



For Immediate Release

## **Measuring Sustainable Economic Growth Through Immigration**

**April 14, 2022** – The five largest cities in Northern Ontario – Thunder Bay, Sault Ste. Marie, North Bay, Timmins, and Sudbury – are experiencing job vacancy rates between five and 55 per cent in some occupations. To mitigate the current labour market trends, the Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot (RNIP) program has been implemented across all five of these communities.

In the new series *All Roads Lead Home*, author Mercedes Labelle lays out current immigration levels and characteristics for each of Northern Ontario's five RNIP cities. This series is part of a larger Northern Policy Institute project to monitor and assess the impact of the RNIP in Northern Ontario communities.

To assess the effectiveness of the Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot program, decision-makers need a baseline – and these reports provide it. The papers find that the main immigration stream used currently by permanent residents in Northern Ontario's five largest cities is “economic”. The most common intended occupations by these “economic” migrants do not, however, align with occupations with high vacancy rates in those cities. The RNIP program has shifted the focus to more demand-based targeting, but there is still considerable variance between jobs in highest demand and the occupations targeted by RNIP. “Creating a baseline is just one step of many when it comes to measuring the success of the RNIP program,” said Mercedes Labelle, author and Lead Analyst at Northern Policy Institute. “The work that the five communities have put into the program has been fantastic and we’re excited to see those efforts reflected in future assessments.”

The papers put forward five recommendations to be considered:

1. Ongoing annual monitoring and assessment of community-level immigration trends.
2. Community-specific ongoing assessment of the impact of the Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot (RNIP) before, during, and after the program.
3. Expanded analysis to include secondary and domestic migrants.
4. Strengthening the alignment between labour market shortages, targeted occupations, postsecondary institutional fields of study, and immigrant-intended occupations to maximize economic outcomes.
5. Undertaking welcoming community initiatives to welcome, attract, and retain immigrants and the existing population.

Want to learn more? Read the complete series here: <https://www.northernpolicy.ca/all-roads-lead-home>



**Media Interviews:** Author Mercedes Labelle, NPI President & CEO Charles Cirtwill and NPI Research Manager Rachel Rizzuto are available for comment. To arrange an interview, please contact:

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### **About the Author:**

*Mercedes Labelle graduated from McGill University in 2020 with an Honours Bachelor of Political Science and Urban Systems. During her studies, she focused on Canadian politics and public policy processes, specifically researching the uneven distribution of benefits and services between urban and rural communities. At McGill, Mercedes provided analysis on Canadian Politics for the McGill Journal of Political Studies (MJPS). Through her involvement with MJPS, Mercedes developed a deeper understanding of the diverse interests and needs of the Canadian population. Having grown up in Canada, the United States, and Spain, Mercedes is eager to return to Northern Ontario, where her family now resides. In her free time, Mercedes enjoys listening to podcasts, cooking, and reading.*

### **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 offices are in Thunder Bay, Sudbury, and Kirkland Lake. 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.*

*Northern Policy Institute is pleased to have the support of FedNor for this important work to assess the impact of the Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot in Northern Ontario.*

