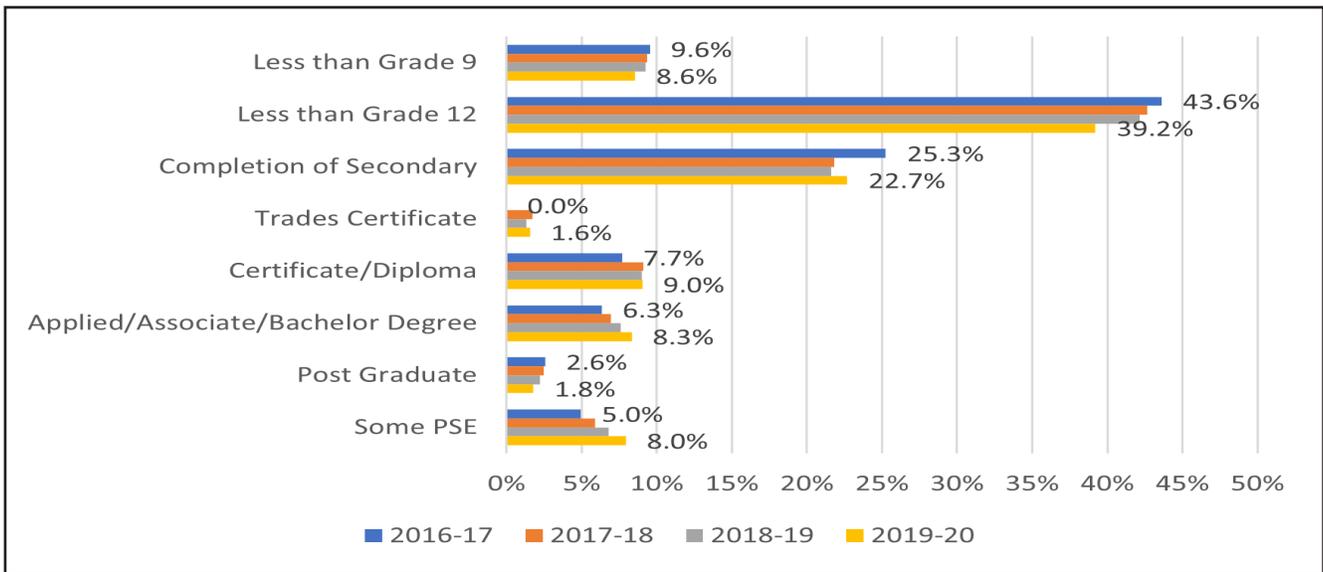
Figure 25: Age Cohorts as a Share of LBS Client Load in NSWPB Region, 2016-2020



Of course, not everyone that accesses LBS services is doing it to improve their employability. Some simply want to become more independent or, more recently, be able to connect with their loved ones. Providers mentioned the surge in clients accessing LBS in order to build their digital skills, particularly in social media and web conferencing platforms. Coupled with the growing number of people that need assistance doing their banking or paying bills online, the nature of LBS programs has changed dramatically. Digital skills have grown in prominence and have shifted to those that will allow people to remain connected in this new, physically distanced world. Despite suddenly lurching to a top priority, developing digital skills is not necessarily perfectly aligned with LBS providers mandates, creating a possible source of friction where curricula and programming no longer match the needs of the population. Programming and funding priorities will likely need to be re-assessed to ensure that people are receiving the skills training they need, and that success is properly captured in the data, especially as those accessing the programming are coming in with different skillsets.

The client base is not only younger, but also more educated. Figure 26 shows that clients with some college or university education – other than those with a post graduate credential – are a growing proportion of the total. Meanwhile, the percentage of those with a high school credential or less is declining.

Figure 26: Education Credentials of LBS Clients in NSWPB Region, 2016-2020

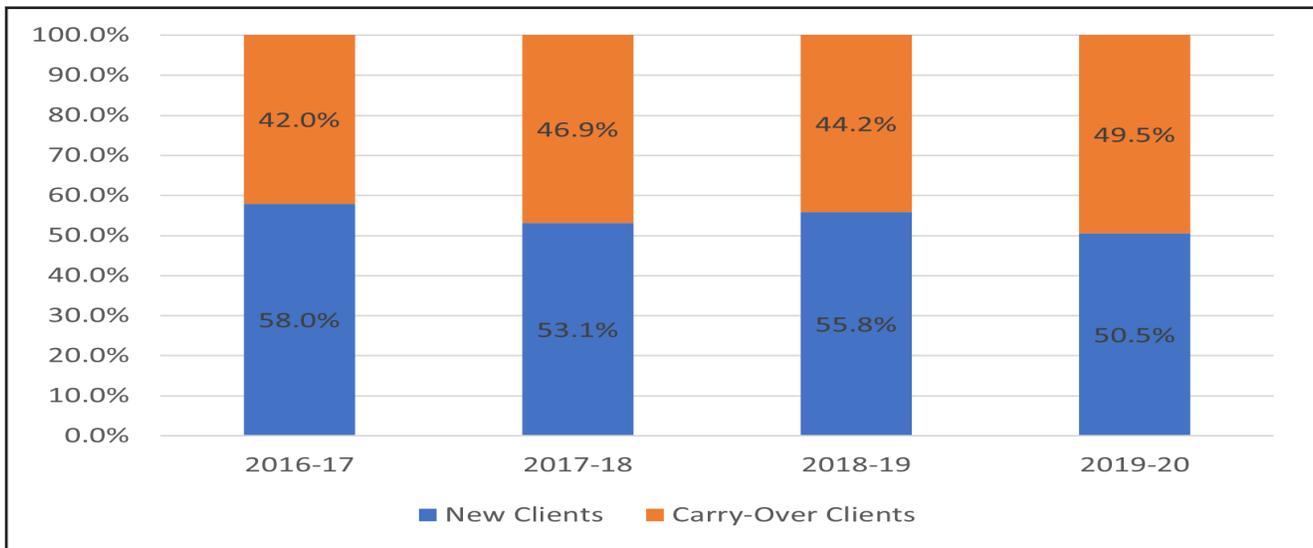


Roughly 30 per cent of those accessing LBS in the NSWPB region have some education beyond high school, a number that has grown each fiscal year. This may be surprising, but it is still below rates for the north and Ontario, both of which were over 34 per cent in 2019-20. It is not clear from the data whether this is due to students not acquiring the necessary skills in their post-secondary education, or just a natural by-product of a larger segment of the population pursuing higher education. Regardless, the fact remains that the client base has higher education credentials than previously.

Providers raised some concern with this development, not because they are reluctant or unable to help these people, but that providing it could conflict with their mandate. LBS is targeted primarily to people with a lower education credential and providers can be penalized for servicing too many clients with some post-secondary education if they do not have a strong rationale. The reality is that COVID-19 has dramatically changed the skills that people in the NSWPB require, and changed the reasons that people access LBS. The standards for judging the success of these programs may well need to change along with them.

This younger, more educated client base that is interested in new skillsets also appears to be accessing LBS services for longer periods of time. Figure 27 indicates that the proportion of carry-over clients has grown to a roughly even distribution of new clients and those who did not complete the program in the previous fiscal year. Meanwhile, the province and Northern Ontario were at 62 and 58 per cent new clients, respectively.

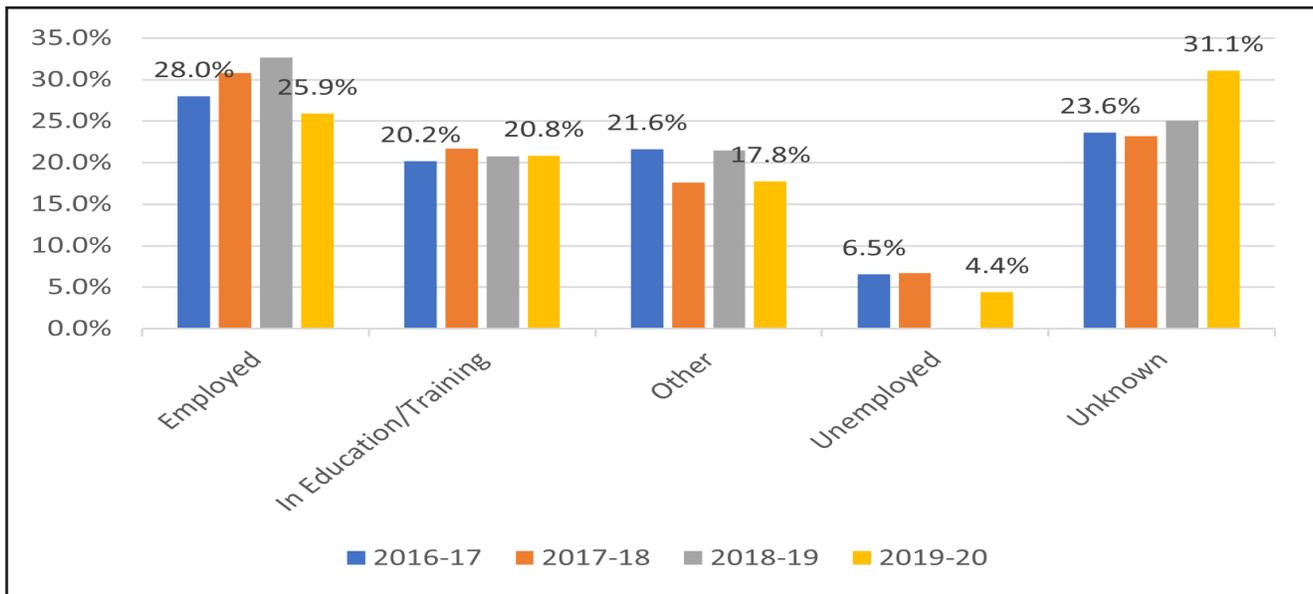
Figure 27: Distribution of New and Carry-Over LBS Clients in the NSWPB Region, 2016-2020



LBS providers noted that a person that enrolls in March will be considered a carry-over client by the time the fiscal year rolls over in April, so the data should be taken with some caution. More to the point, many of the clients are pursuing long-term goals, such as getting their high school diploma or equivalent, which obviously takes much longer than a person looking to learn a new digital platform or to upgrade their French proficiency for professional reasons. They also pointed out that a person’s skill level and goals determine how long they will be enrolled in LBS. The NSWPB region had a much higher share of people on the post-secondary goal path compared to the province, which could be a contributing factor. On the other hand, the region lags behind the province in terms of how educated the population is. A client base that tends to have less education pursuing longer term objectives is a natural fit for the higher rates of carry-over clients. What remains unclear is why the rate has been growing. Whatever the case, it could well be that the extra time in the program is contributing to the strong outcomes at exit.

Figure 28 demonstrates that an increasing percentage of local LBS clients are ending up employed or in education. The proportion of clients in the NSWPB region experiencing either of these outcomes grew for two years, while the provincial rates dropped. As a result, the NSWPB region was nearly in-line with the Ontario totals in 2018-19 at roughly 53.5 per cent.<sup>13</sup> 2019-20 saw a large drop in the percentage of clients employed at outcome that coincided with an even greater jump in the number of unknown outcomes. This rate grew across Northern Ontario, but not to the magnitude of the NSWPB region. The same factors identified with ES providers came up as explanations for this jump.

Figure 28: Outcomes of LBS Clients in the NSWPB Region, 2016-2020



On the other hand, the NSWPB area dramatically outperforms the northern region and the province in the share of clients unemployed at exit. The larger geographies see unemployment rates of 14-17 per cent over the past three years, compared to the NSWPB's roughly 6 per cent rates.<sup>14</sup> Enhancing the capacity of service providers to track these outcomes, by the same methods outlined in the ES section, could go a long way to judging the success of LBS in the region, and help identify solutions.

<sup>13</sup> The number of people who were unemployed at exit was suppressed in the NSWPB region in 2018-19, indicating that there were 10 or fewer. This means that NSWPB's true rates are somewhat lower than what can be calculated from the data. Imputing a value of 10 unemployed outcomes would drop NSWPB's employed and in education rate to 52.7 per cent.

<sup>14</sup> The rate for 2018-19 could not be calculated due to data suppression but would have been less than 1.5 per cent.

LBS will have to evolve as new skills come into demand and jobs tends to require higher skills at the same time the client base shifts to be younger and more educated. The relatively low level of digital literacy in the region, coupled with the sudden need for thousands of people to learn unfamiliar programs for their professional and personal lives, will make LBS services crucial to the region’s recovery.

## APPRENTICESHIPS:

Ontario’s apprenticeship programs combine in-school education with on-the-job training for skilled trades occupations. 2019-20 saw the number of active apprentices grow, after five consecutive years of decline. The previous labour market report showed that there were 1,164 active apprentices in 2014-15, compared to 948 in 2018-19. This decline of 216 was offset by 66 additional apprentices in 2019-20, to bring the total to 1,014. The NSWPB once again displays its propensity for defying provincial trends, as the number of local apprentices dropped 1.6 per cent since 2016-17, while Ontario’s totals grew 5.7 per cent. As a result, the NSWPB’s share of all apprentices shrank from 1.5 to just under 1.4 per cent.

The decline comes despite strong growth in the number of new registrations and Certificates of Apprenticeship (CofAs) issued, shown in Table 10. Three years of growth means that the number of new registrants is now virtually identical to the previous peak of 341 in 2014-15.

*Table 10: Enrolment in Apprenticeships in NSWPB Region, 2016-2020*

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2016-17 to 19-20 actual change	2016-17 to 18-19 per cent change
Active Apprentices	1030	984	948	1014	-16	-1.6%
CofAs Issued	99	130	154	125	26	26.3%
New Registrations	279	285	325	342	63	22.6%

The growth in registrations and CofAs drastically outpaces the northern region and the province, but it still is not enough to stop the number of active apprentices from declining. The data cannot answer why this is the case. An optimistic answer would be that they are graduating to journeypersons, however the data can neither corroborate nor refute this.

Discussions with local employers and service providers highlighted a lack of journeypersons inhibiting the hiring of new apprentices, suggesting this might not be the case. No matter the reason, the growth in 2019-20 hopefully heralds a reversal of the long-term trends, and the erosion of long-standing barriers to attracting people to work in the trades.

Discussions with employers, service providers, and people involved in secondary school education via NSWPB's In-Demand Skilled Trades Project of 2019-20 and other outreach highlighted the expected obstacles: trades continue to be negatively perceived; there is a lack of employers willing to take on apprentices; especially as there is no guaranteed return on their investment to train people; and potential trades people are reluctant to begin apprenticeships in occupations they feel may not provide adequate work-life balance and/or a worthwhile future. A universal answer to these topics was to improve marketing and communication regarding the viability of a career in the trades.

NSWPB's recent animated videos on careers in the skilled trades are a part of that effort. While people tended to suggest schools as one of the first places to market the skilled trades, those involved in the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program in the region say that they are already doing a great deal, but it is difficult to overcome perceptions that students and often parents have regarding this type of career. The consensus is that it will take a concerted effort to change the way people view a career in the trades, by demonstrating the high earning potential of many trades and disabusing the notion that they are reserved for less intelligent or successful people.

Work being done by Job Talks can begin changing this narrative, particularly by acknowledging the unique types of intelligence required in the skilled trades. The practical knowledge and skills used and cultivated by tradespeople are highly applicable to a wide range of situations. Workers in the trades develop what Job Talks refers to as "balanced intelligence", which draws upon both intellectual and physical resources in a way that many other, better perceived careers do not. This fusion of brain and body intelligences should be celebrated rather than denigrated. Another suggestion from Job Talks is to cease referring to apprenticeships as the third component of post-secondary education, and begin incorporating it on equal footing with college and university educations. These sentiments echo comments made in discussion sessions with locals, who insisted that trades are viable, often preferable options for high-performing students.

Another topic that achieved consensus was that technological advances are going to have an incredible impact on the trades, both positively and negatively. On the one hand, the physical strain associated with many trades can be mitigated by more advanced tools or by wearable technology such as construction exosuits; on the other, service providers

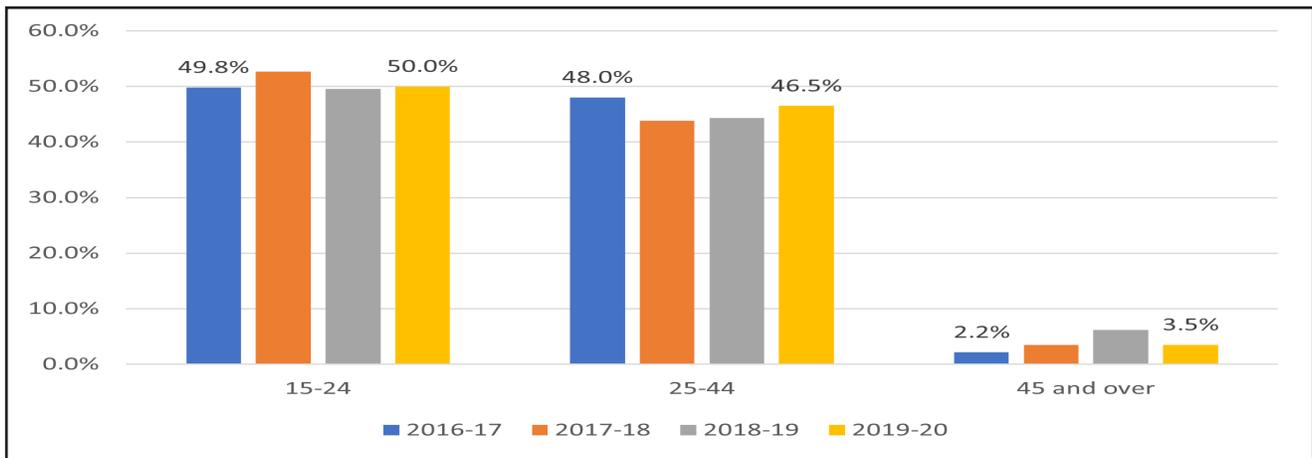
posited that these developments necessitate life-long learning for tradespeople, to a much greater extent than ever before. Automotive technicians, in particular, were identified as trades that have evolved a great deal, with the need to constantly learn new diagnostic tools and be proficient with computerized parts. The potential need to continually upskill to keep pace with accelerating technological change may act as a deterrent to some prospective tradespeople.

Overcoming these hurdles will be vital, as Canada and Northwestern Ontario face skills shortages in the trades. Clearly communicating the earnings, demand, and perhaps most importantly, the dignity and value of a career in the trades will be paramount if the region is to build on the consecutive years with growing registrants and grow the number of apprentices and tradespeople more generally.

Unlike the previous EO programs, there is not enough data to provide detailed analysis of education level or designated groups. More specifically, apprentices in the region were so overwhelmingly high school educated males between 15 and 24 years old that did not belong to a designated group, that other options were suppressed.

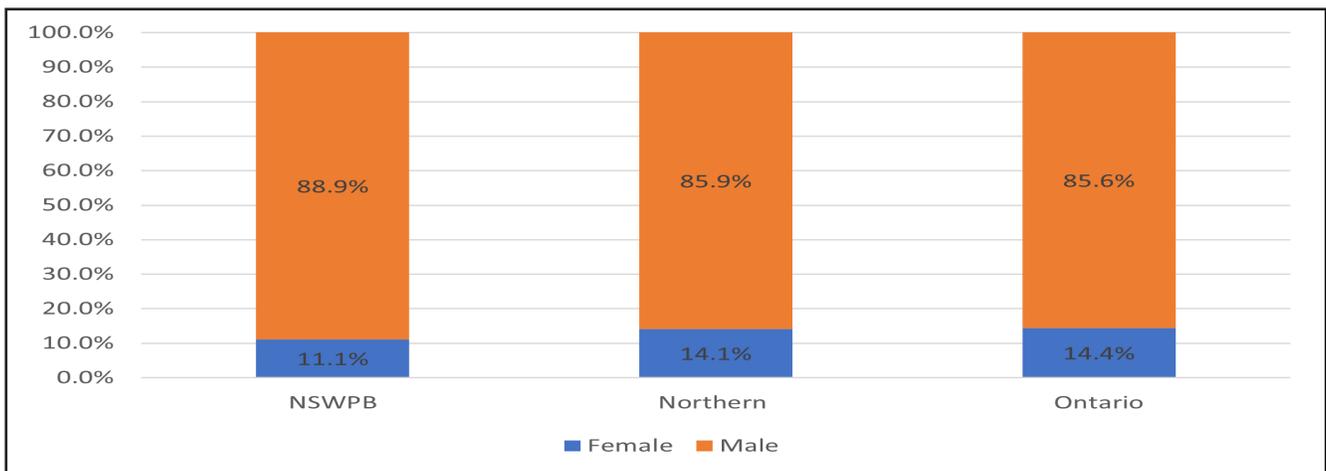
The breakdown of the new registrants bucks some trends established by the other programs analysed. For starters, in the age category, where the 25-44 group is shrinking relative to the others. Figure 29 shows that those aged 45 and over are occupying a large share of the total, largely at the expense of the 25-44 group. This should be kept in context however, as there were still only 12 registrants aged 45 and over in 2019-20. Meanwhile, those under the age of 24 have grown in absolute terms each year since 2016-20. Despite losing some of their share of the total, the 25-44 cohort reached a four year high with 159 new registrants.

Figure 29: Age Cohorts as a Share of Apprenticeship Clients in NSWPB Region, 2016-2020



The local apprenticeship program further defies expectations by aligning fairly closely with the regional and provincial gender distribution, as shown in Figure 30.

Figure 30: Gender Distribution of Apprenticeship Clients in NSWPB Region, Northern Ontario, and Ontario, 2019-2020

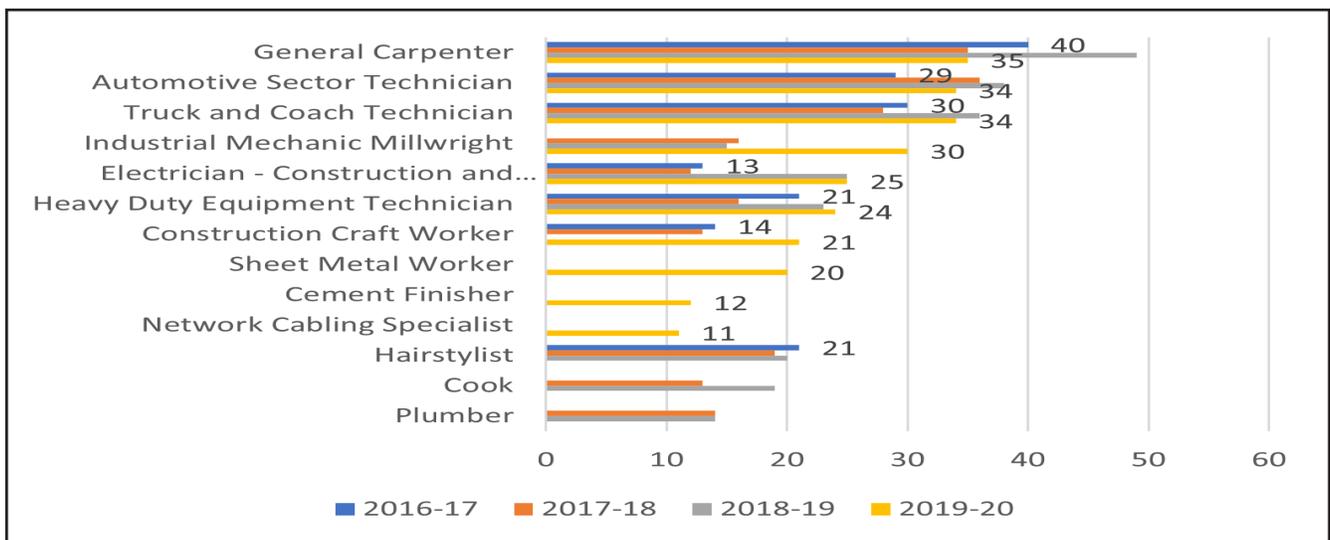


The female share increased for consecutive fiscal years, on the strength of five new female registrants in 2017-18 and 11 more in 2018-19. This helped push the female share of apprentices from under 12 per cent to just over 15. That 16 additional apprentices signified a 48 per cent increase in female apprentices is a testament both to how few female apprentices there are in the NSWPB area, and that efforts to attract more females to the trades can and do work. Unfortunately, 2019-20 witnessed a setback, as the number of women and girls that enrolled dropped back to the same level as 2017-18. Coupled with the growth in male registrants, the female share of the total has dropped to a four-year low.

Women and girls offer a virtually untapped labour pool for occupations that are soon to be experiencing a massive skills crunch. Data provided by the Ontario College of Trades showed that, in 2019, there were just over 500 female journeypersons – roughly 97 per cent of which were in the service sectors of the trades. That means there are more than 500 potential role models for local women and girls interested in the trades. It also means that less than two per cent of jobs that females hold are in the trades and related occupations. There are thousands of young women in the region that are unemployed or in part-time employment (Statistics Canada 2020), and more than 9,000 people in these occupations will reach retirement age in the next decade (Moazzami 2019). There is a natural synergy between the supply and demand, and efforts to balance them could ease two major concerns for the region, especially if women enter trades that are in high demand locally.

Figure 31 shows the top 10 trades by new registrations in 2019-20 and compares them to previous years. This list represents 246 of the 342 new registrations. The other 96 new apprentices were spread across 24 trades, all of which had suppressed counts, indicating none had more than 10 new registrations.

Figure 31: Number of Registrants in Trades in NSWPB Region, 2016-20



The top three are clearly in a league of their own, having been the most common trade registrations each of the past six fiscal years, going back to the last report. This trio accounted for a combined 30 per cent of all new registrations in 2019-20. It is also notable that four of the top 10 fall into the construction sector, and three more are motive power. Welders are the only industrial trade, with hairstylists and cooks representing the service sector. Furthermore, only three – carpenter, electrician, and heavy-duty equipment technician – are on the province’s list of trade-related job profiles in high demand across Ontario (Ontario 2020).

Inferences from this data, and a handful of other sources, offer some insight into trades that could be emerging in the region, and will soon be in high demand. First, industrial mechanic millwrights, sheet metal workers, cement finishers, and network cabling specialists have all gone from few or no registrants to more than 10. This could be an indication of growing demand and interest for these jobs. The expected boom in mining operations in Northwestern Ontario suggests strong growth in trades such as millwrights, electricians, and heavy equipment operators. Government spending priorities in response to COVID-19 offer another inkling. Trades like Native Residential Construction Workers, IT support and installation technicians, and social services workers to care for the young, elderly, or ill could all see major increases in demand due to pandemic response and recovery initiatives. Improving housing in First Nations, expanding broadband through the region, and care occupations are all targeted to see major investments. Lastly, data from EMSI suggests that trades like cooks and arborists have been growing in the NSWPB region (EMSI 2019).

Apprenticeships are going to remain crucial components of the local labor force in the post-pandemic landscape, especially if major infrastructure projects that were already planned go ahead. Addressing the obstacles that inhibit participation in order to attract more registrants will continue to be a priority. The traditional demand for plumbers, carpenters, mechanics, and tradespeople more generally is not expected to wane for the foreseeable future. With several large-scale infrastructure projects already underway, more in the hopper, and probable investments into expanded broadband infrastructure and home retrofits, there will likely be increased need for apprentices and journeypersons in traditional and emerging trades in Northwestern Ontario.

## **CANADA-ONTARIO JOB GRANT:**

COJG offers funding that employers can access to pay for training for their employees. Worker participants in this program made up only 2.3 per cent of all EO clients in 2018-19, down from 8.9 per cent in 2016-17. The program saw a 64 per cent drop from 2016-17 to the

following year, another 37 per cent drop over the next fiscal year, and an additional 12 per cent in 2019-20. As a result, the client base is less than one fifth what it was in 2016-17. Most of the data is suppressed due to small sample sizes, but the available data shows two things: the 25-44 age cohort has grown at the expense of the others; and females have gone from one-third of clients in 2016-17 to 53 per cent in 2019-20.

### **EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE, SECOND CAREER, YOUTH JOB CONNECTION:**

The remaining three programs had a combined client load of about 170 in 2019-20, down from over 200 in 2016-17. SC helps recently laid-off workers learn new skills in in-demand occupations to help them transition back into the workforce. YJC, meanwhile, serves youths aged 15-29 who face multiple barriers to employment, and provides supports beyond typical job search and placement opportunities. Data suppression means any analysis of the individual client bases for these programs be severely limited, however there are some insights that can be gleaned.

Most of the decrease in client load occurred in SC, which saw a 48 per cent drop since 2016-17. Meanwhile, YJC clients dropped 20 per cent from 2016-17 to 2017-18 but has rebounded so that 2019-20 had the largest client load since 2016, at 128 clients. The SC client base is primarily aged 25-44, while YJC's clients are, unsurprisingly, predominantly aged 15-24. Both client bases are about 60 per cent male. 71 per cent of YJC clients identified in the Indigenous group, while another 16 per cent listed themselves as a Person with a Disability. Any further analysis is stymied due to data limitations due to the small sample sizes. There was no data available for EA clients in the NSWPB area.

# Conclusion



COVID-19 changed everything, including NSWPB's strategic priorities. Now, navigating through and recovering from the pandemic is front of mind for virtually every community, business, and service provider in the region. However, the topics that are most important to a just, inclusive, and sustainable recovery are the same as they were before the pandemic. Many have taken on greater urgency, notably the need for universally accessible broadband and childcare, but nothing has emerged from nowhere. The recovery in Northwestern Ontario will hinge on addressing longstanding issues. Discussions with community partners point to value of NSWPB's subject matter working groups, digital tools, research and analysis, professional development opportunities, and networking facilitation these endeavours.

As such, the planning board's local labour market plan will focus on population and workforce growth through attraction and retention and improving the conditions for workers and businesses by working to establish better alignment between education, industry, training, and government. This will be especially important in areas that are likely to see major investment and attention as pillars of the recovery. In the NSWPB region, that will mean things like childcare and broadband infrastructure.

Last, and most importantly, the recovery will need to be inclusive, particularly to women and Indigenous peoples in the region. Both groups continue to have relatively low rates of engagement in the labour force and the economy. NSWPB will continue prioritizing efforts that rectify this situation in order to drive a just, equitable, and sustainable recovery to COVID-19.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A – GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS:

APPR	Apprentice
AETS	Anishinabek Employment & Training Services
AFNOO	Association des francophones du Nord-Ouest de l'Ontario
ASETA	Aboriginal Skills Employment and Training Agreement Holders
BI	Baakaakonani Ishkwaandemonan (Opening Doors for You)
CD	Census Division
CEDC	Community Economic Development Commission (Thunder Bay)
CFDC	Community Futures Development Corporations
CLMD	Community Labour Market Discussion
CLMP	Community Labour Market Plan
CLMR	Community Labour Market Report
CMA	Census Metropolitan Area
CofA	Certificate of Apprenticeship
COJG	Canada-Ontario Job Grant
CPT	Central Planning Table
CRIBE	Centre for Research and Innovation in the Bio-Economy
CSD	Census Subdivision
CY	City
EI	Employment Insurance
EO	Employment Ontario
ES	Employment Services
ESL	English as a Second Language
FedNor	Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario
FWFN	Fort William First Nation
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HSW	Highly Skilled Workforce
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
INAC	Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada

IRI	Indian Reserve
ISC	Indigenous Services Canada
ISET	Indigenous Skills and Employment Training
KE	Knowledge Economy
KKETS	Kiikenomaga Kikenjigewen Employment & Training Services
LBS	Literacy and Basic Skills
LEPC	Local Employment Planning Council
LMI	Labour Market Information
LU	Lakehead University
MCI	Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration
MCSS	Ministry of Community and Social Services
MCYS	Ministry of Children and Youth Services
MEDG	Ministry of Economic Development and Growth
MEDU	Ministry of Education
MEI	Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure
MNDM	Ministry of Northern Development and Mines
MNRF	Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MOHLTC	Ministry Health and Long-term Care
MLTSD	Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development
MRIS	Ministry of Research, Innovation and Science
MU	Municipality
NAIC	North American Industry Classification System
NAN	Nishnawbe Aski Nation
NEW	Northwest Employment Works
NO	Northern Ontario
NOACC	Northwestern Ontario Associated Chambers of Commerce
NOC	National Occupational Classification
NOHFC	Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation
NOIC	Northern Ontario Innovation Centre
NOMA	Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association
NOSM	Northern Ontario School of Medicine

NR	Northern Region
NSWPB	North Superior Workforce Planning Board
NW-LHIN	North West Local Health Integration Network
NWO	Northwestern Ontario
ODSP	Ontario Disability Support Program
OMAFRA	Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
ON	Ontario
OW	Ontario Works
SC	Second Career
S-E	Indian Settlement
SME	Small-Medium Enterprises
SMWG	Subject Matter Working Group
TBDSSAB	Thunder Bay District Social Services Administration Board
TBRHSC	Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre
TP	Township
UAS	Urban Aboriginal Strategy
UE	Unemployment
YES	YES Employment Services
YJC	Youth Job Connect

## APPENDIX B – EO AND NON-EO EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICE PROVIDERS:

Organization Name	Website
Anishinabek Employment and Training Services (AETS)	<a href="https://www.aets.org/">https://www.aets.org/</a>
Canadian Hearing Society (Northern Literacy and Lifeskills Program)	<a href="https://www.chs.ca/services/literacy-and-basic-skills">https://www.chs.ca/services/literacy-and-basic-skills</a>
Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) – Thunder Bay	<a href="https://cmha.ca/">https://cmha.ca/</a>
Centre de Formation Manitouwadge Learning Centre	NA
Centre de formation pour adultes de Greenstone	<a href="http://www.cfag.ca">http://www.cfag.ca</a>
Community Living Thunder Bay	<a href="http://www.cltb.ca">http://www.cltb.ca</a>
Confederation College	<a href="http://www.confederationcollege.ca/">www.confederationcollege.ca/</a>
Fort William First Nation (FWFN)	<a href="https://fwfn.com/">https://fwfn.com/</a>
Frontier College	<a href="https://www.frontiercollege.ca/">https://www.frontiercollege.ca/</a>
Independent Living Resource Centre Thunder Bay	<a href="http://www.ilrctbay.com/">http://www.ilrctbay.com/</a>
Kiikenomaga Kikenjigewen Employment & Training Services (KKETS)	<a href="http://www.kkets.ca/">www.kkets.ca/</a>
Lakehead University – Student Success Centre	<a href="https://www.lakeheadu.ca/current-students/student-success-centre">https://www.lakeheadu.ca/current-students/student-success-centre</a>
Literacy Northwest	<a href="https://www.northernliteracy.ca/">https://www.northernliteracy.ca/</a>
March of Dimes Canada	<a href="https://www.marchofdimes.ca/">https://www.marchofdimes.ca/</a>
Métis Nation of Ontario	<a href="http://www.metisnation.org/">www.metisnation.org/</a>
Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO)	<a href="http://www.metisnation.org/">www.metisnation.org/</a>
MTW Employment Services	<a href="https://www.mtwjobassist.ca/">https://www.mtwjobassist.ca/</a>
Northwest Employment Works (NEW)	<a href="http://www.northwestworks.ca/">www.northwestworks.ca/</a>
Novocentre (Alpha Thunder Bay)	<a href="https://novocentre.com">https://novocentre.com</a>

<b>Ontario Native Women's Association</b>	<a href="http://www.onwa.ca/">www.onwa.ca/</a>
<b>Oshki-Pimache-O-Win (OSHKI) Education and Training Institute</b>	<a href="http://www.oshki.ca/">www.oshki.ca/</a>
<b>PARO Centre for Women's Enterprise</b>	<a href="http://www.paro.ca/">www.paro.ca/</a>
<b>Réseau de soutien l'immigration francophone du Nord de l'Ontario</b>	<a href="http://reseaudunord.ca/">http://reseaudunord.ca/</a>
<b>Seven Generations Education Institute</b>	<a href="http://www.7generations.org/">http://www.7generations.org/</a>
<b>St. Joseph's Care Group - Employment Options Program</b>	<a href="http://www.sjcg.net/services/mental-health_addictions/housing-employment/employment.aspx">http://www.sjcg.net/services/mental-health_addictions/housing-employment/employment.aspx</a>
<b>Superior North Adult Learning Association</b>	<a href="https://www.snala.ca/">https://www.snala.ca/</a>
<b>The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB)</b>	<a href="https://www.tbdssab.ca/">https://www.tbdssab.ca/</a>
<b>Thunder Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre</b>	<a href="https://tbifc.ca/">https://tbifc.ca/</a>
<b>Thunder Bay Literacy Group</b>	<a href="https://www.tblg.org/">https://www.tblg.org/</a>
<b>Thunderbird Friendship Centre</b>	NA
<b>YES Employment Services</b>	<a href="http://www.yesjobsnow.com/">www.yesjobsnow.com/</a>

## APPENDIX C – NSWPB GEOGRAPHIC AREA:

Until August 2018, NSWPB was using Canada Census methodologies and data to identify 35 distinct communities within its Northwestern Ontario jurisdiction. In doing so, NSWPB omitted three equally significant local communities, which have not figured in municipality-based Canada Census data. The following three Métis communities have therefore been added to the Thunder Bay district NSWPB community list:

1. Superior North Shore Métis Community (Terrace Bay Council office covers the North Shore of Lake Superior)
2. Greenstone Métis Community (Geraldton Council office covers the Municipality of Greenstone)
3. Thunder Bay Métis Community (Thunder Bay Council office covers Kakabeka to Nipigon)

Although the three Métis of Ontario (MNO) Community Council offices listed above are situated in established non-Indigenous municipalities, they are not within these municipalities' governance or representation. Métis Community Councils represent distinct communities within wider geographical areas.

Census Division	Common Community Name	Census Subdivision Name, Type	Population
Thunder Bay	Pawgwasheeng (Pays Plat First Nation)	Pays Plat 51, IRI	92
Thunder Bay	Biinjitiwaabik Zaaging Anishinaabek (Rocky Bay First Nation)	Rocky bay 1, IRI	193
Thunder Bay	Ginoogaming First Nation (Long Lake #77 First Nation)	Ginoogaming First Nation, IRI	219
Thunder Bay	Red Rock Indian Band/ Lake Helen First Nation	Lake Helen 53A, IRI	341
Thunder Bay	Dorion	Dorion, TP	326
Thunder Bay	Pic Moberg First Nation	Pic Moberg N/S, IRI	336
Thunder Bay	Whitesand First Nation	Whitesand, IRI	415
Thunder Bay	Aroland First Nation	Aroland 83, IRI	382

Thunder Bay	Long Lake #58 First Nation	Long Lake 58, IRI	392
Thunder Bay	Biigtigong Nishnaabeg (Ojibways of the Pic River First Nation)	Pic River 50, IRI	458
Thunder Bay	Gillies	Gillies, TP	489
Thunder Bay	O'Connor	O'Connor, TP	616
Thunder Bay	Conmee	Conmee, TP	933
Thunder Bay	Red Rock	Red Rock, TP	864
Thunder Bay	Fort William First Nation	Fort William 52, IRI	989
Thunder Bay	Schreiber	Schreiber, TP	1,018
Thunder Bay	Terrace Bay	Terrace Bay, TP	1,603
Thunder Bay	Nipigon	Nipigon, TP	1,627
Thunder Bay	Manitouwadge	Manitouwadge, TP	1,988
Thunder Bay	Neebing	Neebing, MU	2,186
Thunder Bay	Shuniah	Shuniah, MU	2,942
Thunder Bay	Marathon	Marathon, T	3,331
Thunder Bay	Greenstone, Municipality of	Greenstone, MU	4,389
Thunder Bay	Thunder Bay, Unorganized	Thunder Bay, Unorganized, NO	5,959
Thunder Bay	Oliver Paipoonge	Oliver Paipoonge, MU	6,137
Thunder Bay	Thunder Bay	Thunder Bay, CY	112602
Thunder Bay	Animbiigoo Zaag'igan Anishinaabek (Lake Nipigon Ojibway First Nation)	Lake Nipigon, IRI	0
Thunder Bay	Bingwi Neyaashi Anishinabek (Sand Point First Nation)		*
Thunder Bay	Kiashke Zaaging Anishinaabek (Gull Bay First Nation)		*

Thunder Bay	Lac Des Mille Lac First Nation	Lac des Mille Lacs 22A1, IRI	*
Kenora	Neskantaga First Nation (Lansdowne House)	Lansdowne House, S-E	250
Kenora	Marten Falls First Nation	Marten Falls 65, IRI	267
Kenora	Nibinamik First Nation (Summer Beaver)	Summer Beaver, S-E	406
Kenora	Webequie First Nation	Webequie, IRI	869
Kenora	Eabametoong First Nation (Fort Hope)	Fort Hope 64, IRI	988





# North Superior

## Workforce Planning Board

For further information please contact:

Madge Richardson

Executive Director

North Superior Workforce Planning

600 Hewitson Street

Thunder Bay, ON, P7B 6E4

[mrichardson@nswpb.ca](mailto:mrichardson@nswpb.ca) | 807.346.2940

Connecting community partners to improve the quality  
of life in our communities through workforce development.

*Needing Lookout, photo taken by Courtney Lanthier, courtesy of the Municipality of Needing*