

Welcome Home: Immigration Trends in the Nipissing District

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By: Karly Mabee and Mercedes Labelle



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NPI would like to acknowledge the First Peoples on whose traditional territories we live and work. NPI is grateful for the opportunity to have our offices located on these lands and thank all the generations of people who have taken care of this land.

Our main offices:

- Thunder Bay is on Robinson-Superior Treaty territory and the land is the traditional territory of the Anishnaabeg and Fort William First Nation.
- Sudbury is on the Robinson-Huron Treaty territory and the land is the traditional territory of the Atikameksheng Anishnaabeg as well as Wahnapiitae First Nation.
- Kirkland Lake is on the Robinson-Huron Treaty territory and the land is the traditional territory of Cree, Ojibway, and Algonquin Peoples.
- All are home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples.

We recognize and appreciate the historic connection that Indigenous people have to these territories. We recognize the contributions that they have made in shaping and strengthening these communities, the province and the country as a whole.

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Author's calculations are based on data available at the time of publication and are therefore subject to change.

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Several data sources were utilized in this report such as the Community Data Program. NPI is the data consortium lead for Northern Ontario under the name "Northern Ontario Data Consortium".

NPI 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.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	5
Introduction	5
Methodology	6
Immigrant Characteristics	8
Economic Outcomes	11
Housing	17
Education	18
Immigration System	19
Income	20
Retention	21
Conclusion and Recommendations	22
References	24
Appendix A: Data Suppression	26
Appendix B: Definitions	27
Appendix C: Indicator List	28
Appendix D: North Bay RNIP – Year 1 Targeted NOCs	29



Executive Summary

Ontario's northern, western, and central regions are facing labour shortages, as a result of an aging population, high levels of youth out-migration, and low fertility rates. The Nipissing District, Ontario is no stranger to this issue, as it has experienced high average job vacancy rates of up to 40 per cent in some occupations. To combat the labour market impacts, the Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot (RNIP) program has been implemented across all five of Northern Ontario's largest cities. The RNIP aims to spread the benefits of economic immigration to small communities with demonstrated need, by creating a path to permanent residence for skilled foreign workers who want to work and live in one of the participating communities.

To assess the effectiveness of the RNIP program in the Nipissing District, baseline immigration trends are needed to accurately identify which occupations are in need of economic stimulation, and which labour market skills are most beneficial to immigrant success in the community. If admission criteria is not aligned with community-based need, then labour market shortages will only continue to be exacerbated. Which is why evidence-based decision making is crucial to adequately plan for labour supply, demand for housing, and settlement service capacity.

The Nipissing District has experienced a decline in immigration since 2010 with a decrease of approximately three per cent. Most immigrants have been accepted under the Family Sponsorship pathway. The limited number of economic immigrants that did settle in Nipissing District most frequently intended the National Occupation Codes (NOC) of home childcare providers, retail and wholesale trade managers, registered nurses and registered psychiatric nurses. Although these are the occupations immigrants were most frequently qualified for, the occupation vacancy rates suggest that there is the greatest need for corporate sales managers, managers in customer and personal, administrative services managers, and other installers, repairers and servicers, to name a few. Nipissing District has also targeted NOCs which they hope to attract, however, none of the 35 NOCs are consistent with occupation vacancy.

This analysis finds that five recommendations are to be considered for the effective measurement of RNIP success.

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.



Introduction

Population trends in many of Ontario's northern, western, and central regions are characterized by high levels of youth out-migration and low fertility rates. A significant portion of the population is about to age out of the core working-age and labour shortages will emerge. There will not be an adequate supply of young workers to fill these gaps.

Without an adequate influx of immigrants, coupled with integration of the current domestic population into the labour market, shortages will continue to emerge (Ross 2020, 9). To combat this trend and engage in evidence-based decision making that will positively impact Northern Ontario communities, there must be a baseline understanding of current and future immigration demographic characteristics. Using the available data, groups—such as workforce planning boards, chambers, municipalities, employers, and immigration partners—can strategically plan for and fill labour shortages that will emerge.

The purpose of these commentaries is to establish baseline assessments of immigration trends in the 11 Census Divisions in Ontario's northern, western, and central regions—Algoma, Cochrane, Greater Sudbury, Kenora, Manitoulin, Nipissing, Parry Sound, Rainy River, Sudbury, Thunder Bay, and Timiskaming. These assessments can then be used to evaluate immigration pilot programs such as the Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot (RNIP), and potential future newcomer programs.

The data collected can be used to evaluate current federal initiatives and to measure how communities in Northern Ontario are doing at attracting and retaining immigrants. It is crucial to have this information, identify the gaps, and pinpoint who is collecting that data. Additionally, it is important for the data to be collected and reported at the community level. With a more complete picture of immigration trends in Northern Ontario, communities can be compared against each other to assess the effectiveness of immigration, attraction, retention, and successes. Also, communities can self-assess by monitoring their progress, successes, and areas for improvement. Having this baseline immigration assessment will help communities continuously know which immigrants to target and attract to their communities.





Methodology

Ideally, an immigration trend analysis would be done annually with a quick turnaround of results so communities could measure the impact of their decisions soon after they are made. Additionally, having baseline data provides a benchmark for assessing progress, or lack thereof, when compared with future reports. But there are limitations in attempting to annually update immigration trends at the community level.

The data sources used for this analysis include Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada's (IRCC) admission data; the 2016 Census (and subsequent target group profiles obtained from the Community Data Program); Taxfiler Migration Estimates; Emsi Economic Modeling; and the Longitudinal Immigration Database (IMDB). Notably, the data obtained from the census are updated once every five years (as per the frequency of release) and, at the time of publishing, details of citizenship and immigration had not been released. The IMDB has an approximate two-year lag for data to be released and Taxfiler data have a one-year lag. IRCC does have monthly updates to its admission data, but the process for obtaining the data at the community level takes up to six months, and high levels of data suppression are present when requesting data at the community level. Finally, Emsi has economic modelling data updated monthly.

It is important to look at immigration trends in each community over time to see how they evolve, especially when evaluating the impact of a pilot program. But doing so with community-level data, specifically IRCC admission data, reveals that many years have few observations to report as data are suppressed for privacy reasons (see Appendix A).

Additionally, certain datasets are of all immigrants who arrived before 1981, while others are based on those who arrived before 1990. This creates a large group of immigrants that overshadows more recent inflows, which is specifically present when looking at census data. Thus, recent data from post-2000 can provide a more accurate picture of immigration trends and their evolution over time.

Analyzing change over time is particularly difficult in the case of non-permanent residents. The data available are largely organized by year of immigration and, technically speaking, non-permanent residents are not 'official' (i.e. landed) immigrants, according to Statistics Canada datasets (notably the census). Non-permanent residents refer to people from another country who had a work or study permit, or who were refugee claimants at the time of the census and had family members living with them in Canada.

Despite limitations surrounding the frequency of data updates, high levels of suppression, and obtaining this data at the community level, a thorough overview of immigration trends in Ontario's northern, western, and central regions was produced.

Finally, it is important to note the impact COVID-19 has had on Canadian immigration flows, labour market, industries, and so on. This analysis is primarily focused on data prior to the pandemic as that is what was available at the time of writing. To assess the impact of immigration programs in Northern Ontario, we need to know the picture of immigration in the regions.

Theme and Indicator Selection

Many of the indicators selected were aligned with pre-existing government immigration programs. For example, the Federal Skilled Worker (Express Entry) Program provides permanent residence to foreign skilled workers. There are minimum education, language, and work experience requirements. Applications are then further assessed based on age, education, work experience, job offers, official language skills, and adaptability (Canada 2020a).

The Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program (OINP) looks at an applicant's skills, experience, and education, specifically in-demand skills, language skills, and status as a recent Ontario graduate (Ontario 2019).

The RNIP also creates a path to permanent residency for foreign skilled workers with work and educational experience in specific occupations (Canada 2020c).

As mentioned previously, limitations were present surrounding data availability. Ultimately, for the purpose of our analysis, eight themes were identified: economic outcomes, education, housing, immigrant characteristics, immigration system, income, retention, and settlement service-providing organizations (SPOs).¹

Limitations

Economic outcomes, such as income and involvement in the labour market, typically differ depending on the immigration stream the immigrant followed. In terms of labour force participation rates and employment rates among all newcomers, principal applicants in the Economic stream fare best in the Canadian labour market. In fact, they perform better in these metrics than the Canadian-born population (de Chardon 2019, 6). Additionally, unemployment rates among principal applicants in the Economic stream are on par with Canadian-born citizens. Immigrants arriving under the Resettled Refugees and Protected Persons stream as well as Sponsored Family stream usually fare worse.

Although these distinctions are important to note, it was not possible to obtain community-level data separated by immigration stream and period of admission for all indicators (see Appendix C). When possible, the immigration streams were divided; when not possible, total immigration numbers were assessed. Addressing these gaps is crucial in order to collect specific data to ensure immigrants are not treated as a homogenous group. When evaluating a work experience program that will potentially directly impact Economic migrants, it would be useful to have stream-specific data to better assess program impacts.

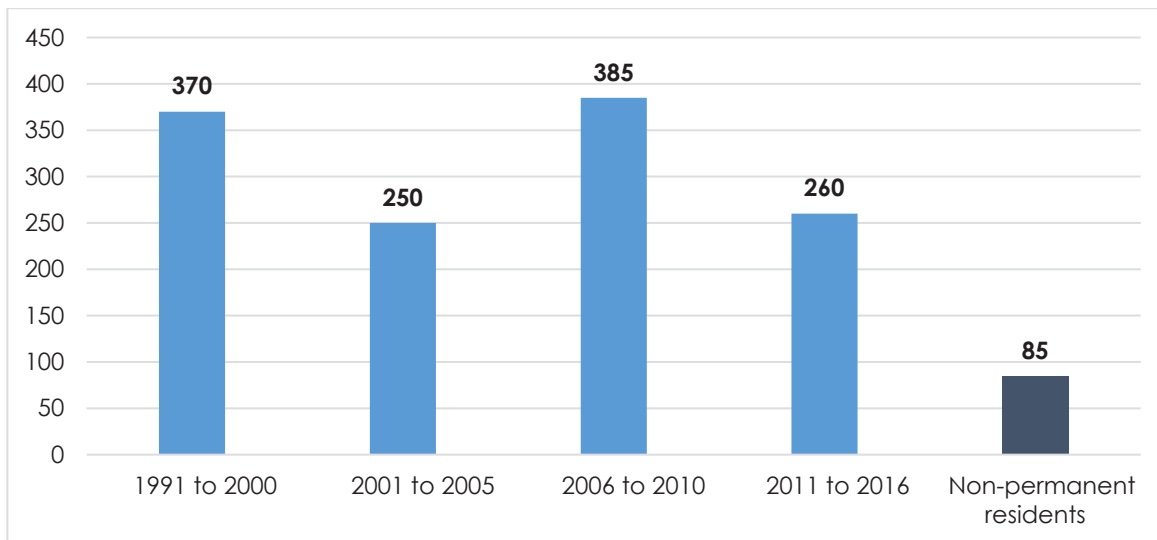
Analysis of immigration trends must continue through the years, especially when assessing a pilot program. A detailed methodology is needed to ensure that the trend analysis can be replicated in the future. Immigration trends should continue to be tracked throughout Ontario's northern, western, and central regions before, during, and after the end of the RNIP and other immigration initiatives.

¹ Service Usage data were only available for the Census Divisions (CDs) of Algoma, Greater Sudbury, Nipissing, and Thunder Bay.

Immigrant Characteristics

The 2016 Census counted 3,650 immigrants in the Nipissing District. Immigrant, as defined by Statistics Canada, refers to a person who is, or who has ever been, a landed immigrant or permanent resident (Statistics Canada, 2021a). Thus, these figures do not include temporary residents, such as study and/or work permit holders. Most immigrants in Nipissing immigrated before 1991 (2,385 immigrants)—the earliest data available. Since 1991, the city experienced the highest rate of immigration between 2006 and 2010, with levels fluctuating and falling since 2001. Additionally, most immigrants were Sponsored Family (740), followed by Economic immigrants (725), Refugees and Protected Persons (185) and 'All Other Immigration' (15). Most immigrants to Nipissing since 2001 have a university degree or diploma. Temporary residents are included in the 'non-permanent resident' category, of which there were 85 in Nipissing in 2016. Longitudinal data on non-permanent resident cohorts are not available from Statistics Canada. Non-permanent residents do not have an official 'period of landing' as they are not landed immigrants.

Figure 1: Immigrants by period of immigration in the Nipissing District, 1991-2016



Source: Author's calculations, Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of the Population, Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001.

To capture the effect of non-permanent (temporary) residents in Nipissing, Taxfiler Migration Estimates can be used. Taxfiler data use tax records to estimate migration patterns. Taxfiler Migration Estimates of international in-migrants include those who file taxes and had a previous address (the year before) in a location outside Canada (Canada, 2021a).

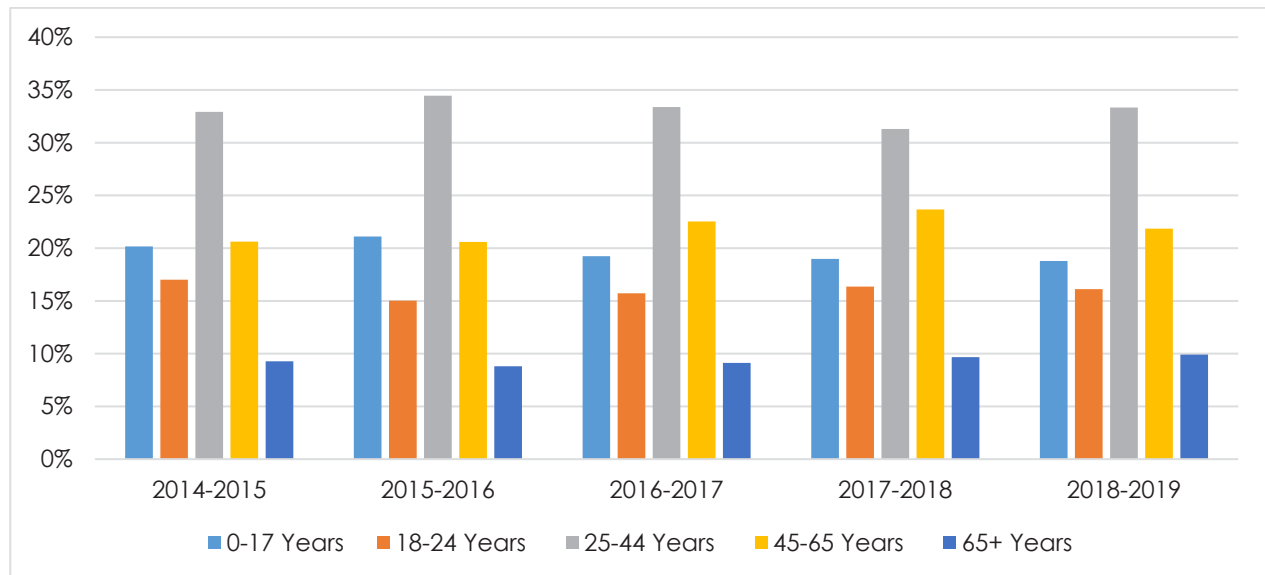
Based on the Taxfiler definition of international in-migrants, Nipissing has seen an increase in the past five years.² In the 2014-2015 tax year, there were 62 international in-migrants. That number rapidly increased, reaching 157 in the 2018-2019 tax year. Additionally, that same year, the female-male ratio of international in-migrants was relatively balanced, with 54 per cent being male in 2018-2019.

Permanent residents who landed in Nipissing between 1998 and 2019 have citizenship from the United States of America. Other common countries of citizenship for landed immigrants include the Philippines, India, China, and the United Kingdom. Between 2014 and 2017, there was a large increase of permanent residents with Philippine citizenship. Between 2014 and 2019, Nipissing saw its highest numbers of permanent residents with Indian citizenship (50). The number of United States citizens remained constant.

² The last five years data are available – 2014 to 2019.

The largest age group at landing in Nipissing was 25 to 44.³ The second largest group was 45 to 65, perhaps indicating the presence of economic immigration. The smallest age group at landing was consistently those over 65.

Figure 2: In-migrant age at landing by year in the Nipissing District, 2014-2019



Source: Author's calculations, MIG: Migration Estimates from Taxfiler (T1FF), Table B: By Age Group, 2014-2019.

Language

Among permanent residents in Nipissing, the most prevalent language spoken is English, perhaps due to the points allotted to English speakers in the federal Express Entry immigration program.⁴ Additionally, English is the primary language spoken in the United States—the most common country of citizenship for permanent residents. In fact, English is the most common language spoken by permanent residents in Northern Ontario's 11 districts and five largest cities. Other common languages include Chinese, Tagalog, Spanish, and Arabic.⁴

Tagalog-speaking permanent residents started increasing in 2014 and peaked in 2017. Notably, 15 Arabic speakers gained permanent residence in Nipissing in 2016; for most other years, the number of Arabic speakers ranged from zero to less than five. The number of English-speaking permanent residents remained mostly consistent since 1998.

Service Usage

The settlement services most used by immigrants in Nipissing are information and orientation, followed by needs assessment and referrals. There is low usage of community connections services and very low usage of employment-related services.

³ Age groupings done by IRCC are not uniform in age range. Age ranges are 0-17, 18-24, 25-44, 45-65, and 65+. Thus, 18-24 are underrepresented because of category groupings. The two groupings that have the largest age range are 25-44 and 45-65, which might overrepresent these categories in the data.

⁴ Language spoken indicates an individual's mother tongue. Mother tongue is the native language of an individual upon entering Canada.

⁵ Tagalog is the basis of Filipino and is spoken in the Philippines.

Stream

Between 2015 and 2019,⁶ the number of permanent residents to Nipissing increased, starting at 55 in 2015 and plateauing at 70 between 2016 and 2019. Between 2015 and 2019, the most common immigration stream in Nipissing was Sponsored Family, with 155 people gaining permanent residence through that stream. The second most common stream was Economic, with 125 people.

Identical to trends seen in the past five years, the most common immigration stream for permanent residents in the Nipissing District between 1998 and 2019 was Sponsored Family, followed by Economic, Resettled Refugees and Protected Persons, and 'All Other Immigration'.

In 2009, the number of Economic and Sponsored Family immigrants coming to Nipissing peaked at 40 for each stream. The number of Sponsored Family immigrants had mostly increased year over year since 1998, remaining relatively stable after 2009. The number of Resettled Refugees and Protected Persons peaked at 15 in 2016.

Prior to 2010, Economic applicants immigrating to Nipissing were almost equally principal applicant and spouse or dependants subcategories. From 2010, Economic applicants were predominantly principal applicants. Since 1998, Sponsored Family immigrants were consistently predominantly principal applicants.

Economic and Family Sponsored immigrants predominantly know English; very few know only French. There are more immigrants who do not know either official language than those who know both.

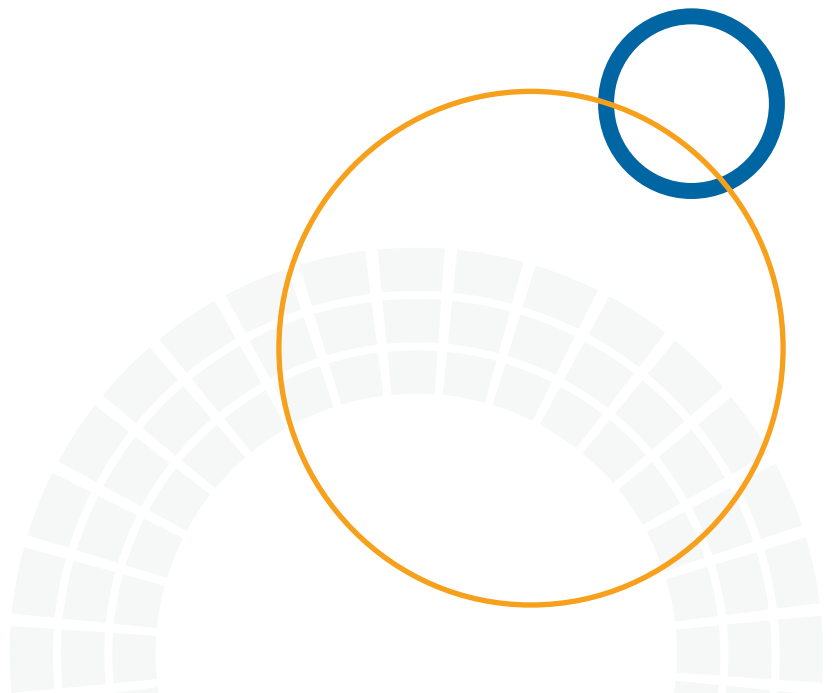
Analysis

Characteristics such as age, education, and language spoken are weighted heavily in the various streams of the Express Entry application system. For example, higher levels of education, such as university degrees, are given more points in the program. Additionally, certain age groups, such as 18-24, are allotted more points, while other age groups (0-17) receive no points.

Despite French being an official language and French-speaking applicants being given points in the Express Entry system, French is not one of the common languages spoken among permanent residents in any of Northern Ontario's 11 districts or five largest cities. Perhaps French-speaking immigrants are not common within most Northern Ontario regions due to the benefits they receive if they locate in Quebec, such as prioritized credential recognition between France and Quebec (Quebec 2019). Additionally, the immigration target set by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada for French-speaking migrants to Canada (outside Quebec) is 4.4 per cent.

⁶ The most recent years with full data available at time of writing. Captures data from January 1, 2015 to December 31, 2019.

⁷ Another 15 per cent of respondents did not state an Official Language, therefore their knowledge of an Official Language is unknown.



Economic Outcomes

Intended National Occupation Classifications (NOCs)

Measuring immigrants' intended occupations can help align labour supply with labour demand. To put it another way, strategically targeting immigrants with skills needed in the community, such as a specific labour shortage, can promote the vitality of the local labour force. National Occupation Classifications (NOCs) provide an organizational framework of occupations in the Canadian labour market.

Occupations are identified and grouped primarily based on the work usually performed, in other words, by the tasks, duties, and responsibilities of the occupation (Statistics Canada 2016).

In no particular order, the most frequent immigrant-intended NOCs in the Nipissing District between 1998 and 2019 were:

- Home child care providers
- Retail and wholesale trade managers
- Registered nurses and registered psychiatric nurses

It is worth noting that 'Other Intended Occupation' was the most selected NOC answer for every district in Ontario's northern and western regions. Thus, it is excluded from this analysis as to only include specific occupations.

Registered nurses and registered psychiatric nurses are the only occupation that aligned with current trends in terms of both immigrant-intended NOCs and NOCs targeted by North Bay, the largest city in the Nipissing District, in the first year of the RNIP. The other two most common immigrant-intended NOCs do not align with the RNIP occupations. As the program progresses and more recent data are available, an increase in alignment between immigrant-intended NOCs and RNIP occupations might be observed.

Occupation Vacancy Rates

Occupation-specific vacancy rates represent vacancies as a proportion of the total labour force for that occupation. Thus, vacancy rates can identify potential current labour market gaps.

The methodology for calculating vacancy rate mirrors that of the Northern Policy Institute's "Assessing Labour Market Shortages" series of reports on North Bay, Greater Sudbury, Timmins, Sault Ste. Marie, and Thunder Bay (Ross, 2020). The series reflects trends from 2018, but this paper outlines updated calculations to reflect 2020 trends—the most recent full year with data available. A high job vacancy rate typically indicates a stronger labour market for job seekers, as it demonstrates that a higher proportion of the total labour market consists of vacant jobs needing to be filled (Lindzon, 2019).

The data used to calculate job vacancy rates were obtained from Emsi Economic Modeling, which were provided through a partnership with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.⁷

⁷ The methodology the Northern Policy Institute uses to calculate vacancy rate is explained in the "Assessing Labour Market Shortages" paper series by Alex Ross (2020).



According to Table 1, multiple management-related occupations appear to have the highest job vacancy rates (NOC Skill Level 0). Additionally, there are two Skill Level C occupations facing high vacancy rates:

- Other installers, repairers, and servicers
- Customer and information services representatives

There were also two Skill Level A occupation with a high vacancy rate:

- Therapy and assessment professionals
- Optometrists, chiropractors, and other health diagnosing and treating professionals

It should be noted that Nipissing has relatively high job vacancy levels compared to the other districts analyzed in Northern Ontario.

Table 1: Occupations with the highest average job vacancy rates, the Nipissing District, 2020

NOC	Description	Total Labour Market 2020	Average Unique Job Postings 2020	Job Vacancy Rate
060	Corporate sales managers	44	18	40.12%
065	Managers in customer and personal services, n.e.c.	38	13	34.45%
011	Administrative services managers	189	45	23.97%
051	Managers in art, culture, recreation, and sport	40	8	19.78%
744	Other installers, repairers, and servicers	177	31	17.40%
001	Legislators and senior management	88	11	12.82%
031	Managers in health care	91	9	9.82%
655	Customer and information services representatives	683	63	9.22%
314	Therapy and assessment professionals	186	17	8.96%
312	Optometrists, chiropractors, and other health diagnosing and treating professionals	119	11	8.87%

Source: Author's calculations based on Emsi – economicmodeling.com.

In the District of Nipissing, the City of North Bay is participating in the RNIP. Participation in this pilot program requires communities to target specific occupations that are in demand and that immigrants could fill. These occupations are identified at the community level, largely through consultations with community employers. In the first year of the RNIP, North Bay was targeting multiple three- and four-digit NOCs, including the following (See Appendix D for full list):

- 2173: Software engineers and designers
- 2271: Air pilots, flight engineers
- 4152: Social workers
- 4212: Social and community service workers
- 7511: Transport truck drivers

There was no alignment between occupations with the highest vacancy rates in the Nipissing District and NOCs targeted by the City of North Bay. Most of the above occupations are at the management level, which is NOC Skill Level 0. The City of North Bay only targeted one management-level occupation for Year 1 of its RNIP. Additionally, it is beneficial to consider the average raw job vacancies to target occupations that have demonstrated active recruiting through job postings. The occupations bolded in Table 1 rank among the top ten highest job vacancy rates, and of those ten, three had the highest average job postings for 2020.

At first glance, vacancy rate might not seem indicative of immigrants' economic outcomes. Looked at in conjunction with intended and targeted occupations, vacancy rate can indicate if there is alignment between the occupations experiencing high vacancy rates and employment, unemployment, and participation rates among immigrants.

Labour Market Impact Assessments (LMIAs)

When looking at the presence of work permit holders in a specific region, it is important to analyze the jobs they are filling. Labour Market Impact Assessments (LMIAs) are submitted by employers to gain approval, in most cases, to hire foreign workers. A positive LMA will show that there is a labour shortage that cannot be filled by a Canadian worker or permanent resident, indicating a need for a foreign worker to fill the job (Canada, 2021d). It is worth noting that some foreign workers are exempt from needing a LMA or work permit, such as those in the International Mobility Program.

For the lowest-skill and lowest-wage occupations in accommodation, food services, and retail trade sectors, LMIAs are only approved in regions that do not have high unemployment rates.

Reviewing positive and negative LMIAs is a way to measure, quantitatively, which occupations are experiencing labour shortages. LMA information should be considered when identifying labour shortages in each community. Specifically, for the RNIP, communities select the occupations they will be 'targeting' each year.

In 2020, there were four (4) occupations approved for LMIAs in the Nipissing District, with a total of seven (7) unique positive LMIAs issued:

- 6311 – Food service supervisors (3)
- 0632 – Accommodation service managers (2)
- 1221 – Administrative officers (1)
- 7372 – Drillers and blasters - surface mining, quarrying and construction (1)

As mentioned, an approved LMA indicates that there is no Canadian talent available to fill the above positions in Nipissing. As such, approved LMA positions are a good indicator for decision makers of labour market gaps and occupations that could be targeted through the RNIP, post-secondary institutions, or through additional training and upskilling.

Nipissing had one **denied** LMA applications in 2020 for the following occupation: 6211-Retail sales supervisors.

Denied LMA applications do not necessarily indicate there is availability of Canadians to carry out the duties of the occupation. Instead, there are multiple reasons that contribute to whether an application is denied, including a company's experiences with the LMA process (Canada, 2021b).

Between 2018 and 2020, there were a total of 35 LMIAs approved in the Nipissing District.⁸ The occupations with the most approved positions are as follows:

Table 1: Occupations with the highest average job vacancy rates, the Nipissing District, 2020

NOC	Occupation	Skill Level	Approved Positions	Included in RNIP Y1 NOCs?
8431	General farm workers	C	18	No
6322	Cooks	B	5	No
6311	Food service supervisors	B	3	No
0632	Accommodation service managers	0	2	No

Source: Open Data - Government of Canada, Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP): Positive Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMA) Employers List, multiple issues.

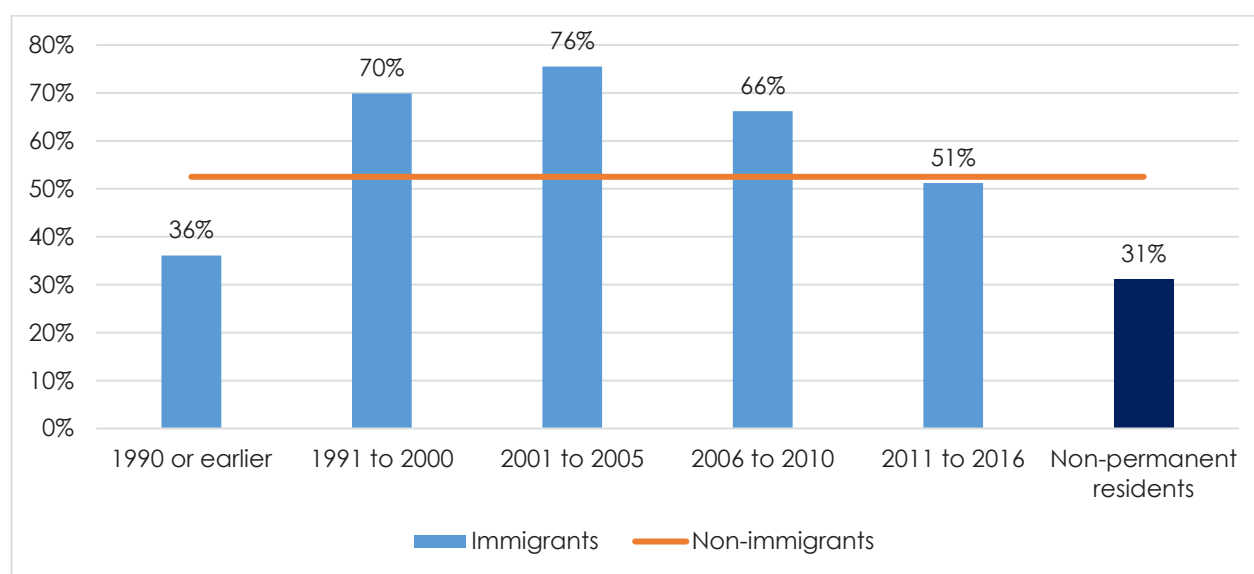
⁸ Not all occupations are included in this table.

It should be noted that there were no positive LMIAs issued in 2020 that aligned with the occupations in Nipissing with the highest vacancy rates (Table 1). Additionally, the occupations in Nipissing with the most approved LMIAs between 2018 and 2020 did not align with the occupations that had the highest vacancy rates. There was also no overlap between approved LMIAs and North Bay RNIP Year 1 targets. Again, it is important to note that Nipissing does have relatively high vacancy rates than other districts of comparable size in Northern Ontario. With further alignment of in-demand occupations and the RNIP, employers can better attract and retain (as permanent residents) immigrant employees to fill these gaps.

Employment/Unemployment/Participation

Immigrants in the Nipissing District who immigrated between 1991 and 2016, experienced, on average, higher employment rates than non-immigrants and non-permanent residents. Employment rates for immigrants who landed before 1990 are perhaps lower due to the age of these immigrants—many were perhaps aging out of the labour market. More recent immigrants (2011 to 2016) in Nipissing have slightly lower employment rates than non-immigrants and more established immigrants. Other places in Ontario's northern, western, and central regions experience similar trends—notably the cities of Timmins and Kenora—where recent immigrants tend to have lower employment rates than more established immigrants.

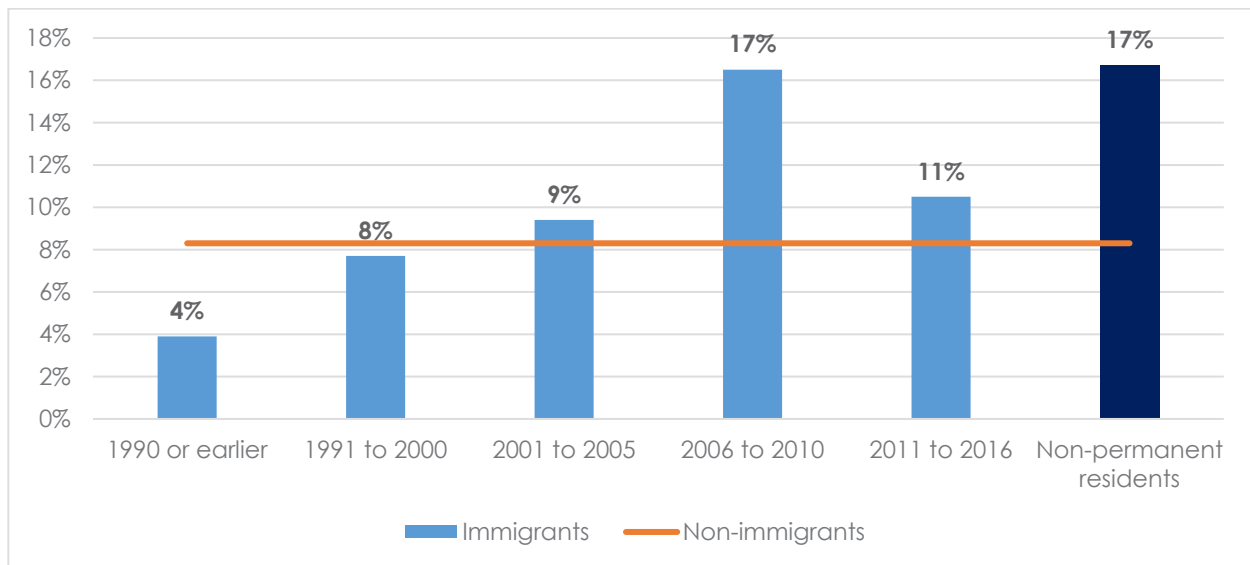
Figure 3: Employment rates (%) in the Nipissing District by period of immigration, 2016



Source: Author's calculations; Community Data Program (CDP); Selected Language, Labour Force, Education, Income and Mobility Status Characteristics; Table EO2767-TBL7R.

Both employment and unemployment rates are higher for most immigrant cohorts compared to non-immigrants. This may be the result of higher levels of labour market participation.

Non-permanent residents, also known as temporary residents, present a higher rate of unemployment compared to non-immigrants and permanent residents (Canada 2020d). This higher unemployment rate may be due to a higher number of work restrictions for temporary residents, given the different nature of their permits. For example, study permit holders who are enrolled full-time can, without a work permit, work on and off campus for up to 20 hours a week during school terms, which may make finding a job more difficult. Additionally, work permit holders can have either an open or closed work permit. Closed work permit holders are only able to work with the employer specified on their work permit, while open work permit holders can work for any eligible Canadian employer.

Figure 4: Unemployment rates (%) in the Nipissing District by period of immigration, 2016

Source: Author's calculations; Community Data Program (CDP); Selected Language, Labour Force, Education, Income and Mobility Status Characteristics; Table EO2767-TBL7R.

Participation rate measures the total labour force, comprised of those who are employed and those unemployed, relative to the size of the working-age population. It is the share of the working-age population that is working or looking for work.

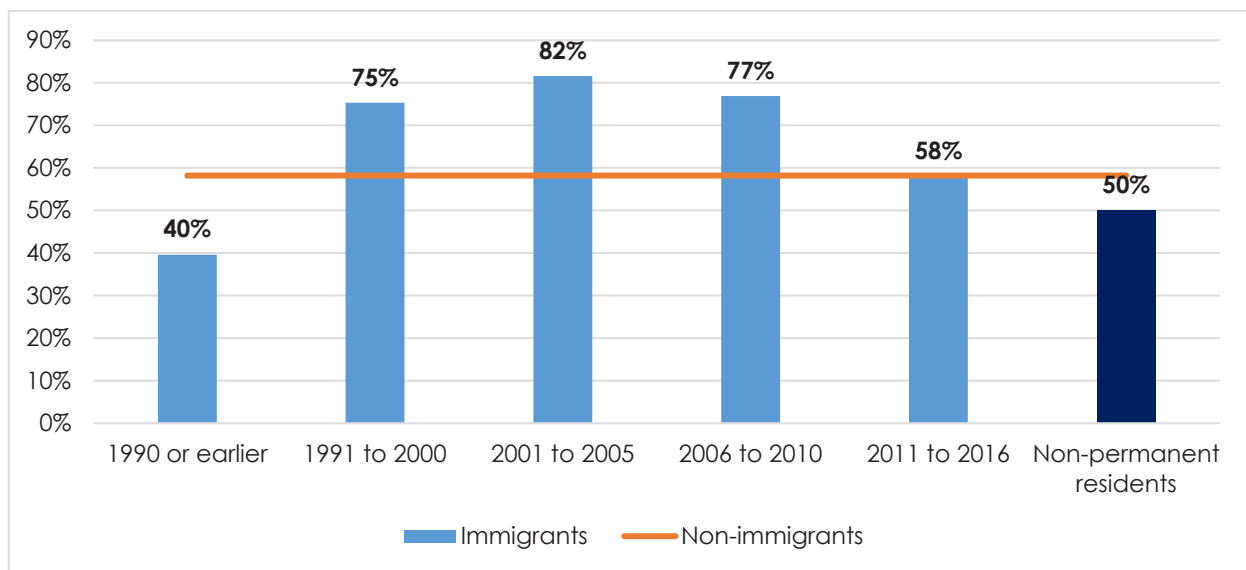
Measuring participation rate between immigrant cohorts includes the number of immigrants in each cohort actively participating in the labour force, as employed, or searching for employment.

With regions in Northern Ontario facing an aging population, low birth rates, youth out-migration, and demographic shifts, immigrant participation in the labour force is a way to maintain the current standard of living.

When discussing employment and unemployment, 'time since landing' is a large determinant of immigrants' labour market outcomes. For example, recent immigrants (defined above) face labour market hurdles that affect their integration into the labour market, such as lack of language proficiency, lack of recognition of foreign credentials, and inadequate familiarity with the Canadian labour market (Statistics Canada, 2003, 10). A high participation rate of immigrants in the workforce combined with a low unemployment rate, indicates there are robust opportunities in the labour market.

Recent immigrants in the Nipissing District had a lower participation rate than the three more established immigrant cohorts that landed between 1991 and 2010. In fact, the immigrant participation rate was equal to the participation rate for non-immigrants. Even among non-permanent residents (temporary residents such as work or study permit holders), the labour market participation rates were comparable to the non-immigrant population. That said, non-permanent residents had a lower participation rate than the other immigrant cohorts, except for those that landed in 1990 or earlier.

Figure 5: Participation rate (%) in the Nipissing District by period of immigration, 2016



Source: Author's calculations; Community Data Program (CDP); Selected Language, Labour Force, Education, Income and Mobility Status Characteristics; Table EO2767-TBL7R.

Discussion

The federal Express Entry program prioritizes immigrants with certain jobs or NOCs. All federal Express Entry streams require work experience in NOCs 0, A, or B, which are jobs in management and/or requiring university or college credentials. Thus, the Express Entry program caters to high-skilled workers.

As seen with the City of North Bay's targeted occupations, the high-skilled workers category was not the only one in which there were labour market shortages. There was also a demand for NOC Skill Level C workers. Skill Level C includes intermediate jobs that usually call for high school and/or job-specific training such as transport truck drivers, home support workers and housekeepers (Canada 2020b).

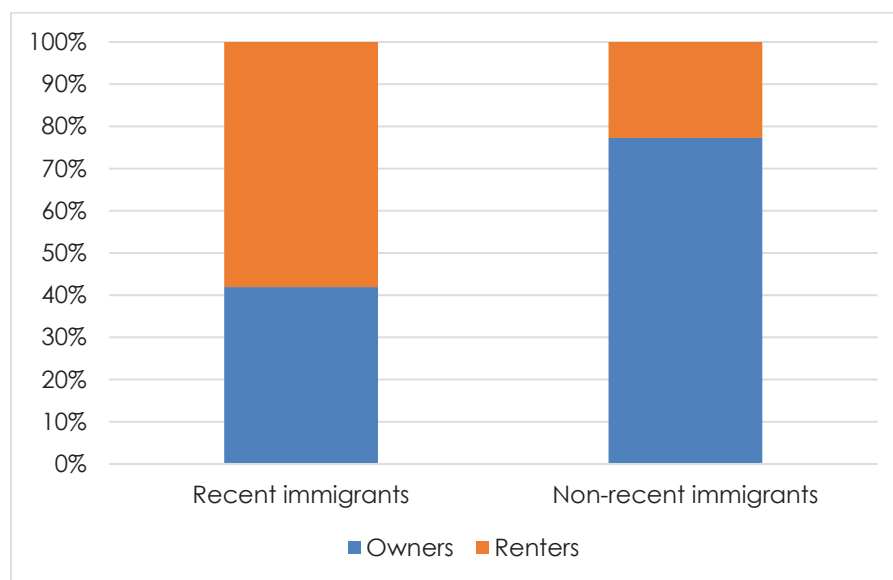
In theory, communities targeting immigrants with specific occupational experience that aligns with their current labour market shortages should result in an increase in employment rates for recent immigrants. Further contributing to positive labour market outcomes, a requirement of the RNIP is that the potential immigrant have a permanent job offer, further cementing employment upon arrival.

Housing

Housing tenure refers to the financial arrangements under which someone has the right to live in a house or apartment. Looking at immigrants' housing tenure can help measure financial security, especially if the dwelling is owned (Haan 2012, 3). House ownership may also signify an immigrant household's commitment to their new community and society (ibid.), which may be a sign of retention.

In Nipissing, recent immigrants and non-recent immigrants were more likely to be renters than non-recent immigrants.

Figure 6: Immigrant households in the Nipissing District by housing tenure (owners vs. renters), 2016



Source: Community Data Program (CDP), Target Group Profile of Recent Immigrant + Immigrant Population, Census 2016, retrieved August 5, 2021.

There are many factors that can influence housing tenure such as housing prices, discrimination, admission category, navigating the system, stable employment, access to credit, affordability/income, availability, and adequacy.

The distinction needed when looking at housing tenure is that between recent and non-recent immigrants. A recent immigrant refers to a person who obtained a landed immigrant or permanent resident status up to five years prior to a given census year. For the data used in this paper, a recent immigrant would be defined as someone who landed between 2011 and 2016. Non-recent immigrants landed before 2011.

Non-recent immigrants have had more time to settle into the community, find careers, and make connections. Recent immigrants, on the other hand, might not yet have stable careers—making it more difficult to qualify for a mortgage and/or build credit—community connections, or knowledge of the Canadian housing market.

Education

The most common field of study for immigrants in the Nipissing District is architecture, engineering, and related technologies. The second most common field of study was health and related fields. The third was business, management, and public administration.

Immigrants who studied in a high-skilled field such as health care, engineering, or architecture, were most prominent in Nipissing. The health and related field of study aligned with one of the most intended occupations for immigrants to Nipissing between 1998 and 2019: Registered nurses and registered psychiatric nurses.

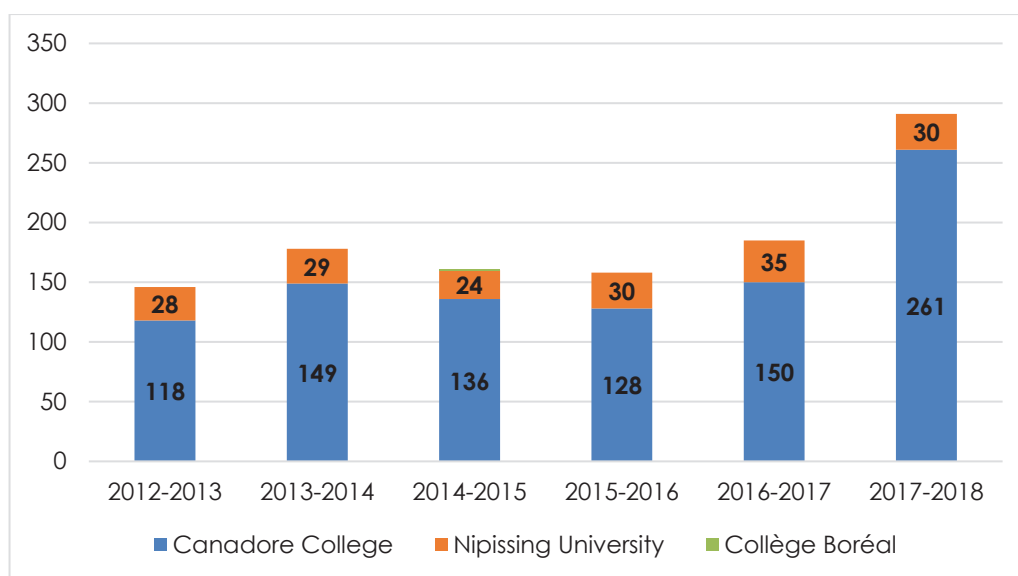
International students comprise an important pool of potential immigrants. They have recognized Canadian education credentials, knowledge of French or English, potentially Canadian work experience, familiarity with Canadian culture, and a connection to the community. For these reasons, international students are expected to integrate more quickly into the labour market and to society than other types of immigrants (Hagar 2019).

The District of Nipissing has three post-secondary institutions: Nipissing University, Canadore College, and Collège Boréal. The number of international students at Canadore College had been increasing since the 2012-13 academic year,⁹ with 261 international students enrolled during 2017-18.¹⁰

Nipissing University's numbers remained fairly consistent over the years. It had its highest number of international students (35) during the 2016-17 academic year.

Collège Boréal had the smallest number of international students in the Nipissing District, with one student during the 2014-15 academic year.

Figure 7: International students enrolled in the Nipissing District by post-secondary institution, 2012-2018



Source: Author's calculations; Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU); Enrolment Data - International and Domestic Full-time Headcounts.

⁹ With the exception of 2015-16.

¹⁰ Most recent data available at time of writing.

Immigration System

Study Permit Holders

In the Census District of Nipissing, which houses Nipissing University, Canadore College, and Collège Boréal, study permit holders between 1998 and 2019, were overwhelmingly citizens of India. India was also the most common country of citizenship for study permit holders in six of Northern Ontario's other 10 districts during this period. In 2017, the number of study permit holders with Indian citizenship in the Nipissing District reached 675. Other common countries of citizenship for study permit holders included China, Mexico, the Philippines, the United States, and Japan. From 2018 to 2019, there was a large increase in study permit holders from the Philippines, with 130 total between the two years.

Study permit holders that gained permanent residence in Nipissing between 1998 and 2019 did so primarily through the Sponsored Family stream. Within the Family Sponsored category, the primary pathway was Sponsored Spouse or Partner. Within the Economic stream, Skilled Worker was the largest subcategory of permanent residents.

The discrepancy between the number of individuals who hold a study permit and the number of students at post-secondary institutions is due to a difference in definition by each data source. The number of international students at post-secondary institutions was based on full-time enrolment at institutions governed by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, not private institutions nor specific training schools. Study permit holders can be studying part-time or enrolled at a private institution as per the definition from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, leading to a greater number of study permit holders than number of students at the post-secondary institutions noted above.

Work Permit Holders

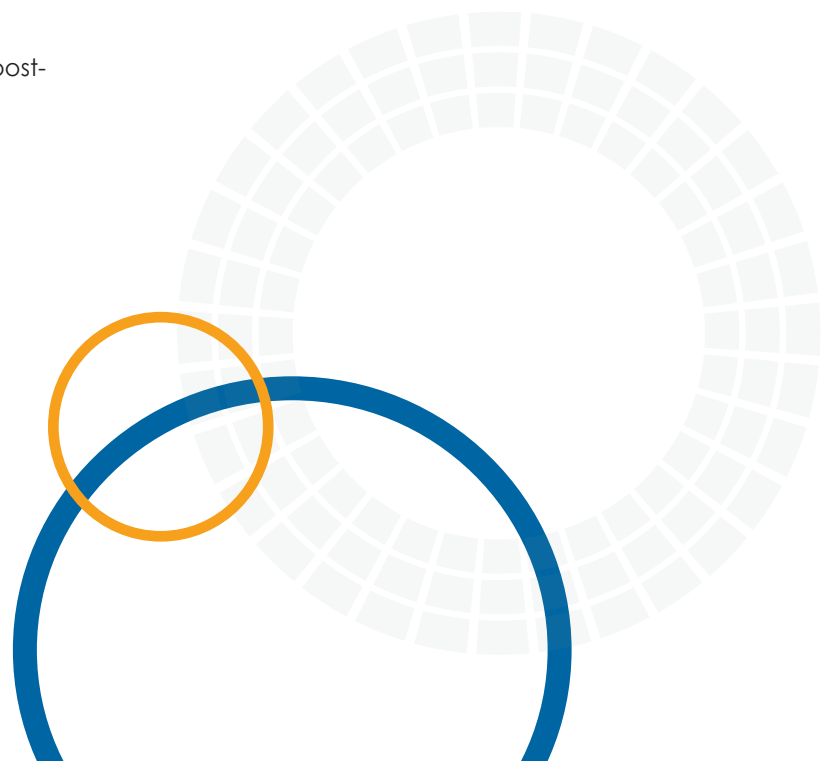
Work permit holders in Nipissing most commonly have citizenship in the United States. The same is true for Northern Ontario's other ten districts and five largest cities. Other common countries of citizenship include China, India, the Philippines, and the United Kingdom

Work permit holders who gained permanent residence in the Nipissing District between 1998 and 2019 primarily did so through the Economic immigrant stream, and most of them came through the Canadian Experience and Skilled Worker subcategories. Some also gained permanent residence through the Provincial Nominee Program.

Discussion

Temporary residents—work permit and study permit holders—make up an important share of Nipissing's immigrant population; they contribute to the local economy and labour force. International students pay tuition to local institutions and spend their money in the city (e.g. rent, groceries, transportation, textbooks, clothing), with additional indirect and induced economic impacts. Similarly, work permit holders fill in-demand jobs in the community and pay for rent/mortgage, groceries, transportation, and other necessities. It is important to measure their presence and assess their characteristics, as is done with permanent residents.

¹¹ See "Where are the international students? How COVID-19 could affect Northern Ontario's economy," Hilary Hagar, 2020.



Income

Employment Income

Employment income is calculated among immigrants who receive employment income whereas total income includes both those with and without employment income. Despite total income also including income from government transfers and investments, employment income may be greater than total income.

In terms of both median and average employment income, recent immigrants who settled in Nipissing between 2011 and 2016 had lower incomes than non-immigrants and all immigrants. There was a much larger disparity between both average and median total income, with recent immigrants making approximately \$20,000 less a year than all immigrants and non-immigrants.

It appears that immigrants begin earning higher employment incomes as they become more established. Income levels among immigrants in Nipissing were consistent with trends identified in the literature. De Chardon emphasizes this point, stating, "annual earnings for high-skilled principal applicants surpass the Canadian average soon after landing and increase over time." (2019, 9) Immigrants and refugees often need time to settle in their new country and, as a result, years since migration generally corresponds with improved economic and social outcomes (Crossman 2013).

Household Income

Factors that contribute to household income for immigrants include number of people in the household, pre-admission experience, knowledge of official languages, and category of admission (Statistics Canada, 2021b). Like other variables, if possible, it is important to look at immigrants based on their period of immigration. For average and median household income metrics, data were only available for the following groups: all immigrants and recent immigrants.

Household income levels for recent immigrants were lower than for all immigrants. The reasons for lower average and median income levels (both total and after tax) were consistent with those previously mentioned: recent immigrants need time to settle into their new communities, gain stable employment, have recognized credentials, complete training, and so on.

Table 3: Immigrant household income statistics in the Nipissing District, 2016

	Average total income	Median total income	Average after-tax income	Median after-tax income
Recent Immigrants	\$74,585	\$50,322	\$63,677	\$47,506
All Immigrants	\$88,402	\$66,197	\$73,556	\$59,413

Source: Author's calculations, Community Data Program (CDP), Household & Family TGP of the recent immigrant population, Census 2016, custom tabulation.

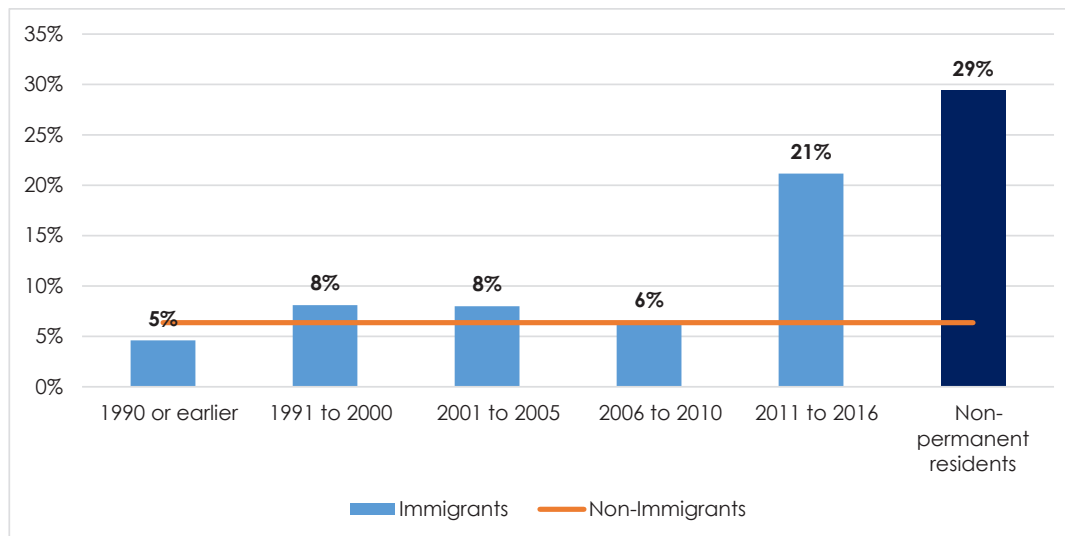
Low Income Cut-offs (LICOs)

Low income cut-offs (LICOs) are income thresholds below which a family will likely devote a larger share of its income to necessities such as food, shelter, and clothing than the average family. Statistics Canada calculates LICOs by looking at the income threshold at which families are expected to spend 20 percentage points more than the average family on food, shelter, and clothing (Statistics Canada 2015). As the purchase of necessities is done with after-tax dollars, after-tax income is used to determine LICOs.

Immigrants that came to Nipissing after 1991 had LICO levels above or equal to non-immigrants. It is worth noting that of those who immigrated between 2011 and 2016, 15 per cent experienced higher LICO levels compared to non-immigrants, and the highest levels among all other permanent residents. Incidence of LICO immigrants decreases as time in the

community increases. Almost 30 per cent of non-permanent residents were LICOs, indicating difficulty integrating into the labour market or finding meaningful employment. As previously stated, non-permanent residents include both study and work permit holders. Study permit holders commonly have restrictions that only allow them to work 20 hours a week. Thus, it is not surprising that this demographic would be driving up the incidence of LICOs among non-permanent residents. The above data shows that having lower income levels as a recent immigrant is not a long-term phenomenon.

Figure 8: Percentage of low income cut-offs after tax (LICO-AT) in the Nipissing District by period of immigration, 2016



Source: Author's calculations; Community Data Program (CDP); Selected Language, Labour Force, Education, Income and Mobility Status Characteristics; Table EO2767 - TBL7R.

Income levels appear to increase, and LICO levels decrease, in correspondence with time spent in the community. As noted, factors such as immigration stream, knowledge of an official language, and employment situation all greatly affect income levels. Additionally, when more recent data are available, income levels will reflect what is happening in the economy at time of landing for the most recent immigrant cohort. Thus, the COVID-19 pandemic will likely impact employment, income, and LICO levels among recent and non-recent immigrants alike.

Retention

Retention of all immigrants in the first year following admission averages 92 per cent for all immigrants, meaning approximately eight per cent of immigrants are leaving Nipissing within their first year of gaining permanent residence. However, among recent immigrants, one-year retention dipped to 60 per cent. As years since admission increase—otherwise known as time spent in a community—retention rates decrease, indicating immigrants are moving out of the community. The five year retention rates suggest that, for all immigrants, there was a drop in retention to 77 per cent and a drop to 12 per cent for recent immigrants. This means that 88 per cent of immigrants who arrived in Nipissing between 2011 and 2016 have since left the community.

As new initiatives are rolled out, it is important to track their impacts on retention. For example, will RNIP's community-specified candidate criteria aid in finding immigrants in North Bay who are more willing to stay in the Nipissing District? Will the conditional offer of permanent residence lead to higher employment satisfaction (and thus higher retention) if applicants can obtain a job in their field? The factors that aid in retention, beyond the RNIP, must be continuously assessed to achieve this goal, not just among the migrant population but also among those already in the community.

Conclusion

When assessing the economic Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot (RNIP), the governing principles are grounded in labour market success for principal applicants. For example, trends related to the labour market participation and employment of recent immigrants are influenced by the fact that RNIP applicants must have a valid job offer in the community. Also, applicants must have either a Canadian post-secondary degree or experience in the field in which they are applying, which would influence income levels. When looking at housing, the previously discussed effects of having stable employment, coupled with more points being given to those who have lived in the community, aid in the search and ownership of housing.

But the impacts of the RNIP are not limited to those directly participating in the pilot. Welcoming initiatives and sustainable economic growth (via immigrants filling labour market shortages) help the entire community. Thus, although the purpose of this paper is to establish a baseline assessment of immigration trends in the region for the purpose of monitoring and assessing the impact of RNIP and other programs, many other aspects need to be looked at in tandem.

Recommendations

Economic immigration is a valuable tool for communities to fill labour market shortages and counteract the effects of an aging population, low birth rates, and high levels of youth out-migration. For this process to be successful and meaningful for all parties involved, the following recommendations must be considered:

1. Ongoing annual monitoring and assessment of community-level immigration trends in Ontario's northern, western, and central regions

Now that baselines have been established for immigration trends in Ontario's northern, western, and central regions, this analysis should be used and built upon to monitor and assess trends in the regions year over year.

Not only should immigration trends be monitored and updated but so should labour market indicators such as vacancy rates in specific occupations. This analysis will aid in monitoring the impacts of the RNIP as well as other welcoming, attraction, and retention efforts undertaken by communities.

It should be noted that data availability and accessibility were a challenge, with long wait times for IRCC admission data. Additionally, there were high levels of data suppression when working at the community level. With the upcoming release of 2021 census data, as well as the continued updating of the IMDB and Taxfiler data, a more comprehensive picture of immigration trends can be provided moving forward.

2. Community-specific ongoing assessment of the impact of the Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot (RNIP) before, during, and after the program

Although 100 recommendations were available to communities in the first year of the pilot, the COVID-19 pandemic significantly hindered the arrival of immigrants to Canada. In some communities, it also impacted the initial rollout of the pilot. Thus, the number of community recommendations issued in the first year of the pilot was low. This is cited to highlight the difficulties in obtaining RNIP candidate-specific data for Year 1.

The goals of the RNIP are to fill community-specific labour market needs while promoting a welcoming community for all participants, ultimately resulting in high retention levels.

Northern Policy Institute (NPI) has partnered with three RNIP communities in Northern Ontario—Thunder Bay, Timmins, and Greater Sudbury—to monitor and assess RNIP-specific immigration trends and outcomes.

This partnership was offered to all RNIP communities in Northern Ontario, and the data-sharing and analysis partnership remains open. Communities that are interested in community-level RNIP assessments, but do not have formal partnerships, are welcome to partner with the NPI for this analysis.

3. Expanding the above analysis to also include domestic and secondary migrants to (and in) Northern Ontario communities

In terms of participation in the housing and labour market, domestic and secondary migrants, and those already in the communities, shape the economic landscape. Once in the communities, to retain them, they need access to welcoming infrastructure, employers, and to the community as a whole.

A limitation to this extra layer of analysis is data availability. IRCC keeps admission records on international in-migrants and temporary residents based on intended destination. Domestic and secondary migration are not captured in these records. Thus, data sources are limited to the census and Taxfiler information.

4. Strengthening the alignment between labour market shortages, targeted occupations, post-secondary institutional fields of study, and immigrant-intended occupations to maximize economic outcomes

Available data should be used to align labour supply with labour demand, thus promoting a robust local labour market and contributing to sustainable economic growth. All involved—chambers, planning boards, post-secondary institutions, employers, immigration networks—can strategically target labour supply and fill current vacancies via targeted immigration.

In most communities analyzed, there is no overlap between occupations with high vacancy rates and those listed under the Year 1 RNIP targeted occupations. To aid in attraction and retention of immigrants, as well as promote positive labour market outcomes for the community, more strategic alignment is recommended. Available data can and should be used to guide decision-making alongside consultations with community partners and employers.

Additionally, migrants already in the community comprise a large source of labour. This population also needs to be considered. Are migrants participating in the labour force? Are they unemployed or underemployed? Are their (foreign) credentials and life experiences adequately acknowledged and compensated?

5. Undertaking welcoming community initiatives to welcome, attract, and retain immigrants and the existing population to/in Ontario's northern, western, and central regions

Beyond looking at the trends measured quantitatively using data gathered from IRCC, the census, Taxfiler estimates, and IMDB, there is a need to also measure attitudes and perceptions of people in the community. Communities participating in the RNIP are required to undertake community welcoming efforts. The implementation of community welcoming initiatives leads to positive benefits for everyone, not just those participating in the pilot.

The effects of these initiatives should be tracked on an ongoing basis, as should immigration trends generally. To do this, primary data collection must be deployed, likely in the form of focus groups and surveys. Important indicators to track include sense of belonging, meaningful employment, positive community interactions, and welcoming infrastructure (such as services available).

When looking at each community's labour market, the individual and community-wide benefits of immigration will be felt when there is alignment between the labour shortages in the community and the immigrants who are applying their skills to fill these gaps.



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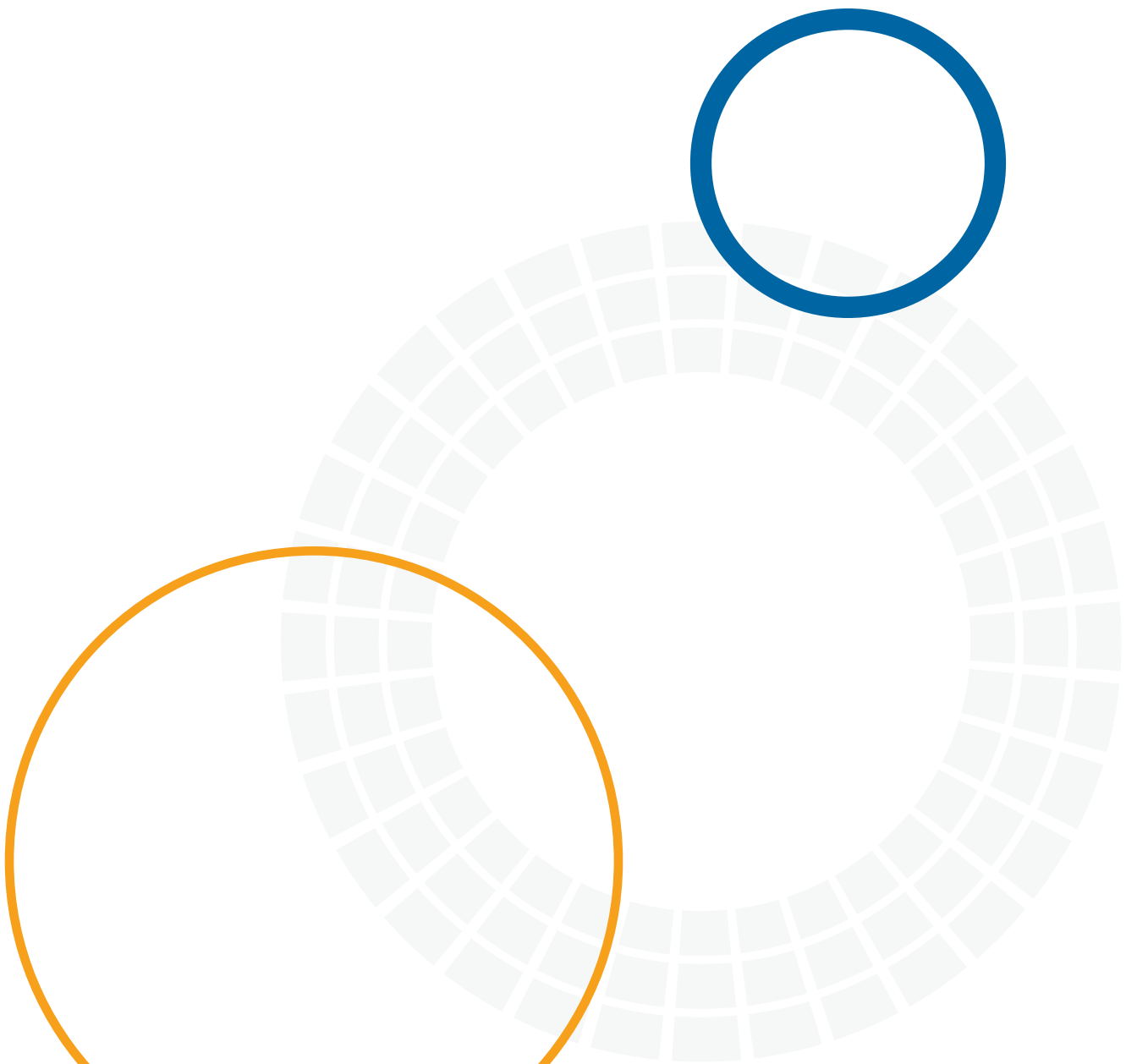
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Appendix A: Data Suppression

All values between zero and five are shown as '--' in requested datasets from IRCC. This is done to prevent individuals from being identified when IRCC data are compiled and compared to other publicly available statistics. All other values are rounded to the closest multiple of five for the same reason. Years with suppressed or rounded data are still significant because they represent a non-zero value. But there are challenges when working with small and suppressed data.



Appendix B: Definitions

Economic immigrants: Immigrants who have been selected for their ability to contribute to Canada's economy through their ability to meet labour market needs, to own and manage or build a business, to make substantial investment, to create their own employment, or to meet specific provincial or territorial labour market needs.

Sponsored Family immigrants: Immigrants who were sponsored by a Canadian citizen or permanent resident and were granted permanent resident status based on their relationship either as the spouse, partner, parent, grandparent, child, or other relative of this sponsor.

Resettled Refugees and Protected Persons immigrants: Immigrants who were granted permanent resident status based on a well-founded fear of returning to their home country.

Other immigrants: Immigrants who were granted permanent resident status under a program that does not fall under the Economic, Sponsored Family, or Resettled Refugees and Protected Persons categories.

Immigrant status: Refers to whether the person is a non-immigrant, an immigrant, or a non-permanent resident:

- Non-immigrants: Persons who are Canadian citizens by birth.
- Immigrants: Persons who are, or who have ever been, landed immigrants or permanent residents. Such persons have been granted the right to live in Canada permanently by immigration authorities. Also includes persons who are Canadian citizens by naturalization.
- Non-permanent residents: Persons who do not have Canadian citizenship and who are not landed immigrants or permanent residents. Includes those who have work, study, or temporary resident permits, or who are refugee claimants, and their family members sharing the same permit and living in Canada with them.

Recent immigrants: Individuals who obtained a landed immigrant or permanent resident status up to five years prior to a given census year. For the data used in this paper, a recent immigrant would be defined as one who landed between 2011 and 2016. Non-recent immigrants landed before 2011.

All immigrants: Individuals who are, or who have ever been, a landed immigrant or permanent resident.

Unemployed: Refers to persons who, during the week of May 1 to May 7, 2016, were without paid work or without self-employment work and were available for work and either:

- a. Had actively looked for paid work in the past four weeks; or
- b. Were on temporary layoff and expected to return to their job; or
- c. Had definite arrangements to start a new job in four weeks or less.

Unemployment rate: Refers to the unemployed expressed as a percentage of the labour force during the week of May 1 to May 7, 2016. The unemployment rate for a particular group (e.g. age, sex, marital status, geographic area) is the unemployed in that group, expressed as a percentage of the labour force in that group.

Appendix C: Indicator List

In total, 24 indicators were identified for trend tracking and analysis.¹²

Category	Indicator
Economic outcomes	Admission of permanent resident (PR) by intended occupation (NOC)
	Unemployment/employment/ participation rates
Housing	Housing tenure (renters vs. owners)
Education	Highest level of education
	Field of study for international students
	Field of study for the immigrant population
	Number of international students by post-secondary institute
Immigrant characteristics	Admission of PR by country of citizenship
	Gender of international in-migrants
	Age at landing
	Admission of PR by language spoken (mother tongue)
	Study permit holder by language spoken (mother tongue)
	Work permit holder by language spoken (mother tongue)
	PR by immigration stream and language
	PR by immigration stream and family status
	PR by country of citizenship
Immigration system	Study permit holders by country of citizenship
	Work permit holders by country of citizenship
Income	Percentage of low income cut-offs after tax (LICO-AT)
	Median and average total income by immigration status and time frame
	Median and average employment income by immigration status and time frame
	Median and average household income
Retention	Immigrant mobility – retention rates by years since admission
SPOs	Settlement service clients by service type

¹² Not all indicators were available for each geography. Service Usage data were only available for the Census Divisions (CDs) of Algoma, Greater Sudbury, Nipissing, and Thunder Bay. Retention data were not available for the Parry Sound District.

Appendix D: North Bay RNIP – Year 1 Targeted NOCs

- 0213: Computer and information systems managers
- 111: Auditors, accountants, and investment professionals
- 121: Administrative services supervisors
- 1242: Legal administrative assistants
- 1311: Accounting technicians and bookkeepers
- 2147: Computer engineers
- 2151: Architects
- 2171: Information systems analysts and consultants
- 2172: Database analysts and data administrators
- 2173: Software engineers and designers
- 223: Civil, mechanical, industrial engineering, technologists, and technicians
- 2244: Aircraft instrument, electrical and avionics mechanics, technicians
- 2251: Architecture, technologists, and technicians
- 2271: Air pilots, flight engineers
- 3012: Registered nurses and registered psychiatric nurses
- 3111: Specialist physicians
- 3112: General practitioners and family physicians
- 3233: Licensed practical nurses
- 3413: Nurse aides, orderlies, and patient service associates
- 4152: Social workers
- 4212: Social and community service workers
- 4214: Early childhood educators and assistants
- 4412: Home support workers, housekeepers, and related occupations
- 7237: Welders and related machine operators
- 7241: Electricians
- 7251: Plumbers
- 7271: Carpenters
- 7311: Construction millwrights and industrial mechanics
- 7312: Heavy duty equipment mechanics
- 7315: Aircraft mechanics and aircraft inspectors
- 7321: Automotive service technicians, truck and bus mechanics and mechanical repairers
- 7511: Transport truck drivers
- 7521: Heavy equipment operators
- 7535: Other automotive mechanical installers and servicers
- 7611: Construction trades helpers and laborers

OPEN NOC (10 allocations)

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 operations are located 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.

Related Research

All Roads Lead Home: Immigration Flows into North Bay and What this Means for RNIP Impacts

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All Roads Lead Home: Immigration Flows into Sault Ste. Marie and What this Means for RNIP Impacts

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