



For Immediate Release

## **New Program Helps Potential Newcomers and Migrants find their Employment Match in Thunder Bay**

**June 19, 2018** – 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 starting 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 new comers 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](http://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

**Media Interviews:** NPI President & CEO Charles Cirtwill and Guy Lucas, Director, Employment Immigration for La Société Économique de l'Ontario, 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. Learn more.

**About North Superior Workforce Planning Board:**

The North Superior Workforce Planning Board (NSWPB) is funded by the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development (MAESD). It was one of twenty-six Local Boards across Ontario



mandated 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, until December 1, 2015, when it was awarded one of eight Local Employment Planning Council project pilot sites. North Superior Workforce Planning Board is an incorporated body and holds the contract with the Ministry for the pilot project.

An active and broadly-based volunteer Board of Directors representing Business, Labour, Women, Francophones, Indigenous People, Diversity, Persons with Disabilities and Educator/Trainers 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. [Learn more.](#)

***About La Société Économique de l'Ontario:***

The Société Économique de l'Ontario (SÉO), established in 2001, is a provincial network with a professional team that takes an innovative approach to economic development, entrepreneurship, employability and immigration. SÉO engages all of the Francophone and bilingual community's stakeholders in fostering the prosperity of Ontario and Canada. [Learn more.](#)

***About Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce:***

The Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce is a voluntary, Member-driven organization of individuals and businesses working together to advance the commercial, financial, and civic interests of the community. Whether they are pooling resources to offer Member learning opportunities, raising their voices together on a policy issue or facilitating connections between members of their business community, they believe that businesses that work together are stronger. [Learn more.](#)

***About Thunder Bay Economic Development Commission:***

Incorporated in December 2006, CEDC is an arms-length Community Development Corporation, led by an independent board with core funding from the City of Thunder Bay. The mandate of the CEDC is to operate in a way that is project based, business led, partner driven and community supported. CEDC receives formal proposals on projects that will contribute to economic development. It responds quickly to new opportunities and initiatives to attract direct financial involvement from government and private sectors. [Learn more.](#)