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For Immediate Release

## Northern Policy Institute Launches Free Community Data Portal

**April 26, 2018** – Northern Policy Institute (NPI) and its partners have introduced a new online tool called “*Community Accounts*” that, for the first time, provides Northern Ontarians with open access to information on key economic and social indicators at the community level. This is the latest resource from NPI that aims to encourage information sharing and provides communities with a greater understanding of their local area and Northern Ontario as a whole.

This project is a partnership between Northern Policy Institute, North Superior Workforce Planning Board (NSWPB), your Local Employment Planning Council (LEPC), the Social Planning Council of Sudbury and the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association (NOMA).

“We’re so excited to provide essential data and insight into the labour market and economy of our communities through this partnership.” said NSWPB Executive Director, Madge Richardson. “Having this information at their fingertips, will further facilitate informed decision making.”

“NOMA is a proud partner of Northern Policy Institute and this initiative”, said Mayor Wendy Landry, President, Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association. “The *Community Accounts* portal is a resourceful tool as it provides important information that assists the region in determining needs on a community by community basis. Further, it provides access to data to further enhance opportunities with our neighbouring communities,” added Landry.

Free to use and explore, [npi.communityaccounts.ca](http://npi.communityaccounts.ca) uses four different interactive approaches including a well-being indicators account, community profiles, tables and charts, and maps. These four tools provide communities with information on topics such as income, education, health and employment, and allows users to generate limitless custom tables and illustrative graphics, to address questions like:

- How does employment in one district compare to Ontario and the rest of Canada?
- How do education levels in one community compare to another?
- How do people rate their mental health throughout Northern Ontario?



Information is retrievable according to two Economic Regions, 11 Districts, 278 Census Sub-Divisions, 144 Municipalities, 118 First Nations, 16 unorganized CSDs, and the province over census years 2001, 2006, 2011 and 2016.

“*Community Accounts* provides users with a single, comprehensive source of community, regional, and provincial data that would normally be too expensive to obtain, not readily available, or too time consuming to retrieve and compile.” said NPI President & CEO, Charles Cirtwill. “This information will allow even the data novice to build an enriched and evidence-based understanding of their hometown.”

In the coming months, community profiles will be added focusing on the Indigenous and Francophone populations. In order to ensure *Community Accounts* features the most complete data sets possible, NPI invites organizations to share information with us by reaching out to [data@northernpolicy.ca](mailto:data@northernpolicy.ca) or to consider joining the list of partners and working with us to fund added functionality or collect/compile new data to upload into [npi.communityaccounts.ca](http://npi.communityaccounts.ca).

[npi.communityaccounts.ca](http://npi.communityaccounts.ca) is modeled after the award-winning Newfoundland and Labrador Community Accounts, a model designed by Dr. Doug May of Memorial University in collaboration with the Newfoundland and Labrador Statistics Agency.

*Community Accounts* has been developed alongside the Northern Ontario Data Consortium (NODC), another NPI project that allows members to access a wide range of raw, local level data, to be used for research and other initiatives. While participation in the NODC will require a membership and an associated fee, [npi.communityaccounts.ca](http://npi.communityaccounts.ca) is a publicly accessible data portal to allow anyone to access publicly available data for their community.

**Media Interviews:** NPI President & CEO Charles Cirtwill and NSWPB Executive Director Madge Richardson are available for comment.

To arrange an interview, please contact:

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**About Northern Policy Institute:**

Northern Policy Institute is Northern Ontario's independent think tank. We perform research, collect and disseminate evidence, and identify policy opportunities to support the growth of sustainable Northern communities. Our operations are located in Thunder Bay, Sault Ste. Marie and Sudbury. We seek to enhance Northern Ontario's capacity to take the lead position on socio-economic policy that impacts Northern Ontario, Ontario, and Canada as a whole.

**About North Superior Workforce Planning Board – Your Local Employment Planning Council (NSWPB – LEPC)**

The North Superior Workforce Planning Board (NSWPB) is one of twenty-six Workforce Planning zones across Ontario, mandated through the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development 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. LEPC in Thunder Bay is a pilot project led by the North Superior Workforce Planning Board (NSWPB) and uses community consultation, research, and evidence-based practices to spur innovation in workforce development in our region.

**About the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association (NOMA):**

The Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association (NOMA) is made up of four components: the Kenora District Municipal Association, the Rainy River District Municipal Association, the Thunder Bay District Municipal League and the City of Thunder Bay. The Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association (NOMA) and the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities (FONOM) forms the Northern Caucus of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO). The objects of the Association are to consider matters of general interest to the municipalities and to procure enactment of such legislation that may be of advantage to the municipalities in Northwestern Ontario and to take united action on all matters where the rights of the municipalities may be affected to advance the standards of municipal government through education and discussion and generally to promote their interests.

**About the Social Planning Council of Sudbury:**

The Social Planning Council of Sudbury works in partnership with individuals, community agencies, government, business, and the health and educational sectors to improve quality of life for all residents of Greater Sudbury. Their work in the community is visible in many different ways. Beyond research, the SPC of Sudbury is at the table and on the ground understanding and finding solutions to issues that affect the Sudbury community.