

For Immediate Release

Northern Policy Institute welcomes its first Vice President

September 26, 2025 – Northern Policy Institute (NPI) is pleased to announce that Paula Haapanen has joined the Institute as Vice President.

Paula joins the Institute after 6 years with Impact ON, most recently as Senior Director of Engagement. Fluently trilingual (French, English, and Finnish), Haapanen was responsible for communications, government relations, and partnership development at Impact ON. She will continue with similar responsibilities at NPI.

"This is a great hire for the Institute" said NPI President & CEO, Charles Cirtwill, "Paula brings a wealth of experience from the Francophone community and the social economy and social innovation sectors. She has been a friend and partner of NPI since our early days and understands our role as an advocate for evidence-based decisions about how best to grow Northern Ontario."

Haapanen was formerly the Community Economic Development Officer for Northwestern Ontario with the Réseau de soutien à l'immigration francophone du Nord de l'Ontario. In that role she was actively involved in the development of various immigration initiatives in the Northwest. Some of these included the Matchmaker project, the Connector project, Francophone settlement services in Northwestern Ontario, and the Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot. This experience will be central to her new duties at NPI.

According to Cirtwill, "Paula will also be leading our ongoing work in building and strengthening Welcoming Communities in every region of Northern Ontario. She is ideally suited for that task since, in addition to her experience working within the Immigration sector, she herself has lived experience as a newcomer having lived and worked abroad in Finland and in France for over 17 years."

Haapanen recently briefed the Northern Ontario Immigration Forum about the upcoming Magnetic North Conference, the fifth such conference organized by NPI to discuss population growth in Northern Ontario, the 2025 conference will be held December 3-4-5 2025 in Sudbury at Science North.

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Media Interviews: Charles Cirtwill and Paula Haapanen 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, 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.

Our permanent locations are in Thunder Bay and Timmins. During the summer months, we have satellite offices in other regions of Northern Ontario staffed by teams of Experience North summer placements. These placements are for university and college students working in your community on issues important to you and your neighbours.