North Superior
Workforce Planning Board

Planning for Success:
Unlocking the Potential of North Superior's Workforce

Local Labour Market Plan 2023–2024

NORTHERN POLICY INSTITUTE

INSTITUT DES POLITIQUES DU NORD

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D'ANALYSTES ANALYST
DU NORD COLLECTIVE

By: Bryanne de Castro Rocha and Rachel Rizzuto

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North Superior
Workforce Planning Board

Limitations

The North Superior Workforce Planning Board (NSWPB) recognizes the potential limitations of this local labour market report. It will continue seeking information in areas requiring further analysis and action.[i] The information presented in this report is current at the time of printing. This document may be freely quoted and reproduced without the permission of NSWPB, provided that NSWPB is acknowledged as the document's author. NSWPB assumes no responsibility to the user for the consequences of any errors or omissions.

About North Superior Workforce Planning Board

North Superior Workforce Planning Board is one of 26 workforce planning boards covering four regions across Ontario. Mandated by the province of Ontario, the role of the NSWPB is to identify, assess and prioritize the skills and knowledge needs of the 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 the affairs of the organization. First established in 1996, NSWPB is recognized by community, economic and municipal leaders as a "partner of choice" in the identification and implementation of solutions to local labour market issues.

Workforce planning boards play a key role in the province's 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 throughout the province.

Vision

A strategically aligned labour force to meet demands across Northwestern Ontario.

Mission

Engaging community partners in leading collaborative workforce development planning.
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.

North Superior Workforce Planning Board, Board of Directors

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North Superior Workforce Planning Board Area

Refer to Appendix B for complete list of communities

Land Acknowledgement

North Superior Workforce Planning Board would like to acknowledge the First Peoples on whose traditional territories we live and work. We are grateful for the opportunity to have our office located on these lands and thank all generations of people who have taken care of this land.

The office of the NSWPB is in the City of Thunder Bay, which is on Robinson-Superior Treaty territory. The land is the traditional territory of the Anishinaabeg and Fort William First Nation.

North Superior Workforce Planning Board's service area includes more than 40 communities, and each is home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples. NSWPB recognizes and appreciates the historical connection that First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples have to these territories. We support their efforts to sustain and grow their nations. We also recognize the contributions that they have made in shaping and strengthening local communities, the province, and Canada.

Acknowledgements

A Note on Data

The year 2022 was an exciting one for data. Throughout the year, Statistics Canada released a series of datasets from the 2021 Census that researchers, decision-makers, and you can use to understand what is happening in Ontario's northern regions and communities.

One of this report's limitations is that, at the time of data collection and writing, data collected from the census refer to information gathered in 2021; this aspect is directly related to the nature of the census and its release. Another limitation is that data used boundaries from the previous census in 2016. Additionally, some data were suppressed in cases with small counts to meet the confidentiality requirements of the Statistics Act, thus generating small variations in counts and percentages for some locations. Furthermore, some data are based on population samples, which is a statistical method to estimate the total population based on information for one segment. By their nature, estimates and samples will approximate, but not mirror, reality.

These limitations may affect the interpretation of data by generating small variations in population numbers depending on the year analyzed, boundaries used, and data suppressed. An effort was made to highlight when data collected in different years are being compared, when boundaries used differ, or when data are suppressed. Nevertheless, armed with information gathered from the consultations and additional literature, the report provides a detailed picture of current trends and projections that NSWPB and others can utilize until updated data are released.

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We recognize and appreciate the historic connection that Indigenous peoples have to these territories. We support their efforts to sustain and grow their nations. We also recognize the contributions that they have made in shaping and strengthening local communities, the province, and Canada.

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Northern Analyst Collective

NAC is a shared cost program where NPI partners with organizations in all regions of Northern Ontario to "time-share" professional staff to complete needed projects. The program is not intended to replace consultants. Instead, it is largely focused on baseline analysis or information gathering that will allow any future investment by partners to be focused on higher value-added work by external 3rd parties.

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About the Authors

Bryanne de Castro Rocha

Bryanne holds a Master of Arts in Political Science from the University of Calgary, where she analyzed the relationship between sustainable development, environmental clauses in international trade agreements, and agricultural lobbying. Her Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in International Relations explored the measurement and conceptualization of sustainable development. She is also interested in the relationship between mining operations and Indigenous communities in Canada and abroad.

Rachel Rizzuto

Rachel Rizzuto is the former Research Manager for Northern Policy Institute. Originally from the United States, Rachel attended the University of Guelph and the University of Waterloo, earning her B.A. (Honours) and M.A. (co-op) in Political Science, respectively. Throughout her academic and professional careers, Rachel has pursued the study of community and economic development, an enthusiasm borne out of travel throughout rural and urban China. Rachel provides research expertise and passion for seeing northern and rural communities thrive.

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Introduction

Every day, the choices of Northwestern Ontario residents impact the vitality and nature of the local labour market, be it from a business owner deciding to switch to a paper-free system or a college program coordinator setting up a new online accounting class. Just as yearly doctor checkups help people keep track of their health, annual checkups help to keep track of our labour market.

Based on these checkups, decision-makers and community practitioners can create and adjust local plans. NSWPB is no exception. It creates annual local labour market plans that outline crucial economic indicators and trends in its service area, which encompasses nearly 40 communities, including First Nations and three Métis communities.

This report is organized into several sections. The first gives a glimpse of the labour force and employers in the NSWPB region. The second features local labour market consultations, with experts from various community actors providing insight into current labour market conditions and next steps. The third focuses on the experiences of Employment Ontario (EO) service providers based on data from their programs. Finally, based on findings from the first three sections, the last section outlines action items for the NSWPB going forward.

This report highlights several identified needs. A trend that may be unique to the most recent years is some post-pandemic effects and, in some areas, some post-pandemic recovery can be seen. Some others are similar to those of previous years and remain relevant, such as the need for increased participation of, and training and education for, First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples. Another is the need for NSWPB to work as a connector, with increased engagement, collaboration, and partnership with all organizations, First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples, and non-Indigenous people. Building, attracting, and retaining a skilled labour force (including newcomers, migrants, and non-migrants) is a relevant need also seen in previous years but perhaps especially emphasized this year. Priorities noted here are fostering accessible training for the local workforce and observing opportunities brought by the Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot. Last but not least, providing tools and programs to local workforce organizations is another key factor of the local labour market trends, needs, and insights encompassed in this report.

Good data, good decision-making :
Economic and Labour Market Data

Insights into the local labour market and next steps for NSWPB[iv]

1. Population

The population in the NSWPB region grew slightly in 2022: +0.2% or 300 people, its **first increase since 2019.**[v]

152,140
2022

151,840
2021

A similar increase, (+0.2% or 264 people) occurred in the Thunder Bay Census Metropolitan Area (CMA).[vi]

The First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples population in the NSWPB region was 27,596 in 2021, or 18% of the total.[vii]

Of that total, 15% were First Nations, 5% Métis, and 1% Inuit.

Seven of the **ten largest communities** outside of the Thunder Bay CMA experienced a population increase.[viii] All of these with an **increase higher** than the Thunder Bay CMA and the NSWPB region.

Manitouwadge	Terrace Bay	Greenstone	NSWPB region	Thunder Bay CMA	Pic River 50	Red Rock	Marathon	Schreiber	Canada	Nipigon	Fort Hope 64	Webequie
-1.00%	-0.80%	-0.10%	0.20%	0.20%	0.20%	0.20%	0.60%	0.90%	1.80%	2.00%	3.60%	4.10%
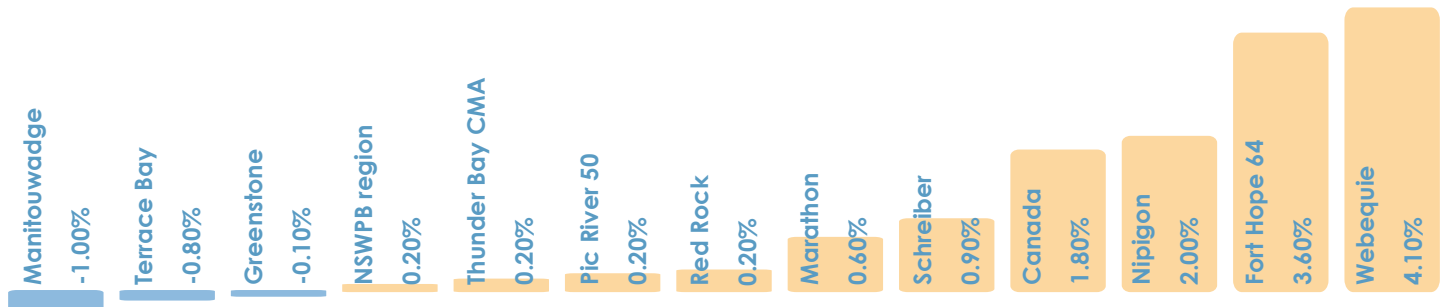
Webequie, Fort Hope, and Nipigon all had an increase **higher than the national average.**[ix]

Greenstone, Terrace Bay, and Manitouwadge presented a **decrease** in population.[x]

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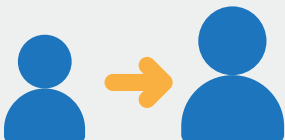
2. Components of Population Growth[xi, xii]

The flow of immigrants and receiving non-permanent residents contributed positively to this population growth from 2021 to 2022. In contrast, natural change and interprovincial migration contributed negatively.[xi]

The flow of Immigration has become the most significant component for population change in the District of Thunder Bay, accounting for **more than half** of the population growth in 2021–2022.[xii] That is up from an average of one fifth in the previous five years. That means that immigration has become the most important factor to increase population in the District of Thunder Bay growth.[xii]

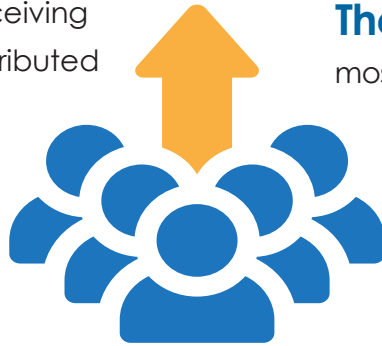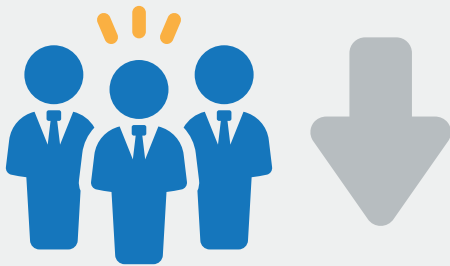## 3. Population Projections[xiv]

The population of the District of Thunder Bay is projected to increase by **+2.2%** over the next 25 years, reaching **152,893 in 2046.[xv]**

The **working-age population's** share of the total population is projected to **decrease by -6.1%** in the next **10 years.**

This decrease means that there will be fewer people working in the next 10 years, and that is directly related to the economic activity needed to support social programs and economic dependents.

The number of **dependents for every worker** is projected to increase from 57 for every 100 workers in 2022 to **65 for every 100** workers in 2046.

That means that **fewer than two workers** will support **each dependent.**

This level is not considered sustainable and may pose challenges for society and its economy.[xvi]

4. Labour Force[xvii]

In the Thunder Bay CMA, the **working-age population** in the labour market (employed or looking for work) experienced an overall decrease during the past five years from 64 to 61%.[xviii]

However, the 2022 percentage (61.1) is up from the 2020 percentage (60).

The **unemployment rate** in 2022 was **4.9%**, the **lowest in the last 15 years.**

64.2%
2018

60.3%
2020

61.1%
2022
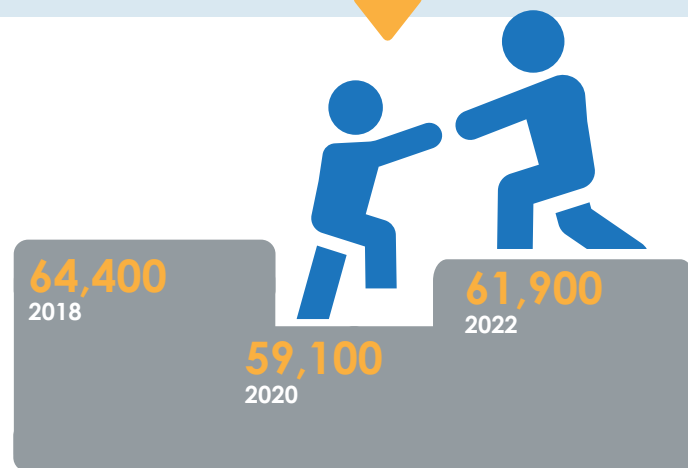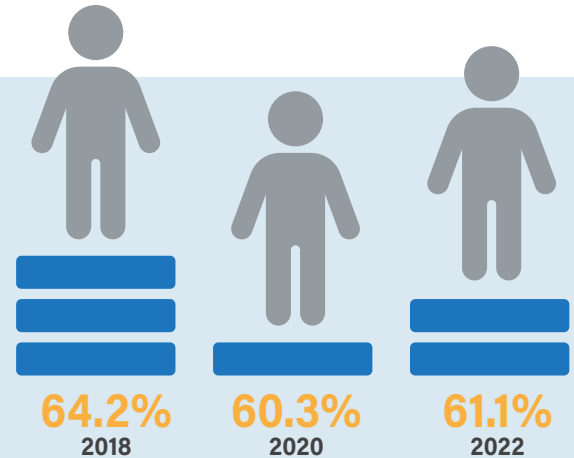
The number of workers employed increased from 2020 to 2022, but it has not equaled its highest point in the last five years.

Most of this increase was due to a higher number of employed **full-time workers** in 2022 **(50,800**, the **highest in the past 15 years).**

64,400
2018

59,100
2020

61,900
2022

The number of employed **part-time** workers has **decreased** considerably **since 2018.**

14,600
2018

11,100
2022
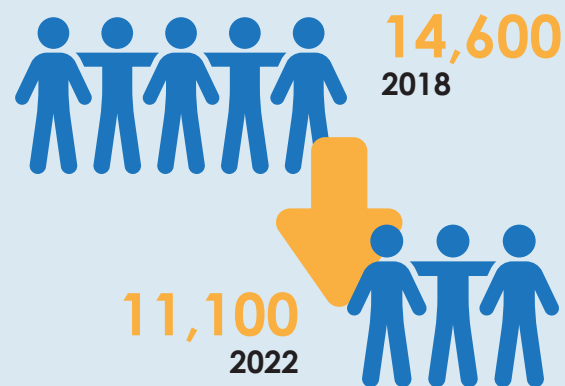
In 2022, full-time workers accounted for **82%** of those employed, while part-time workers accounted for **18%**. That represents an **increase** in the **percentage** of employed **full-time workers** from 77% in 2018.

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Sex Breakdown[xix]

Employed Workers – full and part-time

- **Males** represented a **larger share (53%)** of employed workers in 2022.

- The percentage of employed **female workers (47%)** has been declining since 2018, reaching the **lowest percentage** in the **last 15 years**. This percentage was stable between 2012 and 2017 (50%).

31,500
2018

29,100
2022
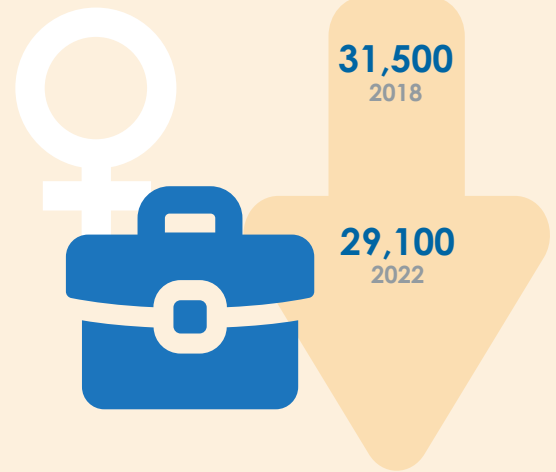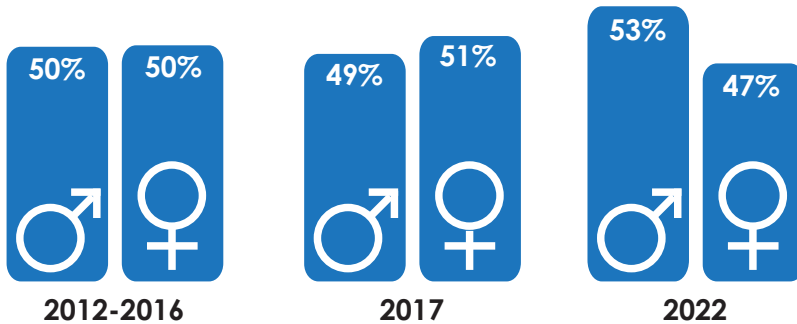
- The **increase** in the number of employed workers since 2020 has been due to an increase in employed **male workers** (full and part-time).

- The number of employed **female workers** has **decreased since 2018**, with 2020 and 2022 representing the **lowest numbers** of employed females **since 2011**.

50% **50%**
2012-2016

49% **51%**
2017

53% **47%**
2022

Full-time Employed Workers

The share of **males (55%) to females (45%)** in full-time employment has remained relatively stable in the last five years. .

Part-time Employed Workers

- **Females** represented the **majority** (60%)of those employed **part-time** in 2022.

  - The difference between males and females employed part-time is the **smallest** in the **past 15 years.**

60%
2022

40%
2022

9,500
2017

-2,800
-29%

6,700
2022
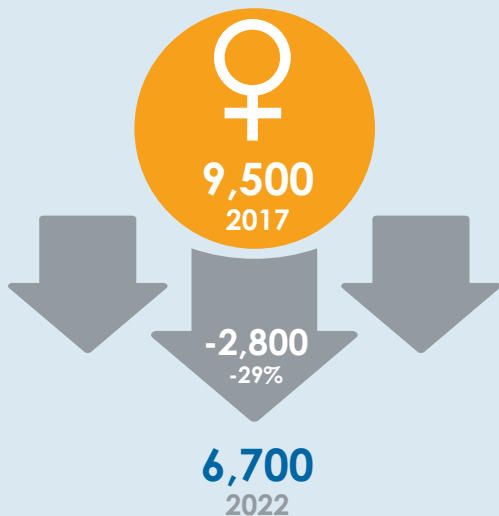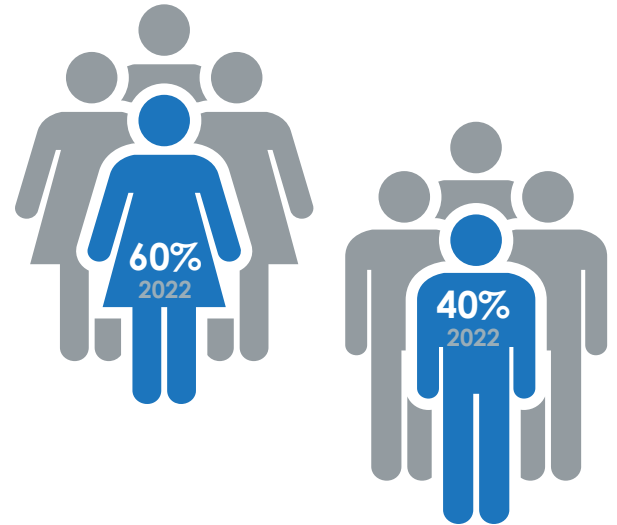
- This is due to fewer females who are employed part-time rather than more males.

- There was a steep decrease of -29% in the number of **part-time female workers** from 2017 to 2022, amounting to 2,800 fewer workers.

- Thus, from 2017 to 2022, there were 2,800 fewer part-time female workers (29 per cent), 300 fewer part-time male workers (6 per cent), and 400 more full-time female workers (2 per cent).

- Therefore, the decrease in the share of employed female workers (full and part-time) and the number of part-time workers (both sexes) is directly related to fewer part-time female workers.

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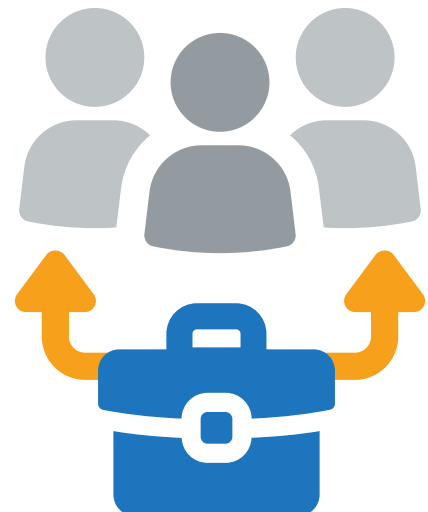
5. Income[xx]

Median **total income** continuously increased from 2016 to 2020, with 2020 presenting the **highest increase** in the period (+6.4%).

$37,350
2016
+1.1%

$38,600
2017
+3.3%

$39,790
2018
+3.1%

$40,780
2019
+2.5%

$43,390
2020
+6.4%
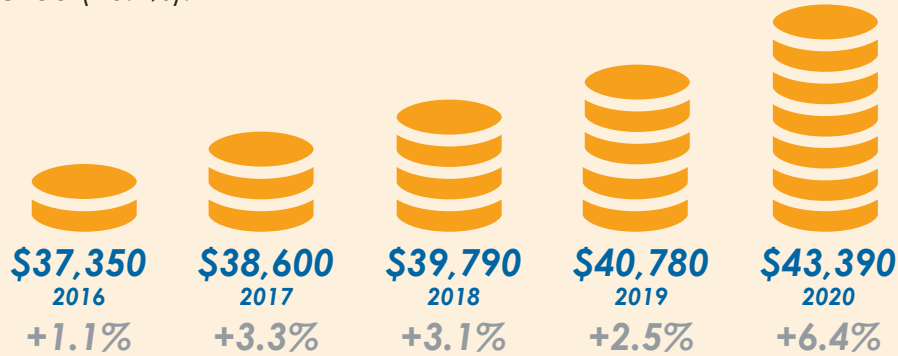
Median employment income increased from 2016 to 2019 but stayed relatively stable from 2019 to 2020.

The increase in total income might have been due to government income supports related to the COVID-19 pandemic. This could explain the higher increase in total income for **females (+9.2%)** compared to **males (+4.2%)** from 2019 to 2020, since females were more likely to receive such support in Canada (Statistics Canada 2022b).

6. Share of the Workforce

Occupations[xxi]

- The top five occupations for the NSWPB region in 2021 were:

1.
Sales and Service
23%

2.
Trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations
19%

3.
Education, law and social, community and government services
16%

4.
Business, finance and administration
15%

5.
Health
11%
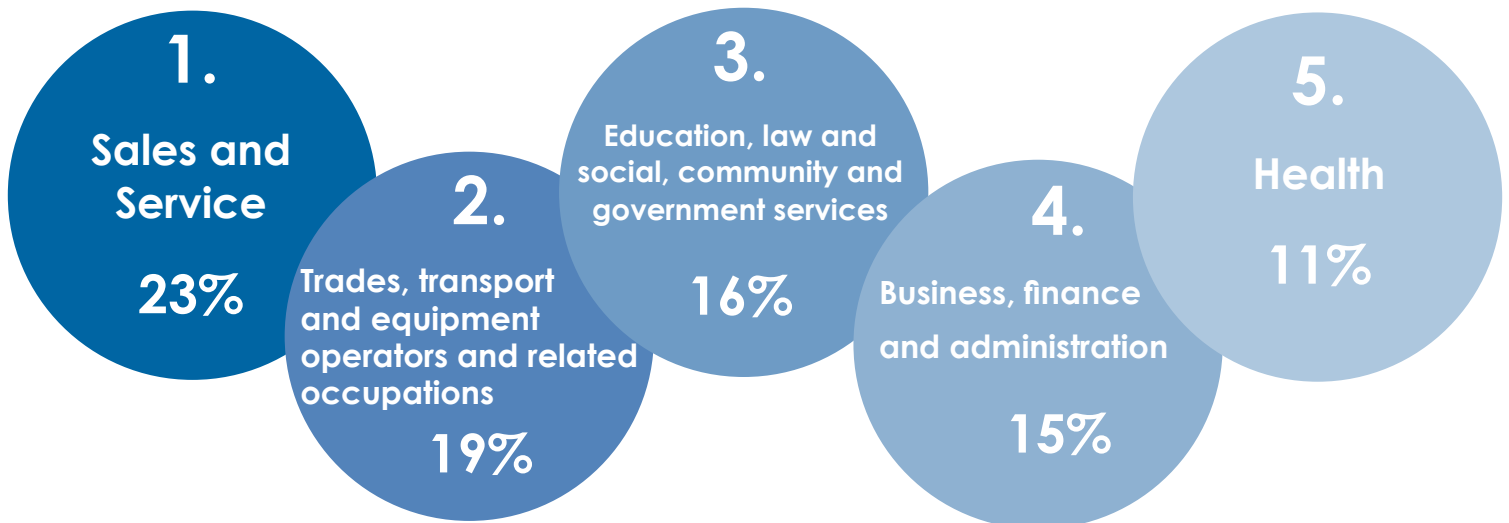
- This means that these five occupations account for **85% of the workforce.**

- Of these five, **Health** was the occupation with the largest growth since 2016 (+23%).

Gender breakdown[xxii]

- The occupations with a higher percentage of men than women were:

93% Trades, transport and equipment operators and related

89% Manufacturing and utilities

85% Natural resources, agriculture and related production

77% Natural and applied sciences

63% Legislative and senior management
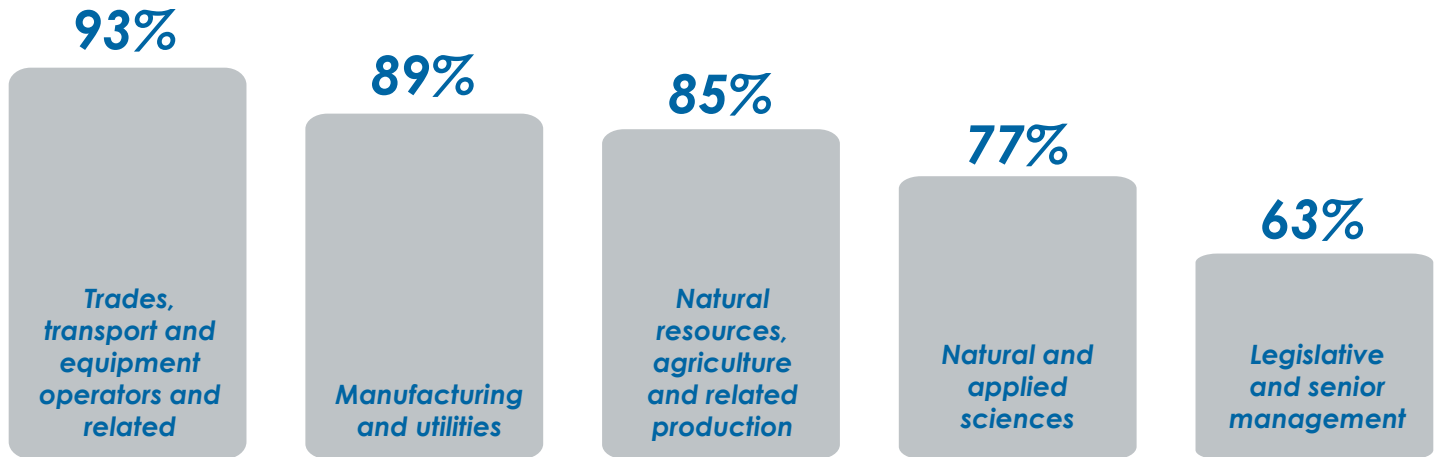
- The occupations with a higher percentage of women than men were:

78% Health

73% Business, finance and administration

67% Education, law and social, community and government services

56% Art, culture, recreation and sport

54% Sales and service
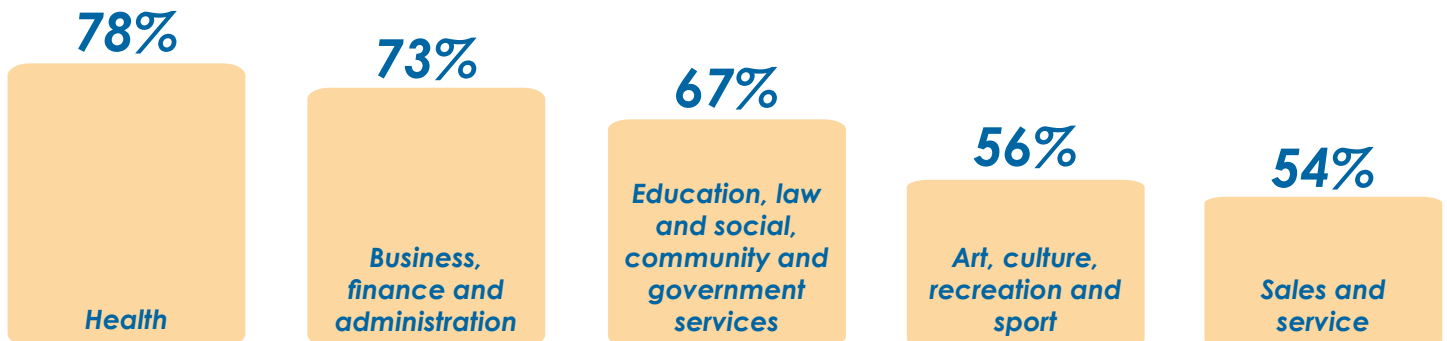
Industries[xxvi]

The top ten industries in the NSWPB region, based on the number of jobs, employed **82% of the workforce** in 2021.

18%

82%

■ Top 10 industries
■ Other industries
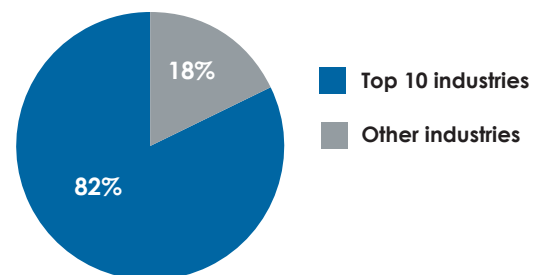
The **biggest employer** in 2021 was the **Health care and social assistance** industry with **13,030 jobs**, (**20%** of the employment in the region).

- Of the top ten industries, this was also the industry that **grew the most (+9%)** from 2016 to 2021, followed closely by Transportation and warehousing (+8%).

20%

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Gender breakdown[xxiv]

- For **men**, the **Construction** and **Retail trade** industries were the region's two biggest employers in 2021 in the region, each accounting for **12%** of the total employment.

- Combined, the **top ten** industries for **men** employed **72%** of the male workforce in 2021.

12% each

34%

- For **women**, the **Health care** and **social assistance** industry was the biggest employer in 2021 in the region, accounting for **34%** of the total employment.

- Combined, the **top ten** industries for **women** employed **89%** of the female workforce in 2021.

- The top employers industries were less balanced for women than for men. Women were primarily employed in the Health care and social assistance industry, and were prominent in the Educational services and Retail trade industries. Together, these **three industries** accounted for **59%** of all women employed in the region in 2021.

- **Among men, seven industries** combined accounted for a similar share of employment **(61%)**. Also, the top ten industries for women accounted for 15% more of their share of the workforce than the top ten industries did among men. Therefore, **jobs are more concentrated in some industries for women than men.**

7. Educational Attainment[xxv]

Most people in 2021 had **some type of post-secondary education.** Of these, the most common level of education was college, CEGEP or other non-university certificate or diploma. This has been the case since at least 2011.

From 2016 to 2021, the number people with a **Bachelor's degree or higher increased** considerably by **+15.4%**, the highest increase among education levels.

15.4%
2016-2021

- The second highest increase during this period (+9.2%) was for high school completion.

- Improving high school completion has significant impacts on improving human capital, increasing job mobility, and allowing workers to further their education and training.

The **largest decrease** from 2016 to 2021 **(-14.1%)** occurred among people with **no certificate, diploma or degree.**
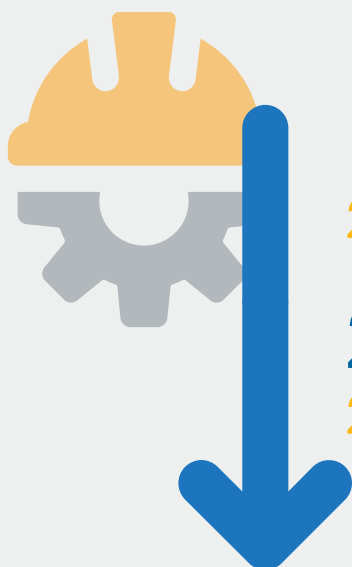
12.7%
2016-2021

26.6%
2011-2021

- **Apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma** also saw a **significant decrease (-12.7%)** in those years. That is part of a longer trend, with 2011 to 2016 demonstrating a decline of -16%.

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Gender breakdown[xxvi]

Those with an **apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma** in 2021 were predominantly **men (81%).**

- This is part of a longer trend that has been happening since at least 2011.

- From 2016 to 2021, the decreases in the number of women (-13%) and men (-12%) with an **apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma** were similar.

8. Business Counts

Business Sectors[xxvii]
2-digit NAICS[xxviii]

- In December 2022, there were **11,145** businesses in the NSWPB region.
  - That is an increase from 10,687 in 2021 and 10,579 in 2020.

- **Real estate, rental, and leasing** businesses were the most common types of businesses in the NSWPB region in December 2022, (**20% of all businesses**, or 2,181 establishments). That has been the case since at least December 2020.

- The top six types of businesses between 2020 and 2022 were:

	2020	2021	2022	Percentage of businesses in 2022
Real estate and rental and leasing	1,914	2,103	2,181	20%
Health care and social assistance	1,048	1,006	1,113	10%
Construction	945	926	964	9%
Retail Trade	870	874	876	8%
Other services (except public administration)	862	822	858	8%
Professional, scientific and technical services	789	786	857	8%

Of these six, the Health care and social assistance sector experienced the largest increase (+10.6%) in number of businesses from December 2021 to 2022. However, that followed a decrease of -4.0% from 2020 to 2021, with a compounded increase from 2020 to 2022 of +6.0%.

The Professional, scientific and technical services sector experienced the second highest increase from 2021 to 2022 (+9.0%).

Business counts by number of employees

In December 2022, **61%** of businesses **(6,819)** in the NSWPB region **did not have employees.** That is an increase of **+8.5%,** or 532 owner-only businesses, since 2020.

This was the second highest increase during this period, only after businesses with **200 to 499 employees,** which increased by **+47.4%** or 9 businesses, between December 2020 and 2022.

Among businesses with employees, those with **1 to 4 employees** accounted for the largest share in December 2022 (45%, or **1,944** businesses).

Small businesses (i.e. those with up to 100 employees) made up **97%** of the businesses with employees in the NSWPB region in December 2022.[xxix]

These trends on business counts and number of employees have been the case since at least December 2020.

Business Subsectors[xxx]

In terms of the number of establishments, **Real estate** was the **largest** business subsector in the NSWPB region in December 2022, accounting for **19%** **(2,114)** of **businesses**.

Five subsectors, including Real estate, accounted for approximately **four out of ten** **(43%)** of all businesses in the NSWPB region in December 2022:

Real estate	**19%**
Ambulatory health care services	**8%**
Professional, scientific and technical services	**8%**
Specialty trade contractors	**5%**
Securities, commodity contracts, and other financial investment and related activities	**4%**
Total	**43%**

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Labour Market Consultations

Throughout the month of December 2022, various community actors were asked about what a successful labour market looks like, emerging trends in the local economy, human capacity building, and their short- and medium-term workforce priorities going forward.

The focus group participants represented a variety of industries and areas of expertise, such as Indigenous and non-Indigenous economic development, immigration, municipal government, education, employment and training, and business. Additionally, the individuals were located in large and small communities around the Thunder Bay District. Overall, the key goal was to provide a range of voices and perspectives that could speak to the current and future landscape of the labour market.

Aiming for Success

There were several key themes that arose among participants when asked what a successful economy/labour force could look like and what could ensure this success. Of course, the execution of the following items would involve multiple actors—First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples, political leaders, industry champions, employers, and so on.

Indigenous Peoples and Prosperity:
Focus group participants stated that there must be full participation of Indigenous peoples—First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples—in the labour force and economy and encouragement of their economic and community prosperity through economic catalysts. Training and education options should be available to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples, and greater collaboration with Indigenous training organizations is a must.

Diversification and innovation:
Focus group participants noted a diversification of jobs and industries and encouraging innovation is vital. Strategic investments will be critical.

Retention:

Attracting and retaining newcomers, such as students, is one way to fill labour market shortages. Also, ensuring spouses find employment aids in retention. Quality of life for everyone is a key factor in encouraging people to stay in the community. Finally, providing education and training on new system changes to organizations that facilitate immigration will enable them to offer more effective assistance to newcomers.
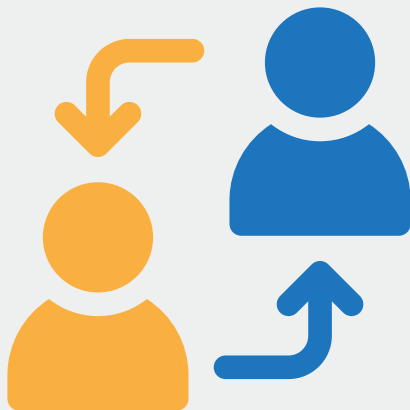
Making Labour Market Connections:

Focus group participants stated that newcomers and jobseekers need to be better connected to employers and workforce resources to fill in-demand jobs and ensure consistent labour market participation. That needs to occur not only while people are in Canada, but also before their arrival. Additionally, connecting them to informal networks and ensuring people are transferred between industry projects are musts for success.

Data:

Having data on hand about the labour market and economy will aid in appropriate and informed decision-making.

Several factors were noted as potential barriers to success. First, a lack of physicians and housing can deter people from living in Northern Ontario communities. Second, industry project delays mean constant training, which impacts labour market participation. Addressing the labour market shortages is a must as, in some small communities, big businesses are stealing employees from smaller ones. Finally, coordination, in general, is necessary.

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Emerging Trends

Focus group participants provided various examples of new industries and occupations emerging in the local economy. Some of these are not exactly "new" but are growing and changing. These include: service sector jobs, digital opportunities, mining, healthcare, tourism and hospitality, and aerospace. Also, it was noted that big industry projects can spur numerous in-demand occupations in a community, such as construction for housing, entertainment, and so on.

Other general comments were:

- The need to encourage entrepreneurship and educate about different supports available for those looking to start their own business. In this regard, coordination is necessary to ensure a strong entrepreneurial spirit;

- The opportunities the Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot (RNIP) could bring to their community;

- Specific connection and alignment between the labour force and post-secondary education institutions to include: [xxxi]
  - prepping students for the workforce;
  - alignment between labour force demand and supply of graduates; and
  - funding support for employers looking to hire students.

Strengthening Human Capital

While numerous ways exist to increase human capital levels, the focus groups identified a few specific ones. The first was continued marketing to attract and retain labour market talent. Second, connect job seekers that are in training to employers. And third, strengthening the pathway from high school to post-secondary education, for example, by ensuring opportunities are accessible and communicated to all communities.

Workforce Priorities

The most commonly shared priority was filling jobs, with different approaches taken to achieve this goal. Some of the approaches were educating students about local job opportunities, connecting employers with post-secondary programs that match their field, and the RNIP program.

Other priorities included:

- addressing housing availability;
- ensuring training opportunities are available;
- encouraging a robust trades sector;
- addressing the minimum wage legislation; and
- knowledge transfer of priorities and initiatives between service providers, so momentum is not lost on work within this sector.

Employment Ontario Data Review

All data tell a story, and those closely involved with employment activities are the ones who can best tell this story. For this reason, their input is essential to define labour market challenges and opportunities going forward. Therefore, part of the exercise with focus groups was reviewing employment data for the NSWPB region. From the data they were presented, participants were able to identify long-term trends that have been happening in the region and recent positive and not-so-positive changes, leading to examples of best practices and possible improvements.

Challenges Facing Clients

There were several challenges identified by focus group participants. During discussions, it was noted that these issues are not new, but they have been amplified due to the pandemic.

Some commonly cited were:

- Digital literacy;

- How different wants and needs of jobseekers could create barriers to accessing jobs. Examples include,
  - being scheduled to work from 9 to 5 may mean job seekers are not able to pick up kids from school, and
  - job seekers censoring opportunities they feel are not for them;

- The lack of a driver's license can be a barrier to accessing some jobs;

- General improvement of life skills to increase job mobility, and

- A need for bilingualism. One organization noted that offering bilingual services is not within their mandate; yet, they are the only ones in the community who can do so.

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# Gaps and Challenges in Service and Program Delivery

There were several issues. However, most comments revolved around three main ones:

- The lack of tools, which hinders the organization's ability to hitting more milestones with clients;

- Forms required by the Ministry are incompatible with the digital space the organizations are working in. This causes issues such as:
  - working with clients on forms with signatures;
  - clients uncomfortable sharing info over the phone with the organization as they fill it out together;
  - opening and filling in the forms, and
  - people dropping out because the process is too complicated; and

- Accessibility of digital and in-person services. One organization noted that if they had funding, they could send staff to complete services on-site with clients instead of at the main centre.

Working Together

Most organizations interviewed work with multiple agencies; however, one organization in a smaller community said they only work with one agency. The reason for the lack of collaboration is the fear of funding loss by not hitting Ministry targets. This volume element was also brought up again. Another organization noted that they help people beyond their mandate to ensure volumes are hit.
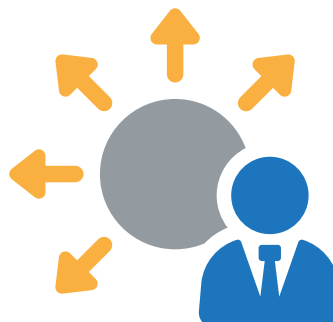
Lessons from COVID-19

Based on the experiences of COVID-19, the EO organizations interviewed said that they continue to use digital service delivery, despite the easing of restrictions. Examples include:

*   holding job fairs online;

*   refining the intake process; and

*   using Zoom as the primary delivery platform.

These strategies led to greater efficiency and accessibility and more personal client time. One organization noted that it altered services for people who weren't comfortable using Zoom so that they could still do activities and assignments at home. However, another organization stated that it is seeing a reversal where clients now want to meet in person. This works for some communities but not all since some do not have the additional staff available.

Priorities Going Forward

Aside from one organization stating that staffing will be an issue in meeting future industry demand in their community, other organizations noted that hitting client volume targets is a priority. To do that, they noted actions such as developing community partnerships and service diversification.

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Action Items

The analysis and insights developed in the creation of this report and as a continuation of last year's Local Labour Market Plan identified a few action points for the NSWPB in the next year. Such points can enable the NSWPB to continue supporting local communities, economies, and labour markets.

Data and Research

1. Continue to expand the labour market information that is **readily available** to inform decision-making and support planning in local communities, particularly related to current and future labour demand and skills supply.

Engagement and Collaboration

2. Increase **collaboration with Indigenous organizations.**

3. **Work as a connector,** building bridges between employers or workforce resources and students, newcomers, or jobseekers.

4. Provide **coordination** to create and maintain a **robust entrepreneurial spirit** in communities.

5. Support the **connection and alignment** of **post-secondary institutions and labour market demands.**

6. Provide **guidance** for employers looking for **funding to hire students.**

7. Strengthen human capital by helping to **solidify the pathway** from **high school to post-secondary education**, and communicating educational opportunities to all communities.

8. Encourage **knowledge transfer** between **service providers** regarding their initiatives and priorities.

9. **Support community partnerships and service diversi ication** to reach program targets set by the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development of Ontario.

Programs and Tools[xxxiii]

10. Support the provision of **training and education options to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples.**

11. Provide programs and tools that ensure the **full participation** of **Indigenous peoples** in the **economy and labour force.**

12. Continue taking advantage of opportunities brought by the Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot to support the increase in **attraction and retention of newcomers,** including the need to provide **employment to spouses.**

13. Supply guidance when possible to encourage strategic investments that **foster innovation and diversi ication** in jobs and industries.

14. Support **training** on **system changes**, such as change in policies and grants, for organizations that **facilitate immigration.**

15. Encourage the promotion of **continued marketing of the region** to **attract and retain skilled labour,** not only newcomers.

16. Ensure **training** opportunities are **available** and **easily accessible.**

17. Create, showcase, and promote programs and tools that strengthen **local digital literacy.**

18. Encourage the **attainment of life skills,** such as getting driver's licenses and increasing bilingualism, to create opportunities for **increased** local **income.**

19. When possible and in the scope of a workforce planning board, enhance the **availability of tools** that allow **Employment Ontario organizations** to improve their performance by hitting more milestone tasks with their clients.

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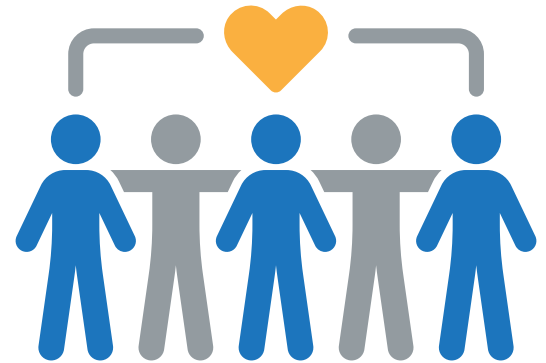
Conclusion

Providing authoritative, evidence-based research, expert insights, and identifying employment trends is at the heart of NSWPB's mandate. This local labour market plan delivers on that, drawing on consultations with local labour market organizations and the most up-to-date data. It provides a base that can inform the planning process going forward. The action points, recommendations, and insights from field experts in this report enable NSWPB to identify workforce opportunities and initiate development strategies in its service area. Since workforce planning is a continuous activity, such information builds on last year's labour market picture and will equally contribute to upcoming reports and planning efforts.

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End Notes

[i] Please refer to appendix A for a complete list of acronyms used in this report.

[ii] Please see appendix B for a complete list of communities included in the NSWPB service area.

[iii] Please refer to appendix C for a list of EO and non-EO service providers in the NSWPB region.

[iv] For a complete overview of these data, please refer to the data document annexed to this report.

[v] These data were sourced from Statistics Canada (2023g). The NSWPB region includes data for the Thunder Bay District minus Osnaburgh and Ojibway Nation of Saugeen plus Ring of Fire communities using 2016 boundaries (Statistics Canada 2023g).

[vi] Data from Statistics Canada (2023e). A census metropolitan area "is formed by one or more adjacent municipalities centred on a population centre (known as the core); a CMA must have a total population of at least 100,000, of which 50,000 or more must live in the core" (ibid.). These data use 2016 census boundaries (ibid.).

[vii] Data from Statistics Canada (2022f). Data for Lake Nipigon, Lac des Mille Lacs, and Lansdowne House were "suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the Statistics Act" (ibid.). Data from a 25 per cent sample of the 2021 Census (ibid.).

[viii] Data sourced from Statistics Canada (2023e, 2023g). These data use 2016 census boundaries (Statistics Canada 2023g).

[ix] Data sourced from Statistics Canada (2022e, 2023g). The national average data are from the third quarter of 2021 and 2022 (Statistics Canada 2022e).

[x] Data from Statistics Canada (2023g).

[xi] Data for the District of Thunder Bay, since data at the municipality level (census subdivision) was unavailable (Statistics Canada 2023f). Data based on 2016 census boundaries, as sourced from Statistics Canada (ibid.).

[xii] The components of population growth are natural change (birth minus deaths), net immigration flows (immigration received minus immigrants that migrated to other places), net interprovincial migration (migrants received from other provinces minus migrants lost to other provinces), net intraprovincial migration (migrants received from other parts of Ontario that are not the District of Thunder Bay and migrants lost to other parts of the province), and net non-permanent residents (non-permanent residents received minus those that migrated to other places; Statistics Canada 2023f).

[xiii] Data from Statistics Canada (2023f). In the District of Thunder Bay, net immigration flows represented 15 per cent of the total population growth in 2016/2017, 12 per cent in 2017/2018, 15 per cent in 2018/2019, and 26 per cent in 2019/2020 (ibid.). The exception is 2020/2021, where net immigration flows accounted for 100 per cent of the population growth in the district, given that the net number of non-permanent residents was negative for the first time in at least the five previous years (likely due to COVID-19 restrictions to enter Canada; ibid.). In 2021/2022, net immigration flows represented 55 per cent of the total population growth (ibid.).

[xiv] Data for this section were sourced from the Ontario Ministry of Finance (2022) and Rizzuto and Lefebvre (2022, 25).

[xv] The District of Thunder Bay is different from the NSWPB region. The District of Thunder Bay is used in this report as defined by Statistics Canada's 2021 Census (Statistics Canada 2023c). Thele the NSWPB region includes data for the Thunder Bay District, minus Osnaburgh and Ojibway Nation of Saugeen, plus Ring of Fire communities using 2016 boundaries (Statistics Canada 2023g).

[xvi] According to Helfand-Green (2018).

[xvii] All the data from this section have been extracted from Statistics Canada and present numbers only for Thunder Bay CMA (2023d).

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xviii This proportion is called the participation rate. Data are for Thunder Bay CMA because data at the municipality (census subdivision) level were not available (Statistics Canada 2023d). Data are for the population ages 15 and over (ibid.).

xix "Males" and "females" represent sex at birth (Statistics Canada 2023d).

xx All data for this section were sourced from Statistics Canada and refer only to Thunder Bay CMA (Statistics Canada 2022d). "Males" and "females" represent sex at birth (ibid.). These data are from tax filers, who are "people who filed a tax return for the reference year and were alive at the end of the year" (ibid.).

xxi All data for the Occupations section were sourced from Statistics Canada (2022i) and Rizzuto and Lefebvre (2022). Numbers contain small variations due to suppressed data in cases with small counts to meet the confidentiality requirements of the Statistics Act, with data for Lake Nipigon, Lac des Mille Lacs, and Lansdowne House completely suppressed (Statistics Canada 2022i). Data are from a 25 per cent sample for those with employment, "15 years and over, in private households" (ibid). Occupations are categorized in broad categories through the one-digit National Occupational Classification (ibid.).

xxii In this section, "men" "includes men (and/or boys), as well as some non-binary persons," and "women" "includes women (and/or girls), as well as some non-binary persons" (Statistics Canada 2022i).

xxiii All data for the Industries section were sourced from Statistics Canada (2013b, 2017, 2022h). 2021 and 2016 data are from a 25 per cent sample of the census for those with employment, "15 years and over, in private households" (Statistics Canada 2017, 2022h). The 2011 data are from the 2011 National Household Survey (Statistics Canada 2013b). Numbers have small variations due to suppressed data in cases with small counts to meet the confidentiality requirements of the Statistics Act (2013b, 2017, 2022h). The 2021 data for Lake Nipigon, Lac des Mille Lacs, and Lansdowne House are completely suppressed; 2016 data for Lake Nipigon, Seine River, Lac des Mille Lacs, and Lansdowne House are completely suppressed (Statistics Canada 2017, 2022h). Data for 2011 are limited to the District of Thunder Bay due to data limitations (Statistics Canada 2013b); therefore, comparisons with 2011 data should be made with caution. The 2021 "industry data are produced according to the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) Canada 2017 Version 3.0." (Statistics Canada 2022h). The 2016 industry data are "based on North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) 2012" (Statistics Canada 2017). The 2011 industry data are "based on North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) 2007" (Statistics Canada 2013b).

xxiv "Men" "includes men (and/or boys), as well as some non-binary persons," and "women" "includes "women (and/or girls), as well as some non-binary persons" (Statistics Canada 2022h).

xxv All data for the Educational Attainment section were sourced from Statistics Canada (2013a, 2018a, 2022g). Data contain small variations due to suppressed data in cases with small counts to meet the confidentiality requirements of the Statistics Act (2013a, 2018a, 2022g). The 2021 data for Lake Nipigon, Lac des Mille Lacs, and Lansdowne House are completely suppressed (Statistics Canada 2022g). The 2016 data for Lake Nipigon, Seine River, Lac des Mille Lacs, and Lansdowne House are completely suppressed (Statistics Canada 2018a). The 2011 data for Nipigon, Marathon, Pic River, Gull River, Manitouwadge, Lake Nipigon, Seine River, Lac des Mille Lacs, Fort Hope 64, Webequie, Lansdowne House, and Summer Beaver were suppressed in the 2011 National Household Survey (Statistics Canada 2013a). The 2021 and 2016 data are from a 25 per cent sample of the census for the "population aged 15 years and over in private households" (Statistics Canada 2018a, 2022g). The 2021 and 2016 data are from a 25 per cent sample of the census for the "population aged 15 years and over in private households" (ibid.). The 2011 data are from the 2011 National Household Survey (Statistics Canada 2013a).

xxvi For 2021 data, "men" "includes men (and/or boys), as well as some non-binary persons," and "women" "includes women (and/or girls), as well as some non-binary persons" (Statistics Canada 2022g). For 2016 and 2011 data, "men" and "women" represent sex at birth (Statistics Canada 2013a, 2018a).

xxvii All data for the business sectors section are based on location counts (Statistics Canada 2021, 2022a, 2023b). "Statistics Canada advises cautious interpretation of period-to-period changes in these counts because they can be affected by administrative or methodological changes in the underlying Business Register data" (Statistics Canada 2023a). The 2022 data for Seine River was suppressed (Statistics Canada 2023b).

xxviii NAICS refers to North American Industry Classification System.

xxix The definition of small businesses is based on Statistics Canada's definition (Statistics Canada 2022c).

xxx All data for the Business Subsectors section was sourced from Statistics Canada (2023b, 2023h, 2023i). Data are based on location counts (ibid.). "Statistics Canada advises cautious interpretation of period-to-period changes in these counts because they can be affected by administrative or methodological changes in the underlying Business Register data" (Statistics Canada 2023a). The 2022 data for Seine River were suppressed (Statistics Canada 2023b).

xxxi The Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot is a community-led project that focuses on providing a pathway to permanent residence in Canada. There are 11 participating communities across Canada, one of which is Thunder Bay. Sault Ste Marie, Timmins, Greater Sudbury, and North Bay are also participating in the pilot.

xxxii To access the Employment Ontario data presented to focus group participants, please refer to the data document annexed to this report.

xxxiii Please refer to appendix D for some of the labour market tools provided by NSWPB and NPI.

xxxiv Please see Statistics Canada (2018b) for a complete list of acronyms used in the 2016 Census.

xxxv Geraldton Council office covers the Municipality of Greenstone.

xxxvi Terrace Bay Council office covers the North Shore of Lake Superior.

xxxvii Thunder Bay Council office covers Kakabeka to Nipigon.

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Appendix A: Acronyms

Acronym	Description
CMA	Census Metropolitan Area
BI	Baakaakonaanan Ishkwaandemonan
EO	Employment Ontario
NAICS	North American Industry Classification System
NPI	Northern Policy Institute
NSWPB	North Superior Workforce Planning Board
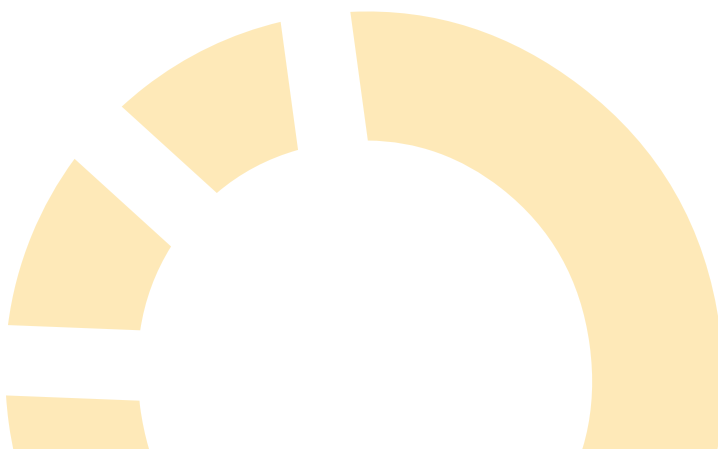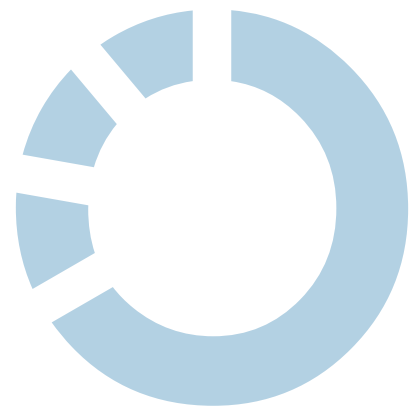
Appendix B: Communities in the NSWPB Region

As identified in the 2021-2022 Local Labour Market Plan, three Métis communities have been added to the communities in the NSWPB service region. Although the Métis Nation of Ontario Community Council offices listed 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 District	Common Community Name	Census Subdivision Name, Type [xxxii]
Thunder Bay	Animbiigoo Zaagi'igan Anishinaabek (Lake Nipigon Ojibway First Nation)	Lake Nipigon, IRI
Thunder Bay	Aroland First Nation	Aroland 83, IRI
Thunder Bay	Biigtigong Nishnaabeg (Ojibways of the Pic River First Nation)	Pic River 50, IRI
Thunder Bay	Biinjitiwaabik Zaaging Anishinaabek (Rocky Bay First Nation)	Rocky Bay 1, IRI
Thunder Bay	Bingwi Neyaashi Anishinaabek (Sand Point First Nation)	
Thunder Bay	Conmee	Conmee, TP
Thunder Bay	Dorion	Dorion, TP
Kenora	Eabametoong First Nation (Fort Hope)	Fort Hope 64, IRI
Thunder Bay	Fort William First Nation	Fort William 52, IRI
Thunder Bay	Gillies	Gillies, TP
Thunder Bay	Ginoogaming First Nation (Long Lake #77 First Nation)	Ginoogaming First Nation, IRI
Thunder Bay	Greenstone, Municipality of	Greenstone, MU
Thunder Bay	Greenstone Métis Community[xxxv]	
Thunder Bay	Kiashke Zaaging Anishinaabek (Gull Bay First Nation)	
Thunder Bay	Lac des Mille Lacs First Nation	Lac Des Mille Lacs 22A1, IRI
Thunder Bay	Long Lake #58 First Nation	Long Lake 58, IRI
Thunder Bay	Manitouwadge	Manitouwadge, TP
Thunder Bay	Marathon	Marathon, TP
Kenora	Marten Falls First Nation	Marten Falls 65, IRI
Thunder Bay	Neebing	Neebing, MU
Kenora	Neskantaga First Nation (Landsdowne House)	Lansdowne House, S-E
Kenora	Nibinamik First Nation (Summer Beaver)	Summer Beaver, S-E
Thunder Bay	Nipigon	Nipigon, TP
Thunder Bay	O'Connor	O'Connor, TP
Thunder Bay	Oliver Paipoonge	Oliver Paipoonge, MU

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Thunder Bay	Pawgwasheeng (Pays Plat First Nation)	Pays Plat 51, IRI
Thunder Bay	Pic Mobert First Nation	Pic Mobert N/S, IRI
Thunder Bay	Red Rock	Red Rock, TP
Thunder Bay	Red Rock Indian Band/Lake Helen First Nation	Lake Helen 53A, IRI
Thunder Bay	Schreiber	Schreiber, TP
Thunder Bay	Shuniah	Shuniah, MU
Thunder Bay	Terrace Bay	Terrace Bay, TP
Thunder Bay	Superior North Shore Métis Community [xxxvi]	
Thunder Bay	Thunder Bay	Thunder Bay, CY
Thunder Bay	Thunder Bay, Unorganized	Thunder Bay, Unorganized, NO
Thunder Bay	Thunder Bay Métis Community [xxxvii]	
Kenora	Webequie First Nation	Webequie, IRI
Thunder Bay	Whitesand First Nation	Whitesand, IRI
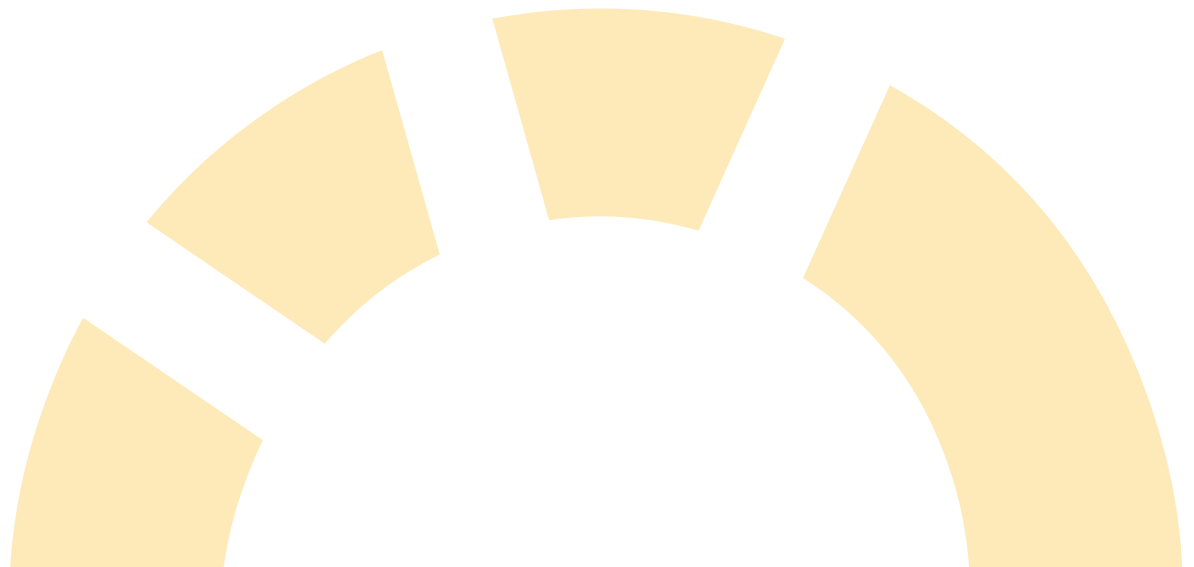
Appendix C: EO and non-EO Employment and Training Service Providers

Organization Name	Website
Anishinabek Employment and Training Services	https://www.aets.org/
Canadian Hearing Society (Northern Literacy and Lifeskills Program)	https://www.chs.ca/service/literacy-and-basic-skills
Canadian Mental Health Association – Thunder Bay	https://cmha.ca/
Centre de Formation Manitouwadge Learning Centre	https://www.facebook.com/ManitouwadgeLearning/
Centre de formation pour adultes de Greenstone	http://www.cfag.ca
Community Living Thunder Bay	http://www.cltb.ca
Confederation College	www.confederationcollege.ca/
Fort William First Nation	https://fwfn.com/
Frontier College	https://www.frontiercollege.ca/
Independent Living Resource Centre Thunder Bay	http://www.ilrctbay.com/
Kiikenomaga Kikenjigewen Employment & Training Services	www.kkets.ca/
Lakehead University – Student Success Centre	https://www.lakeheadu.ca/current-students/student-success-centre
Literacy Northwest	https://www.northernliteracy.ca/
March of Dimes Canada	https://www.marchofdimes.ca/
Métis Nation of Ontario	www.metisnation.org/
MTW Employment Services	https://www.mtwjobassist.ca/
Northwest Employment Works	www.northwestworks.ca/
Novocentre (Alpha Thunder Bay)	https://novocentre.com
Ontario Native Women's Association	www.onwa.ca/
Oshki-Pimache-O-Win Education and Training Institute	www.oshki.ca/
PARO Centre for Women's Enterprise	www.paro.ca/
Réseau de soutien à l'immigration francophone du Nord de l'Ontario	http://reseaudunord.ca/
Seven Generations Education Institute	http://www.7generations.org/
St. Joseph's Care Group – Employment Options Program	http://www.sjcg.net/services/mental-health_addictions/housing-employment/employment.aspx

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Superior North Adult Learning Association	
The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board	https://www.tbdssab.ca/
Thunder Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre	https://tbifc.ca/
Thunder Bay Literacy Group	https://www.tblg.org/
Thunderbird Friendship Centre	https://ofifc.org/friendship-centre/thunderbird-friendship-centre-geraldton/
YES Employment Services	www.yesjobsnow.com/

Appendix D: NSWPB and NPI Labour Market Tools, Programs, and Reports

NSWPB

- **Northwest Connector:** The Northwest Connector Program helps talent discover opportunities by putting trained job seekers directly in touch with local businesspeople, civil servants, and community leaders so they can grow their professional networks, tap into Northwestern Ontario's hidden job market, and successfully integrate into the Thunder Bay area.

- **WorkSCAPE Northwest:** WorkSCAPE (Skills, Careers, Assets, and Programs Explorer) Northwest is a suite of labour market tools that provides an extensive representation of the labour market in the NSWPB region. It aggregates job postings from 25 sources along with a host of community resources, a career pathway explorer, and more into one central location that the public can access. WorkSCAPE Northwest will simplify the way people look for work while enhancing knowledge of the local labour market by generating timely reports on labour supply and demand data.

NPI & NSWPB Partnered Programs and Tools

- **Baakaakonaanan Ishkwaandemonan (BI):** This program focuses on identifying current best practices and promoting existing resources available for supporting the hiring of newcomers and Indigenous job seekers. The goal of the BI program is to recognize the efforts made by employers to create inclusive workplaces and encourage employers to understand the value and benefit of hiring newcomers and Indigenous job seekers.

- **Community Accounts:** Community Accounts is an innovative information system providing Northern Ontarians with a reliable source of community, regional, and provincial data on key economic and social indicators. This resource aims to encourage information sharing and provides communities with a greater understanding of their local area and Northern Ontario as a whole. Community Accounts provides users with a single comprehensive source of data that would normally not be readily available, too costly to obtain, or too time-consuming to retrieve and compile.

- **Employment Calculator:** Just as all politics are local, so too is all employment. In census years, we can secure a great deal of information about local communities throughout the Thunder Bay region. In between census years, it is very difficult to measure changes in those smaller northern communities. It is possible, however, to estimate those changes. This is what the Employment Calculator does. Using historical trends, we have developed community-specific formulas to estimate workforce indicators in the years ahead and before the next census data is released.

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About Northern Policy Institute

Related Research

Northern Policy Institute is Northern Ontario's independent, evidence-driven think tank. We perform research, analyze data, and disseminate ideas. Our mission is to enhance Northern Ontario's capacity to take the lead position on socio-economic policy that impacts our communities, our province, our country, and our world.

We believe in partnership, collaboration, communication, and cooperation. Our team seeks to do inclusive research that involves broad engagement and delivers recommendations for specific, measurable action. Our success depends on our partnerships with other entities based in or passionate about Northern Ontario.

Our permanent offices are in Thunder Bay, Sudbury, and Kirkland Lake. During the summer months we have satellite offices in other regions of Northern Ontario staffed by teams of Experience North placements. These placements are university and college students working in your community on issues important to you and your neighbours.

Setting the Course: Navigating the North Superior Workforce in 2022–2023
Rachel Rizzuto and Dr. Martin Lefebvre

On the Road to Recovery: Becoming A Superior Workforce post COVID-19 2020-2021 Local Labour Market Plan
Northern Superior Workforce Planning Board

Let's Get to Work: New Tools Needed in the Employer Recruitment Toolbox for Newcomers (Thunder Bay)
Mercedes Labelle

Assessing Labour Market Shortages in the City of Thunder Bay
Alex Ross

To stay connected or get involved, please contact us at:

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