



For Immediate Release

The Goldilocks Problem: How to create a system that is “Just Right” for all of Northwestern Ontario

October 29, 2020 – Policies are not one size fits all, especially with an area as large as Northwestern Ontario. As such, the North Superior Workforce Planning Board commissioned Northern Policy Institute to develop a White Paper on what needs to be considered in the creation of a Service System Manager structure for employment services that is appropriate for Northwestern Ontario.

The introduction of Service System Managers was announced in 2019 by the provincial government as a part a transformation process for employment services. To prepare for eventual rollout across the province, NSWPB held community consultations across Northwestern Ontario and four key themes emerged:

- **Digital delivery in the new system:** The overall unreliable – to complete lack of – access to quality internet service (WIFI or cell) makes relying on remote delivery of service/supports an unviable solution. This is further complicated by a lack of digital proficiency and/or overall culture of reluctance in engaging with online approaches;
- **Geographic distance impacts on service model:** The vast geography (and at times climate) at play in this catchment...makes delivery costly and unreliable unless physically located within a given community;
- **Diversity of service populations/needs:** The breadth of unique, local-level needs across the catchment makes it difficult to imagine how one centralized entity is going to be able to do meaningful delivery models for all communities; and
- **System level supports:** In many regions, placing and retaining people in work is often less about the talent or availability of work, and more a lack of access to things such as housing, transportation, and childcare.

The White Paper named “The Goldilocks Problem: Understanding Northwestern Ontario in the Development of Appropriate Employment and Training Management Models,” by Rachel Rizzuto aims to explore the validity and degree of the four themes. As well, recommended next steps were provided such as collecting localized data on digital literacy levels, connecting with the prototype regions to get a sense of how they are navigating the new system, and mapping out what we can do in the short and medium terms with our current employment and training assets.

“Northwestern Ontario is a large geographical area with many unique needs. Having an analysis such as this White Paper allows us to see the needs of specific areas of the region and next steps needed to ensure that this new model will benefit all of the region and ensure no one falls through the gaps,” Madge Richardson, Executive Director for the North Superior Workforce Planning Board.

Read the white paper on our website at: <https://www.northernpolicy.ca/service-system-managers>





Media Interviews: Author Rachel Rizzuto, NPI President and CEO Charles Cirtwill and Madge Richardson from North Superior Workforce Planning Board are available for comment. To arrange an interview, please contact:

Charles Cirtwill
President and CEO
807-632-7999
ccirtwill@northernpolicy.ca

Acknowledgements:

The North Superior Workforce Planning Board (NSWPB) would like to acknowledge the Employment and Training Service Providers (EO and non-EO), Confederation College and Municipalities who contributed their resources to this report. NSWPB would also like to thank the network of organizations, Indigenous Skills and Employment Training (ISET) holders and communities who have been involved in the Service System Manager community conversations over the past 12 months. Your passion, commitment, vision and subject-matter expertise have greatly contributed to the discussions around ensuring that a Service System Manager in Northwestern Ontario will meet the unique needs of our region.

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 communities in Ontario's western and northern regions. Our operations are located in Thunder Bay and Sudbury to enhance Northern Ontario's capacity to take the lead position on socio-economic policy that impacts our communities, our province, and our country.

About North Superior Workforce Planning Board

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.

About the Author:

Rachel Rizzuto

Rachel Rizzuto is the Research Manager for Northern Policy Institute. Originally from the United States, Rachel attended the University of Guelph and the University of Waterloo, earning her B.A. (Honours) and M.A. (co-op) in Political Science, respectively. Throughout her academic and professional careers, Rachel has pursued the study of community and economic development, an enthusiasm borne out of travel in rural and urban China. Through this passion, she aims to help communities thrive with the right information and tools.