

Northern Policy Institute

Evidence-based Policy for and from Northern Ontario

Northern Ontario – a region of regions

Our commitment is to promote informed and effective public policy for every region included in the area known as Northern Ontario. Geographically, this area encompasses 80% of the province's landmass. It is home to over one hundred independent First Nations, a large Metis population, a complex demographic mix of Anglophones and Francophones, new arrivals, and multigenerational residents. Such a diverse area calls for scaled and targeted policies. Policies and programs that are specific to the regions and to each community.

Are we Unique?

Our independent and non-partisan approach to policy analysis is unique in Northern Ontario. We have designed our research methods to ensure our findings are objective and provide a balanced perspective to public and private sector decision-makers. Like every northerner, we understand the value of partnerships. We embrace the need to leverage scarce resources to achieve big impacts. Nothing, absolutely nothing, gets done at NPI without a partner (or five). Limited resources, vast distances, and diverse cultures demand a flexible and adaptable model.

Only together can we deliver a growing, sustainable, and self-sufficient Northern Ontario. One with the ability to not only identify opportunities but to pursue them, either on its own or through intelligent partnerships. A Northern Ontario that contributes both to its own success and to the success of others.

A Representative Board

We start with our Board, which is skills-based but geographically balanced and demographically representative, as per our bylaws. Of our fifteen voting directors, three must be of First Nation, Métis, or Inuit descent, three Francophones, three from the regions to the north and west, and three to the north and east. Three director spots are set aside for post-secondary institutions—one college, one university and one First Nation Education Institution. We value perspective, allowing two directors to come from outside of "northern Ontario," and we have policies to ensure gender balance and diversity, having formally adopted the 50-30 Challenge.

Engagement Beyond our Board

Our Policy Advisory Council is open to all. Individuals and organizations can apply to participate in this quarterly exploration of the urgent and vital issues that need to be addressed to help northern Ontario grow and prosper. We also have the "Top Ten" process to routinely hear from partners, community actors, and the general public about their challenges and opportunities. We systematically note their questions and issues to rank our research priorities, thus, producing material that will directly inform communities and the decisions they need to make. But that is a two-way street, as we are open to feedback on all of our material from anyone, accessible through a simple click of a button on our website.

Reconciliation in Action

NPI seeks to further reconciliation between Canada and its treaty partners by bringing all treaty signatories together whenever possible to provide input on projects and resulting policy recommendations. NPI uses the term reconciliation to refer to its commitment to establish and maintain meaningful relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. It is a long-term relationship-building, learning, and healing process, as opposed to a specific outcome to be achieved. We also deepen and expand our own connections by having in place both a hiring preference for First Nations, Metis, and Inuit candidates and a language subsidy for both securing training and rewarding indigenous language fluency. (We have similar programs for francophone candidates).

Building Human Capacity

Growing northern Ontario starts with retaining and attracting talent. NPI combines our **summer employment program**, *Experience North*, with **our post-graduate internship placements** to create opportunities for young people to work here at home, or to make these regions their home (temporarily or permanently). NPI "alumni" can be found working at or leading organizations across northern Ontario. Some have made the north their home, others have come home or stayed home because of the opportunities NPI provides to build networks, develop skills and begin careers here in northern Ontario.

Tools for Evidence-based Decision Making

NPI practices what we preach. We have created many tools to help private and public partners achieve their goals and measure their progress. Our **Northern Ontario Data Consortium** creates a data buying group achieving low-cost data access for small organizations and communities that otherwise could never afford the data they need to make evidence-based policy choices. **Northern Analyst Collective** takes that approach one step further, allowing many small organizations to "timeshare" NPI analysts ensuring the data can be adequately analyzed and options effectively presented. **Community Accounts** is an entirely free online tool providing socio-economic profiles on demand. It allows communities to obtain a single comprehensive data source that is typically not readily available, too costly, or time-consuming to retrieve and compile.

Public Access

Like all charitable research institutions, NPI's work is readily available to the public. Our research is published free of any direct cost to the user, as per our status as a federally registered charity for educational purposes. We communicate our findings swiftly and, in a form, readily usable by all the actors in our communities. With research and expert insights being translated into everyday language and easily accessible charts, graphs, and images.