

New Program Helps Potential Newcomers and Migrants find their Employment Match

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THUNDER BAY – Local partners have come together to launch the *Thunder Bay Community Matchmaker project*, a program that offers employability and entrepreneurship services for potential immigrants, migrants within Canada, and employers seeking international sources of skilled workers.

This new project is a partnership between the North Superior Workforce Planning Board, La Société Économique de l'Ontario, the Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce, the Thunder Bay Community Economic Development Commission, and Northern Policy Institute.

In order to maintain current population levels, Ontario's northern regions need to attract 150,000 people by the year 2041. Attracting immigrants and migrants within Canada to rural communities has a number of important social and economic benefits. Skilled workers require housing, services, and products, which will provide broader benefits, including job creation, to the community.

“Community Matchmaker is designed to help northern and rural communities build a skilled workforce and fill recognized labour shortages by helping potential immigrants and international students secure firm job offers, stated NPI President & CEO Charles Cirtwill. “Securing a job offer expedites the permanent residency process helping newcomers to achieve citizenship, and contribute positively to Northern Ontario.”

“A large majority of newcomers indicate that they would like to stay in Thunder Bay if they were able to find employment, stated NSWPB Executive Director Madge Richardson. “Our Community Matchmaker provides that direct link and personal touch assisting potential immigrants and international students in their job search and securing employment.”

Program services include:

- Personalized appointments to assess specific needs and target assistance
- Professional orientation with regards to skills
- Tips and action plans for job searching
- Northern Ontario Labour Market information
- Help with resume and cover letter writing according to the Canadian model
- Various workshops related to employability
- Preparation for job interviews
- Job search assistance
- Help to start a business
- Guidance in navigating the immigration and job placement process
- Matching assistance for employers with international talent

“Hiring an immigrant can be an intimidating and confusing process for small business, leaving employers frustrated and reducing job opportunities for newcomers,” said Charla Robinson, President of the Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce. “The Chamber is pleased to support the Matchmaker project that provides hands-on support for employers through the immigration process and helps newcomers find meaningful work in their new community.”

“La Société Économique de l’Ontario (SEO) is pleased to be a contributing partner to this initiative, we consider it very important to increase opportunities for newcomers to access employment in northern Ontario,” stated Pierre Tessier, Executive Director, SEO.

As an applied research project of Northern Policy Institute, the program will be assessed for its efficiency and effectiveness in increasing international placements and national migrants in the Thunder Bay region. If successful, the program could be rolled out in Northwestern Ontario and beyond. The evidence collected might also be used to incorporate these clients and approaches into existing programs through policy and regulatory changes.

For more information, visit www.northernpolicy.ca/communitymatchmaker or contact Yaye Peukassa, Employability and Entrepreneurship Counsellor at [YPEukassa@SEO-ont.ca](mailto:YPeukassa@SEO-ont.ca) or 844-668-7333 ext. 314