

For Immediate Release

## Let's Get to Work Creating Welcoming Communities in Northern Ontario

**January 17, 2023** - What role do organizations play in creating welcoming communities and do they have the resources to do so? This is the question Northern Policy Institute wanted answered by employers and service providers throughout Ontario's northern regions.

In February 2022, Northern Policy Institute and organizations across Northern Ontario launched a data-collection exercise to hear from different groups from around the regions. The reports with those findings, specifically "Let's Get to Work: New Tools Needed in the Employer Recruitment Toolbox for Newcomers" and "Serve it Up: The Roll of Service Providers in Creating Welcoming Communities" are now available.

In general, it was found that surveyed employers in the five Northern Ontario RNIP communities – North Bay, Sudbury, Sault Ste. Marie, Timmins, and Thunder Bay - have **positive attitudes** towards hiring newcomers and diverse groups. Though, **navigating the immigration process** was difficult for employers, meaning support could be beneficial.

In terms of service-providing organizations, there was found to be a **variety of programs and services** to help with the integration and retention of immigrants and diverse groups, as well as promote community acceptance and welcoming. Additionally, a large majority of surveyed organizations worked in collaboration with other organizations, specifically through **resource sharing**.

"The role organizations play in creating a welcoming community for immigrants and diverse groups cannot be understated," Author and Senior Policy Analyst, Mercedes Labelle, expressed. "Ensuring employers and service providers have adequate resources and knowledge of the tools and services available to them is fundamental to the successful completion of this work."

The recommendations based on the findings support ongoing priorities such as:

1. Understand and **monitor** the **needs of employers** and **service providing organizations**;
2. Form **strategic partnerships** and work to continue, or increase, **collaboration** with other organizations;
3. Make **full use** of **human capital** to mitigate labour and skills shortages; and,
4. Work to **promote** and **foster welcoming workplaces** through diversity training to employers and employees.

It is further recommended that efforts should continue to be made across Ontario's northern regions to share, promote, and complete these surveys.

To read Let's Get to Work (Employer Preparedness Survey Summary), visit:

<https://www.northernpolicy.ca/employer-survey-summary-2022>

To read Serve it Up (Service Provider Capacity Survey), visit:

<https://www.northernpolicy.ca/spo-survey-summary-2022>

**Media Interview:** Author and Senior Policy Analyst Mercedes Labelle is available for comment. To arrange an interview, please contact:

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**About the Author:**

*Mercedes Labelle was born in Bilbao, Spain, and lived in the United States before moving to North Bay, Ontario. Mercedes attended McGill University, earning her B.A. in Political Science and Urban Systems and graduating in 2020. Through her role at NPI, Mercedes has worked on various projects related to population growth, demographics, and migration. In her free time, Mercedes enjoys running, hiking, and listening to podcasts.*

*Mercedes is a Senior Policy Analyst at NPI and is located in Sudbury, Ontario.*

**About Northern Policy Institute:**

*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, reconciliation, 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 present in or passionate about Northern Ontario.*

*Based in Thunder Bay, Sudbury, and Kirkland Lake, NPI is active in every region of Northern Ontario. During the summer months, we have satellite offices in communities across 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.*

**About Measurement Month:**

*Measurement Month is an annual effort to leverage our individual resources to collect consistent, comparable data to inform decision-making at the local, regional, provincial, and national level. If you are interested in becoming a partner on this initiative, please contact Dr. Martin Lefebvre, NPI Senior Researcher, at [mlefebvre@northernpolicy.ca](mailto:mlefebvre@northernpolicy.ca)*