

ON THE OUTSIDE LOOKING IN

CHANGES TO IMMIGRATION STREAMS AND THE IMPACTS ON THE FAR
NORTHWEST INCLUDING THE CITY OF KENORA

PRESENTATION TO CITY OF KENORA

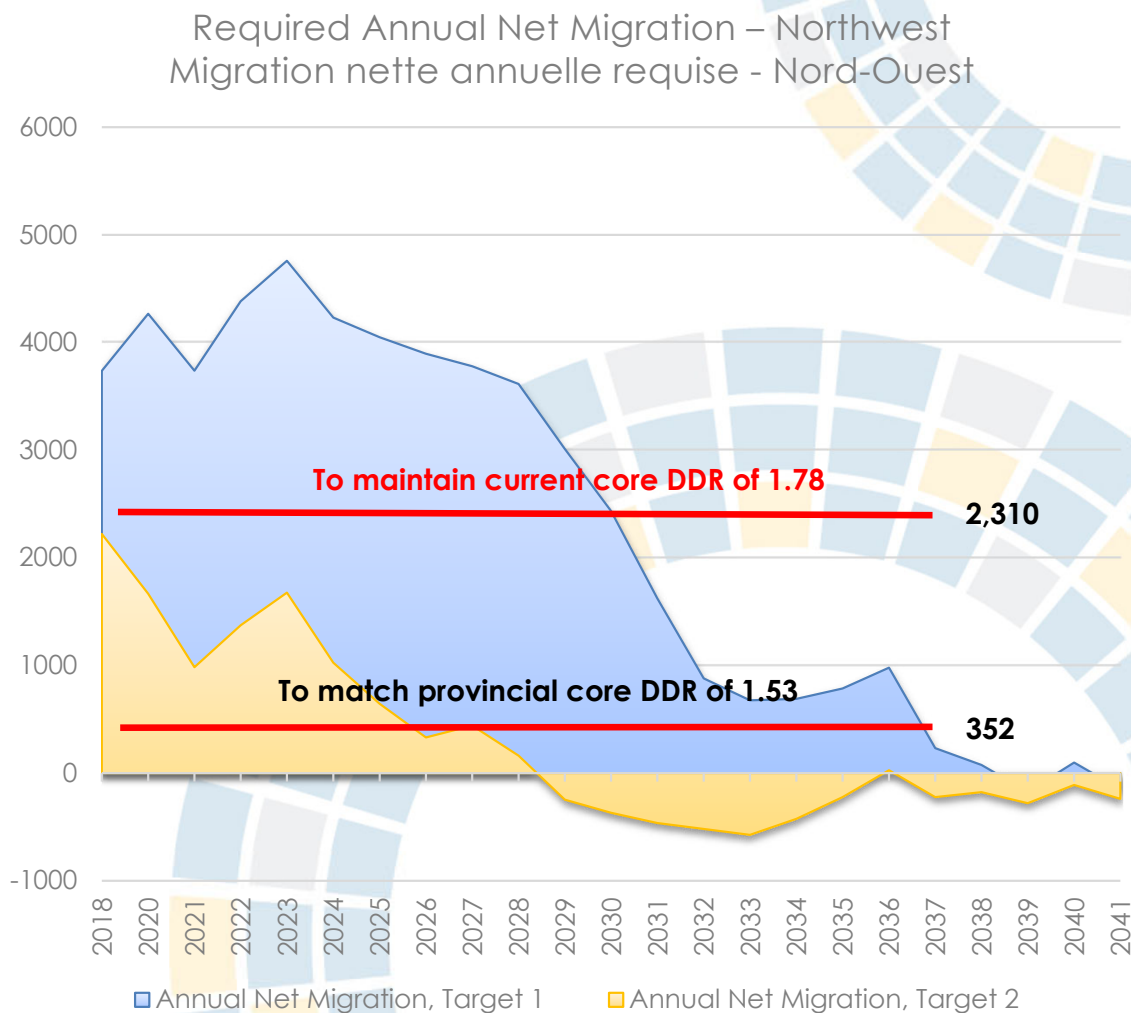
CHARLES CIRTWILL, PRESIDENT & CEO

8 JULY 2025



Even IF we had FULL employment – still too few workers

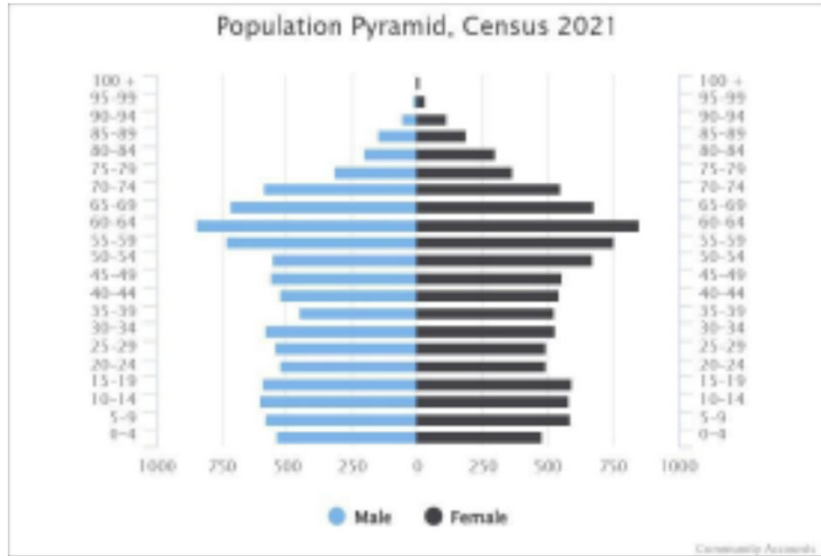
- DDR is the ratio of working people to dependents. An “ideal” ratio would be 2.0 – 2 workers (a person aged 16-64) for every 1 dependent (a person under 15 or over 65)
- **This graph assumes FULL EMPLOYMENT of the FNMI Population**
 - economic inclusion and immigration are not “either/or” ideas – we need them both.



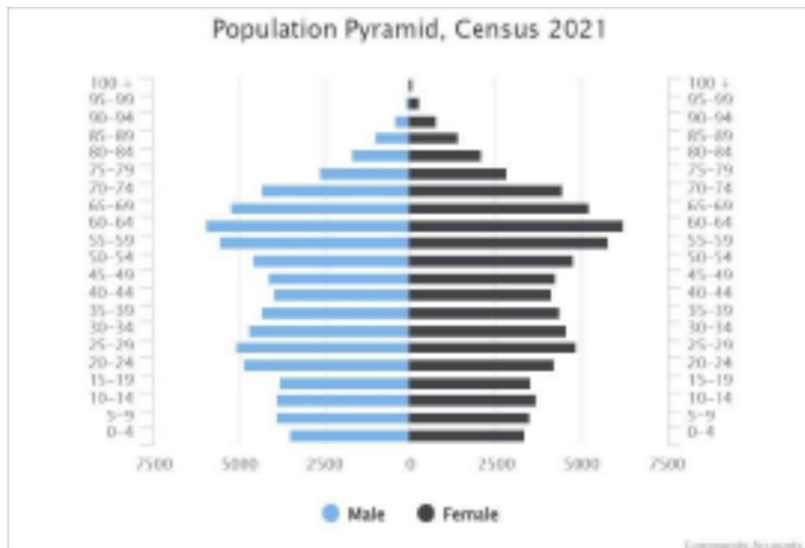
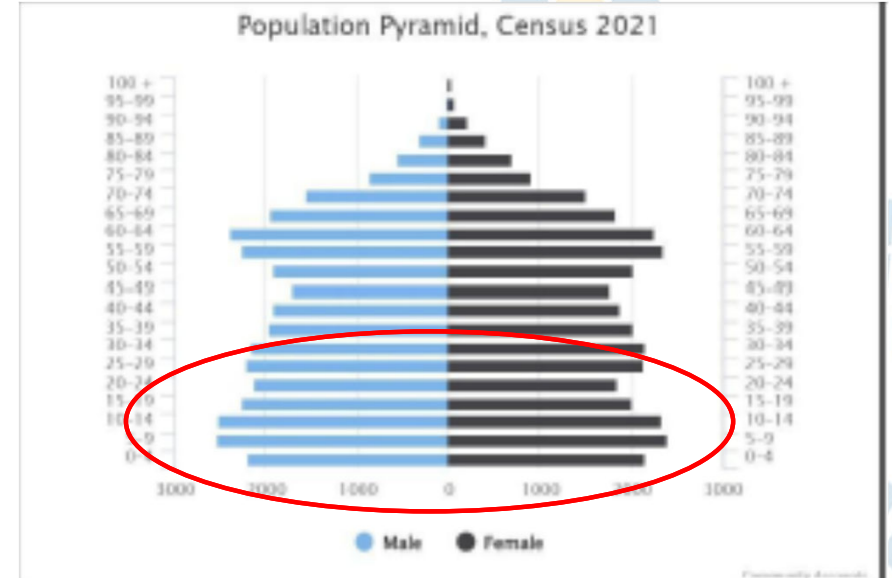
Source: Author's calculations based on Ontario Ministry of Finance population projections. Original DDR projections developed in collaboration with North Superior Workforce Planning Board, Thunder Bay Region's Local Employment Planning Council. NOTE: annual averaging understates the number of young immigrants Northern Ontario needs in the next 10 years by a significant margin.

How do you run out of workers? Well – you age.

Rainy River Census Division



Kenora Census Division



ONLY Kenora has the necessary foundation – and that is driven by relatively young First Nation population

Thunder Bay Census Division

Economic Impact of NOT Solving our “People Problem”

Northern Economist 2.0

<https://northerneconomist.blogspot.com/2025/06/measuring-cost-of-labour-shortages-in.html?m=1>

*A recent Conference Board report has argued that **the main challenge for the labour market in Northern Ontario is a shortage of labour** with the region experiencing some of the highest job vacancy rates in the country.*

- In 2024, the average quarterly number of job vacancies comes out to 8,713 for Northeastern Ontario and 5,148 for the Northwest.
- Multiplying the number of vacancies by the GDP produced per employee results in a **foregone GDP** output of approximately \$1.1 billion in Northeastern Ontario and **about 0.7 billion in the Northwest** for a total of \$1.8 billion dollars.
- (A rough) estimate of (regional GDP is) about \$50 billion for current nominal GDP.
- In other words, the **output foregone represents nearly 4 percent of the current GDP** in Ontario's north.

NB – Author highlights these are very rough estimates using readily available figures.

We were (finally) heading in the right direction

- Growth in Provincial Nominee Streams (**OINP more than doubled**)
 - Growing alignment to employment
 - Local markets with demonstrable labour shortages
 - Tied to job offers – not income potential
- Atlantic Immigration Pilot
- Rural & Northern Immigration Pilot
- Economic Mobility Pathways Pilot
- **BUT – we went astray**
 - Accelerated growth in Temporary Foreign Workers
 - Exponential growth in International students (to offset stagnant investment in PSE)
- Then we **OVERCORRECTED**
 - 2024 across the board cuts have applied a solution everywhere when, in rural and northern communities, there was no problem to begin with

OINP Since 2009

OINP Nominees by Census Division	2009	2014	2019	2023	Jan-Jul 2024	2025 Estimated	2021 Population	2025 Proposed
Algoma	5	10	5	15	15	8	113,777	399
Cochrane	--	5	10	20	10	5	77,963	273
Greater Sudbury	10	90	35	85	55	28	166,004	581
Kenora	5	--	10	5	15	8	66,000	231
Manitoulin	0	0	0	0	0	0	14,318	50
Muskoka	0	0	5	40	20	10	66,674	234
Nipissing	--	5	5	10	10	5	84,716	297
Parry Sound	0	0	--	10	--	0	46,909	164
Rainy River	0	0	--	10	0	0	19,437	68
Sudbury	0	0	--	0	0	0	22,368	78
Thunder Bay	5	--	60	55	85	43	146,862	514
Timiskaming	0	0	--	5	10	5	31,424	110
Northern Ontario	25	110	130	255	220	110	856,452	3,000
Ontario	1,000	2,500	6,650	16,500	21,500	10,000	14,223,942	10,000
NO as % Ontario	3%	4%	2%	2%	1%	1%	6%	30%

Recall – to MAINTAIN our current workforce – we need 2,000 people a year in the NW alone about **750 of those need to be OUTSIDE OF THUNDER BAY**

Allocated Rural/Northern Pilot Spots Per Year

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2025	2025
Pilot Site	RNIP 1	RNIP 2	RNIP 3	RNIP 4	RNIP 5	RCIP 1	FCIP 1	REDI
Thunder Bay	46	104	254	499	101	475	0	200
Timmins	23	98	131	206	138	200	25	0
North Bay	1	45	115	228	172	250 (?)	0	0
Sudbury	6	49	189	467	460	525	45	0
Sault Ste Marie	39	65	149	356	238	300	0	0
Superior East	0	0	0	0	0	0	25	0
TOTAL	115	361	838	1756	1109	1500	95	200

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about **750 of those need to be OUTSIDE OF THUNDER BAY**

1. RNIP = Number of Applications Received (excluding Prospective and Cancelled Applications) by CASE not PERSONS
2. 2024 is applications in calendar 2024 – final RNIP numbers will likely be higher once reported for first part of 2025
3. 2025 – RCIP is “First Year” of allocations – so will roll into 2026

Northwest Communities & Immigration Pilots

Community	RNIP (Y1-2) (CAN)	RNIP (Y3-5) (CAN)	RCIP (CAN)	FCIP (CAN)	REDI (ON)
Thunder Bay	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Nipigon, Marathon, Manitouwadge, Greenstone	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Sioux Lookout, Rainy River, Dryden, Ignace, Atikokan	No	Yes	No	No	No
Kenora, Sioux Narrows, Ear Falls, Red Lake	No	No	No	No	No

The Far Northwest is the **ONLY** region of Northern Ontario **NOT** currently included in either a provincial or federal rural/northern immigration pilot.

Other Streams/Programs - 2025

RECRUTE NORD (pending or submitted)

- Kenora - 4
- Fort Frances - 6
- Sioux Lookout - 8
- Long Lac - 1

Communities Soon to Join

- Hearst, Kapuskasing, Timmins, Chapleau, Cochrane, Wawa, White River, Dubreuilville, Horne Payne, Manitouwadge, Temiskaming Shores, Sturgeon Falls

Recall – to MAINTAIN our current workforce – **we need 2,000 people a year in the NW alone** about **750 of those need to be OUTSIDE OF THUNDER BAY**

ECONOMIC MOBILITY PATHWAY PILOT (pending or submitted)

Thunder Bay – 60
Fort Frances – 25

Some good news - The Economic Mobility Pathway Pilot was extended on June 12 until 31 December 2025.

Better news - now promise to replace with permanent stream by December 2025

What has been done so far

- Kenora & the NW applied for RNIP in 2019 - **denied**
- Kenora & the NW applied for RCIP in 2024 - **denied**
- Northern Chambers advocating for an OINP set-aside since 2023 – **no changes (yet)**
- Ontario Chamber endorsed the set-aside in 2024 – **no changes (yet)**
- No community in the far NW was invited to compete for a REDI spot in 2024 – **was not (to my knowledge) an OPEN province wide competition**
- 2025 - NOMA delegation to province included OINP set-aside and international students in rural/northern areas – **no changes (yet)**
- 84 communities and organizations signed a joint letter to provincial immigration minister on 31 March 2025 re OINP set-aside – **no changes (yet)**
- April 2025 - Northern Chambers (and NPI) met with Ministry to discuss OINP set-aside – **no changes (yet)**

Go Forward Options

FEDERAL

- Short Term:
 - Continue Economic Mobility Pathways Pilot to match timing of windup of RCIP/FCIP – **July 2025 - commitment to replace with a permanent stream by December 2025**
 - One-time extension all Work Permits expiring in 2025 in rural and northern regions for 2 years – **would mitigate impact of sudden change in federal direction - concept was suggested by a local MP**
 - Work with Thunder Bay to expand RCIP service boundary to old RNIP boundary (or to all of NW?) – **mixed blessing – limited number of spots - if we share do we take heat off Ontario/Canada to grow the overall number?**
- Medium/Long Term
 - Reverse cuts to Provincial Nominee Programs on condition reinstituted allocations are assigned to rural and northern regions – **to date there has been limited departmental interest in making this change**
 - Expand Atlantic Immigration Program to be a PERMANENT Community Immigration Program nationwide – **this remains official federal policy – a permanent community led program – timing and size are the BIG questions**

Go Forward Options

PROVINCIAL

- Short Term
 - Expand NOCs under OINP to include some TEER 4 NOCs but ONLY in rural and northern communities – **OINP has indicated willingness to consider expanding list as labour market data supports the change**
 - **Add a REDI site in Far NWO** – The Thunder Bay REDI WAS expanded to include the communities to the east
- Medium Term
 - Allocate 3,000 spots within the OINP to rural and northern communities (50% of OCC request) – **to date there has been limited departmental interest in making this change**
 - Reallocate International students cuts to return northern and rural numbers to 2023 status quo – **to date there has been limited departmental interest in making this change**

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Thank you. Marsee. ᑭᐱᑭᐱᑦᐱᑦ
Merci. Miigwech.

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