

Taking Aim: French-Speaking Migration Targets for the City of Sault Ste. Marie, 2016 to 2026

February 2022

By: Mercedes Labelle



RÉSEAU
du NORD

Soutien à l'immigration
FRANCOPHONE

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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 Wahnapiet 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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About the Northern Analyst Collective:

The Northern Analyst Collective, a project of Northern Policy Institute, will allow members to "time share" a professional policy analyst. By merging our collective resources we can ensure that the smallest municipality or local charity can access high-end skills at an affordable price.

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.

Project Partner:

Réseau du Nord

Réseau du Nord creates links between organizations from all regions of Northern Ontario, such as: Sudbury, Timmins, North Bay, Sault Ste. Marie and Thunder Bay, to put in place a system to facilitate the reception and integration of newcomers.

Réseau du Nord follows the objectives of the strategic plan developed by the Steering Committee:

- Increase the number of French-speaking immigrants so as to increase the demographic weight of the Francophone communities in a minority situation.
- Improve the capacity of French-speaking communities in a minority situation and strengthen welcoming and settlement structures for French-speaking newcomers.
- Ensure the economic integration of French-speaking immigrants within Canadian society and Francophone communities in minority situations in particular.
- Ensure the social and cultural integration of French-speaking immigrants within Canadian society and Francophone communities in minority situations.
- Foster regionalization of Francophone immigration outside of Toronto, Montréal and Vancouver.

About the Author

Mercedes Labelle



Mercedes Labelle graduated from McGill University in 2020 with an Honours Bachelor of Political Science and Urban Systems. During her studies, she focused on Canadian politics and public policy processes, specifically researching the uneven distribution of benefits and services between urban and rural communities. At McGill, Mercedes provided analysis on Canadian Politics for the McGill Journal of Political Studies (MJPS). Through her involvement with MJPS, Mercedes developed a deeper understanding of the diverse interests and needs of the Canadian population. Having grown up in Canada, the United States, and Spain, Mercedes is eager to return to Northern Ontario, where her family now resides. In her free time, Mercedes enjoys listening to podcasts, cooking, and reading.

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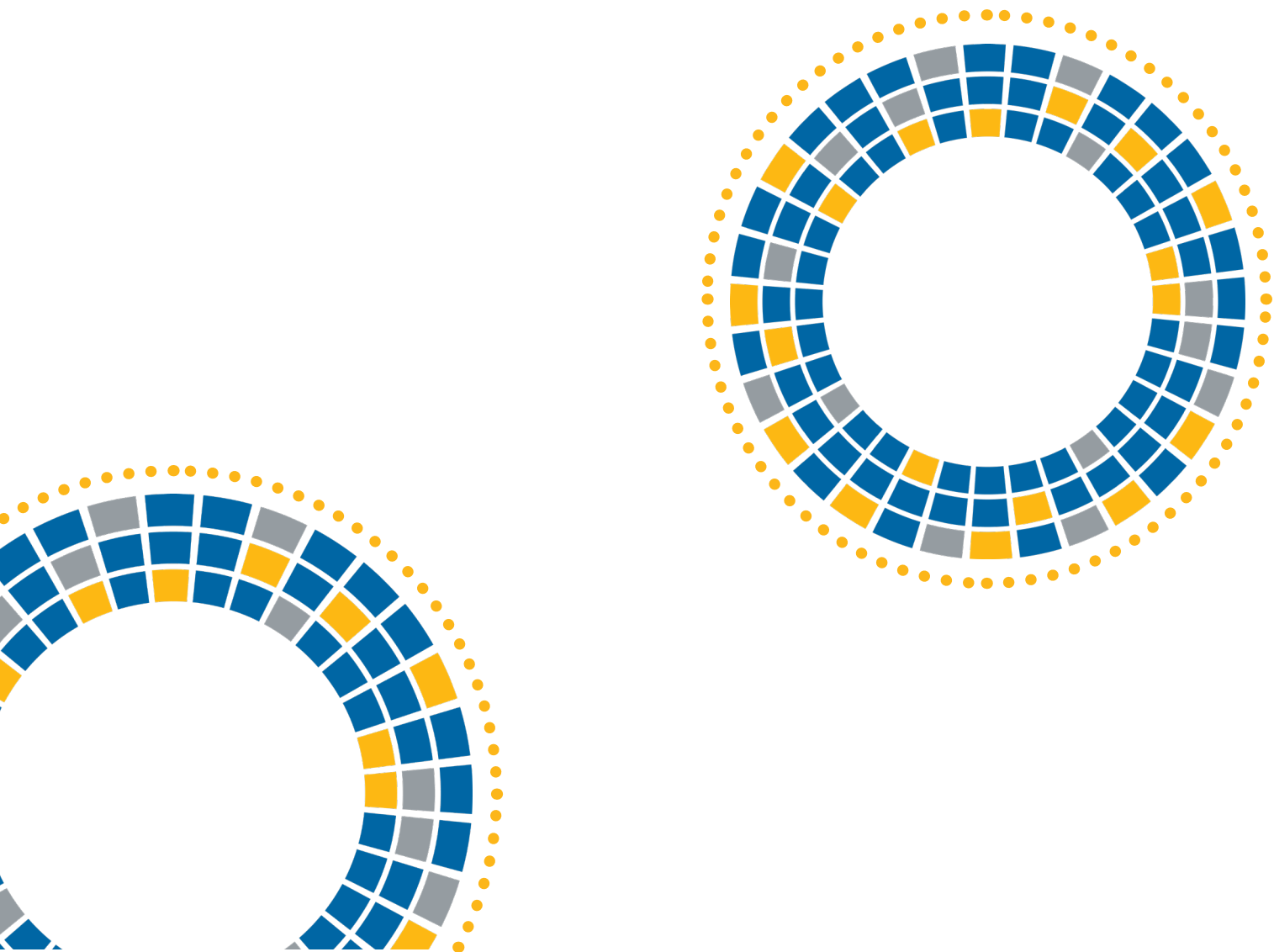
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Executive Summary

In the coming years, many municipalities in Ontario's northern, western, and central regions will be experiencing an increase in the number of seniors at a higher proportion than provincial levels. This will mean future labour market shortages and a greater need for youth retention and migration to the regions. When looking at more migration in general, the demographic composition of future migrants should also be considered to prevent a faster decline of specific subgroups of the population, which are also following the overall aging trend.

This paper estimates how many future French-speaking and Francophone migrants should be targeted for the City of Sault Ste. Marie, as a proportion of total future migrants, in order to maintain the current proportions of French speakers and Francophones in the city's core working-age population. Establishing a baseline target for French-speaking and Francophone migration allows the labour force to maintain its current equilibrium, meaning the ratio of working-age French speakers and Francophones will remain consistent as a share of the total population.

When analyzing the core working-age population, this paper estimates that to maintain the 2016 proportion of French speakers in Sault Ste. Marie, **5.8 to 6.3 per cent** of future in-migrants would need to be French speakers, a range of **851 to 1,039 people**. On the other hand, **5.2 to 5.5 per cent** of future in-migrants would need to be Francophones to maintain their current proportion of the core working-age population, which represents **812 to 865** required in-migrants. Thus, following the targets, occupations that currently require, or benefit from, French language skills will have a sufficient pool of linguistically qualified people to employ into 2026.

To support the targeted attraction and retention efforts, communities can work within existing programs, like the Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot, and develop new initiatives, to encourage French-speaking and Francophone migration. Once French speakers and Francophones are in the community, adequate services must also be in place, and easily identifiable, to support their needs. Finally, at the organizational and individual levels, the City must continue working towards creating welcoming communities for French-speaking and Francophone migrants, and fully employ those already in the community.



Summary Target Tables for 5 Communities and 11 Districts



This series of papers estimates how many future French-speaking and Francophone migrants should be targeted in the five largest cities and 11 districts in Northern Ontario, as a proportion of all migrants from 2016 to 2026. The purpose of the targets is to maintain the **current** proportions of French speakers and Francophones in a given location's core working-age population.

While each paper focuses on a specific city or district, below are two summary tables for comparison purposes.

Targets for Cities: Needed French-Speaking or Francophone In-Migrants, 2016-2026

City	% - French-speaking	# of people - French-speaking	% - Francophones	# of people - Francophones
Greater Sudbury	37.8 - 38.0	10,544 - 12,391	32.6 - 33.7	9,405 - 10,616
North Bay	21.2 - 21.3	3,442 - 3,598	16.4 - 16.6	2,690 - 2,773
Sault Ste. Marie	5.8 - 6.3	851 - 1,039	5.2 - 5.5	812 - 865
Timmins	47.8 - 48.9	3,716 - 4,712	41.1 - 41.5	3,231 - 3,961
Thunder Bay	3.3 - 3.5	774 - 863	3.6 - 3.7	875 - 901

Targets for Districts: French-Speaking or Francophone In-Migrants, 2016-2026

District	% - French-speaking	# of people - French-speaking	% - Francophones	# of people - Francophones
Algoma	9.3 - 9.7	1,412 - 1,658	10.0 - 10.5	1,592 - 1,706
Cochrane	57.6 - 57.8	5,589 - 5,766	54.5 - 54.7	5,284 - 5,454
Greater Sudbury	37.3 - 37.7	7,431 - 9,695	33.4 - 35.7	7,119 - 8,595
Sudbury	34.0 - 34.1	1,577 - 1,643	28.2 - 28.5	1,320 - 1,363
Manitoulin	7.2 - 7.6	198 - 227	3.8 - 4.1	107 - 120
Nipissing	33.2 - 33.3	5,135 - 5,175	29.2 - 29.4	4,546 - 4,534
Parry Sound	6.3 - 6.5	705 - 815	3.9 - 4.0	447 - 489
Timiskaming	34.0 - 34.1	1,552 - 1,988	27.8 - 29.3	1,339 - 1,619
Kenora	4.0 - 4.1	412 - 442	3.5 - 3.6	376 - 383
Rainy River	3.0 - 3.1	83 - 97	2.9 - 3.2	88 - 89
Thunder Bay	4.7 - 5.1	933 - 1,116	6.2 - 6.5	1,302 - 1,355

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to estimate the number of future French-speaking in-migrants that would be required, in the next ten years, for the City of Sault Ste. Marie to maintain the 2016 proportion of the French-speaking core working-age population at 8.6 per cent. The analysis was also applied to the Francophone population, which currently comprises 4.1 per cent of the core working-age population. French-speaking and Francophone migrants are crucial to the longevity of both the language and culture associated with these demographic groups.

Contributing to these numbers is the differing age distribution of the French-speaking and Francophone populations. The French-speaking population in Sault Ste. Marie is younger than the non-French-speaking population, while the Francophone population is significantly older than the non-Francophone population. These findings indicate that the French-speaking population is better poised to maintain its share of the core working-age population in the next ten years. Despite Francophones currently comprising a lesser share of the core working-age population in Sault Ste. Marie, their required in-migration estimates are higher than those for French speakers.

'French speakers' is derived from the 2016 Census variable, "Knowledge of Official Languages", and "refers to whether [a] person can conduct a conversation in English only, French only, in both, or in neither [official] language. For a child who has not yet learned to speak, this includes languages that the child is learning to speak at home" (Statistics Canada, 2017). Therefore, those who reported to have knowledge of French only, or knowledge of English and French, were counted as French speakers. The 'Francophone' definition used is available below.

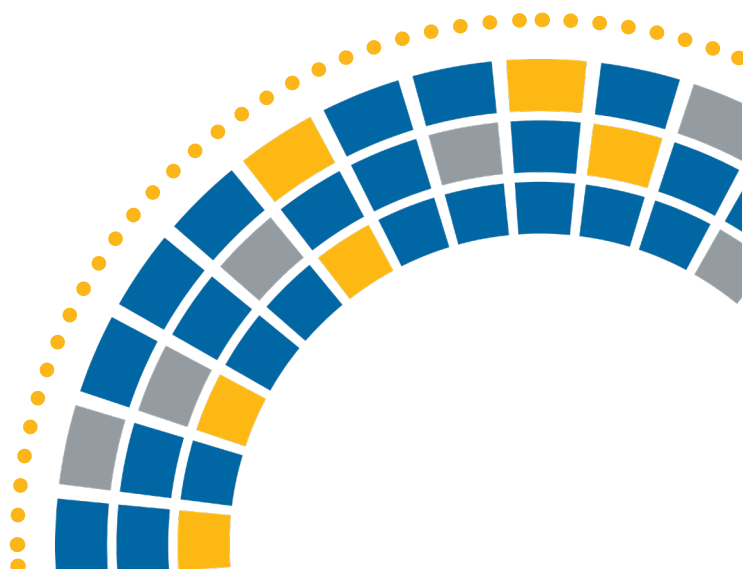
This paper aims to build upon a previously published paper by Alex Ross and Fenfang Li, titled "French-Speaking Migrants to Greater Sudbury: 2017-2026" (November 2019). The purpose of this series is to expand upon the estimates of needed French-speaking and Francophone migrants to all districts as well as the five largest cities in Northern Ontario; specifically, this paper looks at migration to the City of Sault Ste. Marie. In addition, the methodology has also been updated to better reflect and estimate 10- year mobility, account for death rates in the core working-age population, and estimate age-specific mobility rates to control for the differences in demographic groups.

As regions in Northern Ontario will be experiencing an increase in the number of seniors in the coming years, at a proportion higher than provincial levels, future labour market shortages will emerge. With that, there will come a greater need for youth retention and migration to Ontario's northern, western, and central regions. With new government immigration programs, such as the Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot, the Welcoming Francophone Communities Initiative, and multiple matchmaker programs, targets for Francophone and French-speaking migrants must be identified and prioritized to help fill these future shortages.

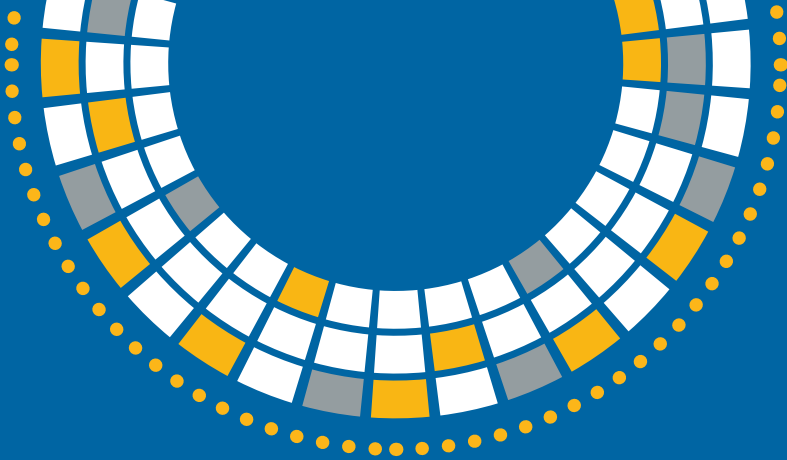


Definitions:

1. Core working-age population: those who are 25 years to 64 years old.
2. French-speaking, core working-age population: those who speak French, as per the above criteria, in the core working-age population.
3. Non-French-speaking core working age population: those who only speak English or non-official languages, in the core working-age population.
4. 2026 Base population: The 2016 population, having aged 10 years (those 15 to 54 in 2016), while also accounting for deaths in each age group. The base population does not account for migration, which is what the paper aims to identify.
5. 2026 projection: This variable uses population projections conducted by Dr. Bakhtiar Moazzami, Economics Professor at Lakehead University.¹ The model takes into account the region's current population, fertility and mortality, and migration to produce population estimates, by age and sex, for 2026. The numbers for the French-speaking and Francophone populations in 2026 are derived using 2016 percentages of each group's proportion of population in the core working-age, and then applied to Dr. Moazzami's projections for 2026 to establish the targets.
6. Geography: This analysis was conducted for the following cities in Northern Ontario: North Bay (CA), Greater Sudbury (CMA), Sault Ste. Marie (CA), Timmins (CA), and Thunder Bay (CMA). This paper specifically looks at Greater Sudbury.
7. Time frame: 2016 to 2026.
8. French-speaking population: Northern Policy Institute (NPI) uses the Statistics Canada's Census variable, "Knowledge of Official Languages," as explained in the introduction above. Those who know "French" or "French and English" comprise the French-speaking group.
9. Francophone population: This definition is derived from the Community Data Program's definition of "Francophone," which considers an individual's "First Official Language Spoken," "Language Spoken Most Often at Home," and "Mother Tongue" (all as defined and gathered by Statistics Canada).



¹ To read more about the population projections used in this paper, see Appendix A.



**“Rural Canada and
northern Canada are
an important part of our
history and key to not only
our current economic
growth, but our future
prosperity as a country.”**

**– Ahmed Hussen, Former Minister of Immigration,
Refugees and Citizenship 2019**



Estimates for French-Speaking Migrants

Establishing targets for the core working-age population in 2026

To begin, since the goal of this paper is to project numbers needed to maintain a constant percentage of French speakers in the core working-age population, the percentage of French speakers in the core working-age population in 2016 sets the benchmark for 2026. The 2016 percentage can be applied to the 2026 total population projection to produce the targeted number of French speakers in the core working-age population in 2026. As defined above, the 2026 population projections account for births, deaths, and migration.

The City of Sault Ste. Marie has a total population of 76,670, with 7,145 French speakers and 3,015 Francophones. In 2016, it had a core working-age population of 40,535 people, of which 3,475 were French-speakers. Thus, the percentage of French speakers in the core working-age population in 2016 was **8.6** per cent, which will act as the target for 2026.

The population projections for 2026 estimates there will be 41,969 people in the City of Sault Ste. Marie within the core working-age group. To calculate the number of French speakers in the core working-age in 2026, the 2016 per cent share of 8.6 is applied to the total working-age estimate to produce a target of **3,598** French speakers in the core working-age population.

Calculating net migration required from 2016 to 2026

Once the target for 2026 has been established, the route to meet that target must be identified. This can be done by looking at the 2016 population and calculating who, and how many people from that population will comprise the core working-age group in 2026.

As stated, the core working-age population in 2016 was 40,535 people, with 3,475 being French speakers. From here, we can look at the people aged 15 to 54 in 2016, who will be 25 to 64 in 2026 (the core working-age). In addition to measuring those aging into, and out of the core working-age, deaths within each age group during the 10-year period.

Using the last ten years of data available for the City of Sault Ste. Marie, an analysis of 10-year death rates, was done for each five-year age group to produce an age-specific mortality rate. Accounting for both the aging process and mortality rates, the core working-age population in 2026 can be estimated, referred to throughout this paper as the "base population." The base population does not account for migration, which is calculated in later sections.

What results is a total base population in 2026 of 32,988 people, with 3,373 being French speakers. Since the base population does not account for migration, but the 2026 population projection does, the difference between both 2026 estimates represents **net migrants**.

Thus, using both the 2026 population projections and the base population estimates, the difference between the French-speaking populations in 2026 is **225** people. As such, in order to maintain the 8.6 per cent proportion of the French-speaking core working-age population, Sault Ste. Marie must attract a total of **225 net migrants** between 2016 and 2026, either from other regions in Canada or other countries.



Table 1 below summarizes the 2016 population, the projected 2026 population, and the needed net migrants for the City of Sault Ste. Marie.

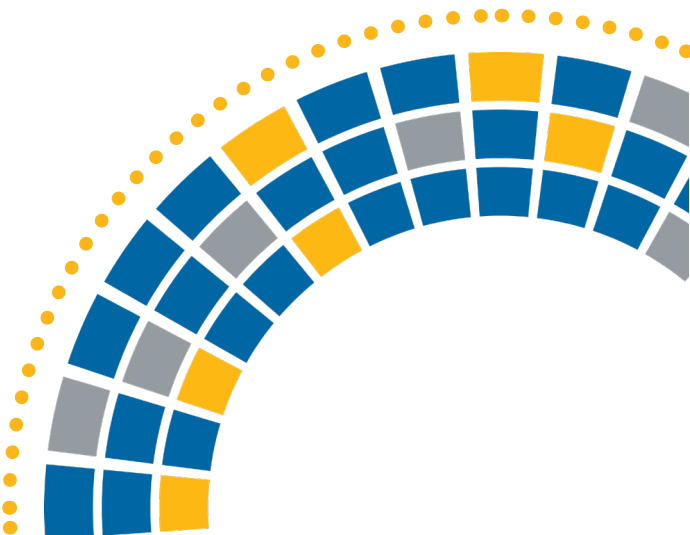
Table 1: Current and Future Population Projections of the Core Working-Age Population in the City of Sault Ste. Marie

	2016 Census	2026 Base Population (incl. deaths)	Net Migrants 2017-26	2026 Population Projection
Core working-age population	40,535	32,988	8,981	41,969
French-speaking, core working age population	3,475	3,373	225	3,598*
Non-French-speaking core working age population	37,060	29,615	8,756	38,371

*This is the number required to maintain the French-speaking proportion of the core working-age population at 8.6 per cent.

(Note: Required net migrants is the difference between the 2026 base population, which includes deaths, and the 2026 population projections).

Determining net migration only tells a portion of the population story. To determine the proportion of new migrants that should be targeted in Sault Ste. Marie, the rate at which the French-speaking, core working-age population out-migrates from the region must be established. Two methods are used to estimate this rate using both Census and Taxfiler mobility data, which will then provide a range of immigration targets based on possible out-migration trends.



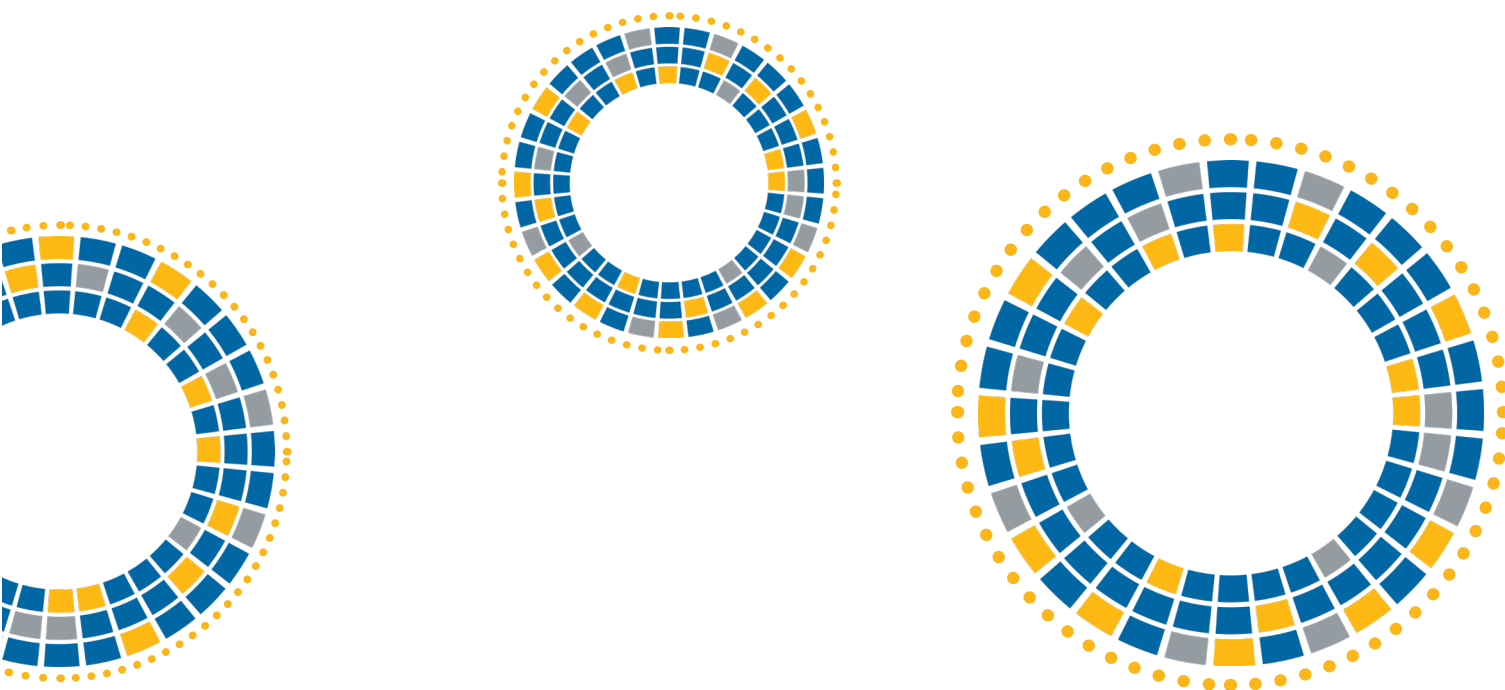
Calculating the number of needed in-migrants - Census Mobility

When calculating mobility, it is important to note the differences between age groups. The younger demographic tends to be more mobile, as they are earlier in their careers and often without established families. As the later analysis will get into, there are notable differences in age composition between the French-speaking and non-French-speaking populations; the same is true for Francophones. Thus, both Census and Taxfiler mobility rates were calculated for the 25- to 44-year-old demographic as well as the 45- to 64-year-old demographic to capture the effect of age on mobility.

To begin, Census mobility rate was calculated using the number of all movers, minus those who moved but remained inside of the city boundaries², as a percentage of the total population. As mentioned, these calculations were done for two age groups: 25 to 44 and 45 to 64, together comprising the core working-age population. The mobility rate for both groups was adjusted to represent a 10-year period. The 10-year mobility rate represents those from the 2016 population who will out-migrate between 2016 and 2026, meaning it is necessary to replace these out-migrants with in-migrants to meet the 2026 targets established above.

Using Census mobility data, it is estimated that approximately 25.3 per cent of 25- to 44- year-olds from 2016 will move out of Sault Ste. Marie by 2026. For 45- to 64-year-olds, this number decreases to 10.4 per cent. Applying both percentages to their respective demographic, the calculations show that 4,003 people from the younger age group, and 1,783 from the older, will out-migrate by 2026, for a total of **5,786** out-migrants over ten years. The total number of French speakers that are estimated to out-migrate in the same period totals **626** from the core working-age population.³ Therefore, to maintain the current percentage of French speakers in the core working-age population, Census mobility numbers show that 626 French-speaking in-migrants are needed by 2026.

Further, adding the 225 net migrants calculated above to the 626 out-migrants that must be replaced, a total of **851** French-speaking, core working-age in-migrants are needed, or **5.8 per cent** of all in-migrants to Sault Ste. Marie between 2016 and 2026.



² Movers are defined as "persons who have moved from one residence to another." To further tailor the analysis, non-migrants, defined as "persons who did move, but remained in the same census subdivision" were not included in NPI's mobility rate calculations for the purpose of this paper. Thus, the working definition of "mover" includes only migrants, both internal (stayed within Canada) and external (moved outside of Canada) migrants.

³ These numbers were calculated by applying the mobility rates (25.3 and 10.4 per cent) to their respective age groups, both in the total population, and the French-speaking population.

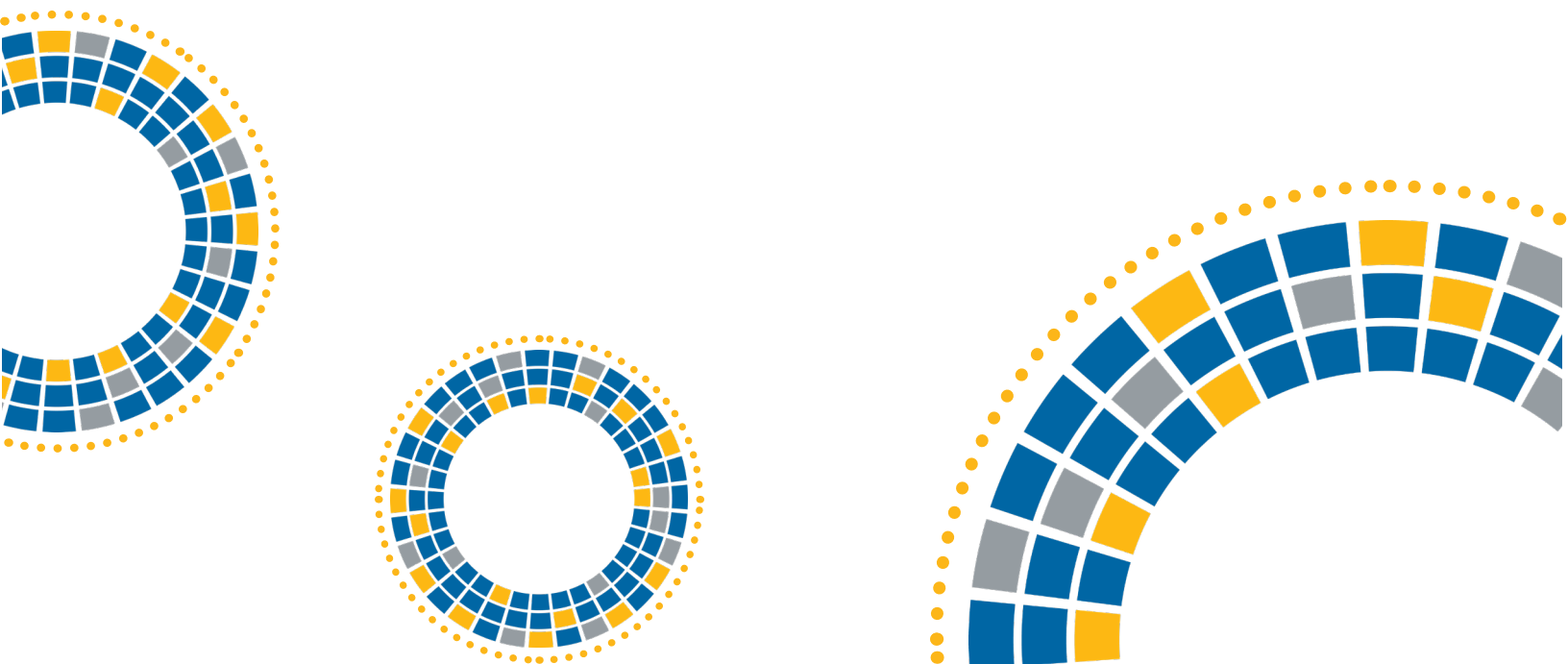
Calculating the number of needed in-migrants - Taxfiler Mobility

The second method used to calculate mobility is similar to that used above, in which mobility was calculated for two age groups: those ages 25 to 44 and those 45 to 64. Taxfiler Migration Estimates that compare individuals' addresses from tax returns each year and only include those who move to another Census division or metropolitan area as out-migrants. Thus, similar to the Census mobility calculations, those who move but remain within the City of Sault Ste. Marie are not counted in determining the mobility rate. A limitation to be noted for the mobility estimates, both the Census and Taxfiler calculations, is the inability to distinguish between movers who relocate outside of Sault Ste. Marie but continue to work within the city, thus contributing to its core working-age population, though being identified as an out-migrant.

One-year mobility rates were calculated for each age group. For the Sault Ste. Marie Census Agglomeration (CA), only six years of Taxfiler mobility data was available,⁴ so a six-year average was used to determine one-year mobility, then adjusted to represent 10-year mobility. Using Taxfiler mobility data, it is estimated that approximately 32.3 per cent of 25- to 44-year-olds from 2016 will move out of the city by 2026. For 45- to 64- year-olds, this number decreases to 14.2 per cent. Again applying both percentages to their respective age demographics, the mobility calculations show that 5,116 people from the younger age group, and 2,443 from the older, will out-migrate by 2026, for a total of **7,559** out-migrants over ten years. The total number of French speakers that are estimated to out-migrate in the same period totals **814** from the core working-age population. Therefore, the Taxfiler Migration Estimates show that to maintain the current percentage of French speakers in the core working-age population, 814 French-speaking in-migrants are needed by 2026.

To further account for net-migration calculated above, the 225 net migrants can be added to the 814 needed in-migrants to establish the need for **1,039** total French-speaking migrants in the core working-age population, or **6.3 per cent** of all in-migrants between 2016 and 2026.

Using both the Census and Taxfiler mobility calculations, it is estimated between 5.8 and 6.3 per cent of all core working-age in-migrants between 2016 and 2026 must be French speakers, representing a range of 851 and 1,039 people. This range will allow the City of Sault Ste. Marie to maintain its current proportion of French speakers at 8.6 per cent of the core working-age population through 2026.



⁴Six-year Taxfiler mobility data was available for North Bay, Sault Ste. Marie, and Timmins. Ten-year Taxfiler data was available for the districts as well as the cities of Greater Sudbury and Thunder Bay.

Table 2 demonstrates the estimated number of in-migrants required to maintain the same proportion of 2016 French speakers in the core working-age population.

Table 2: Estimated Number and Proportion of Required French-Speaking In-Migrants in the City of Sault Ste. Marie

	Estimated required in-migrants, over 10- year period (range)	% of total in-migrants
Total core working-age population	14,767 to 16,540	--
French-speaking, core working-age population	851 to 1,039	5.8% to 6.3%*
Non-French-speaking, core working-age population	13,916 to 15,501	93.7% to 94.2%

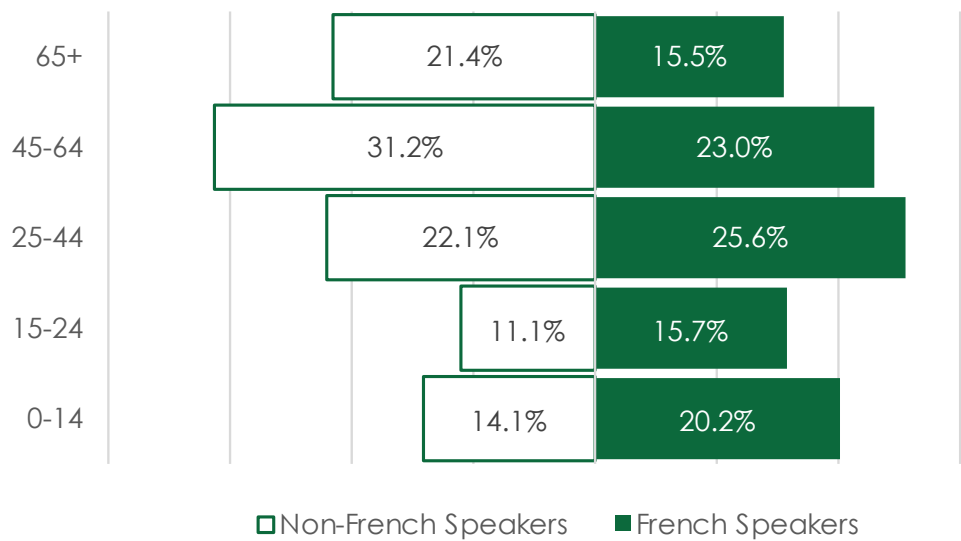
**This is the range of required in-migrants, as a share of total migrants, needed to maintain the current share of the French-speaking core working-age population at 8.6 per cent.*

Further, this analysis suggests that overall, the French-speaking population in Sault Ste. Marie is, on average, younger than the total population. Demographic factors, alongside migration trends and the initial overall proportion of French speakers in the core working-age population in 2016, contribute to the percentage range needed to maintain the current share of French speakers.

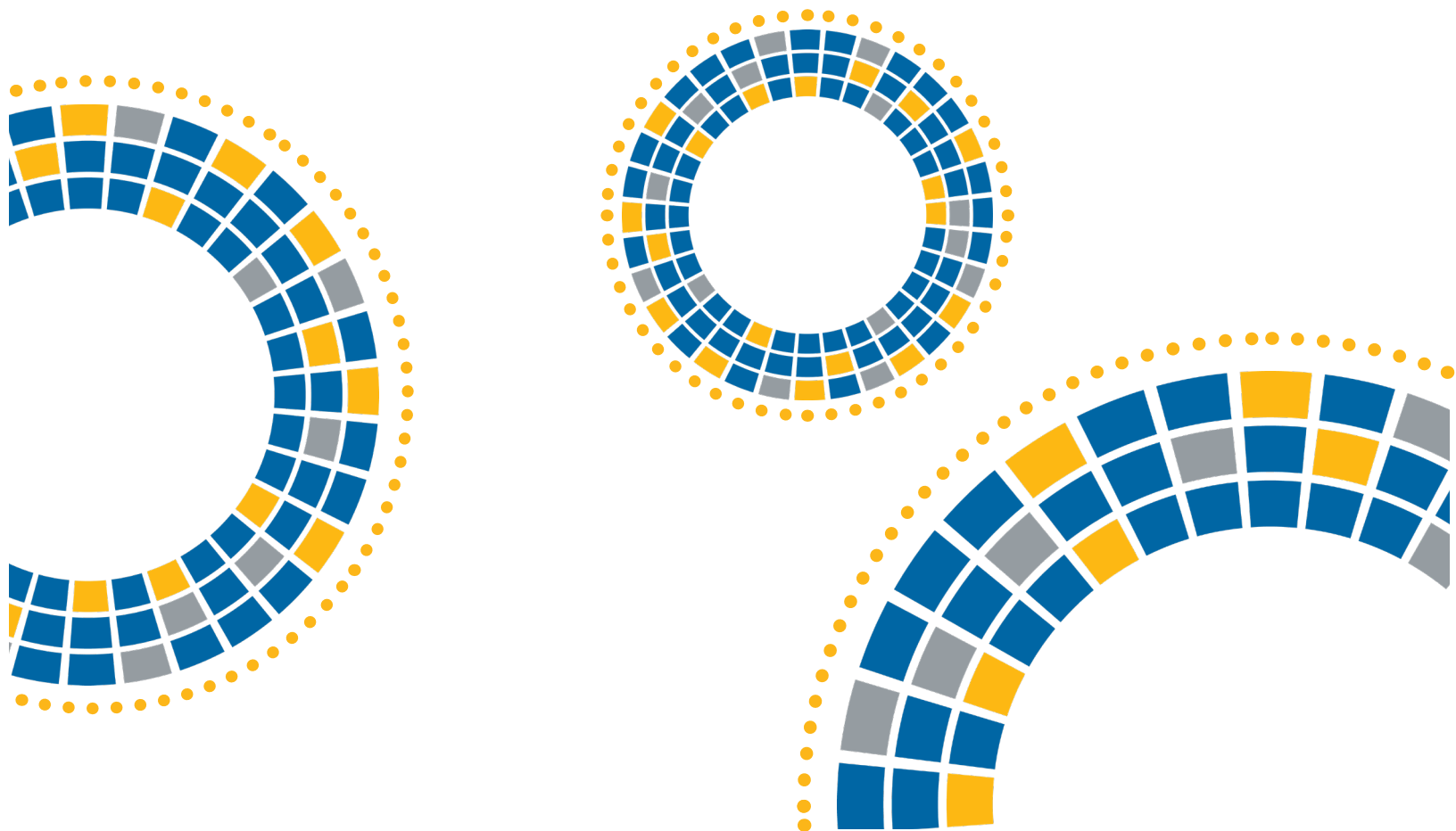
When looking at the age distribution of the population from the 2016 Census, the French-speaking population has a significantly lower share of its demographic nearing retirement age compared to non-French speakers. About 23.0 per cent of the French-speaking population is in the 45 to 64 age group, compared to 31.2 per cent of non-French speakers. Thus, a higher proportion of the non-French-speaking population will be aging out of the labour market in the next ten years. Moreover, when looking at the demographic that will be entering the core working-age labour market in the coming years (ages 0 to 24), 36.0 per cent of the French-speaking population is in that age group, while non-French speakers have 25.2 per cent of their population between those ages.

Additionally, 41.4 per cent of Sault Ste. Marie's French-speaking population is in the young workforce (15 to 44 years old) compared to 33.2 per cent of Sault Ste. Marie's non-French-speaking population. When looking at future scenarios, the French-speaking population in Sault Ste. Marie is better poised to maintain its current proportion of the core working-age population. However, non-French speakers have a larger current share of their population in the core working-age, 53.3 per cent, compared to 48.6 per cent of the French-speaking population.

Figure 1: Age Distribution of French Speakers and Non-French Speakers in Sault Ste. Marie



Source: Author's calculations. Statistics Canada, 2016. Target Group Profile of the Population by Knowledge of Official Languages. Custom Tabulation. Community Data Program (CDP).



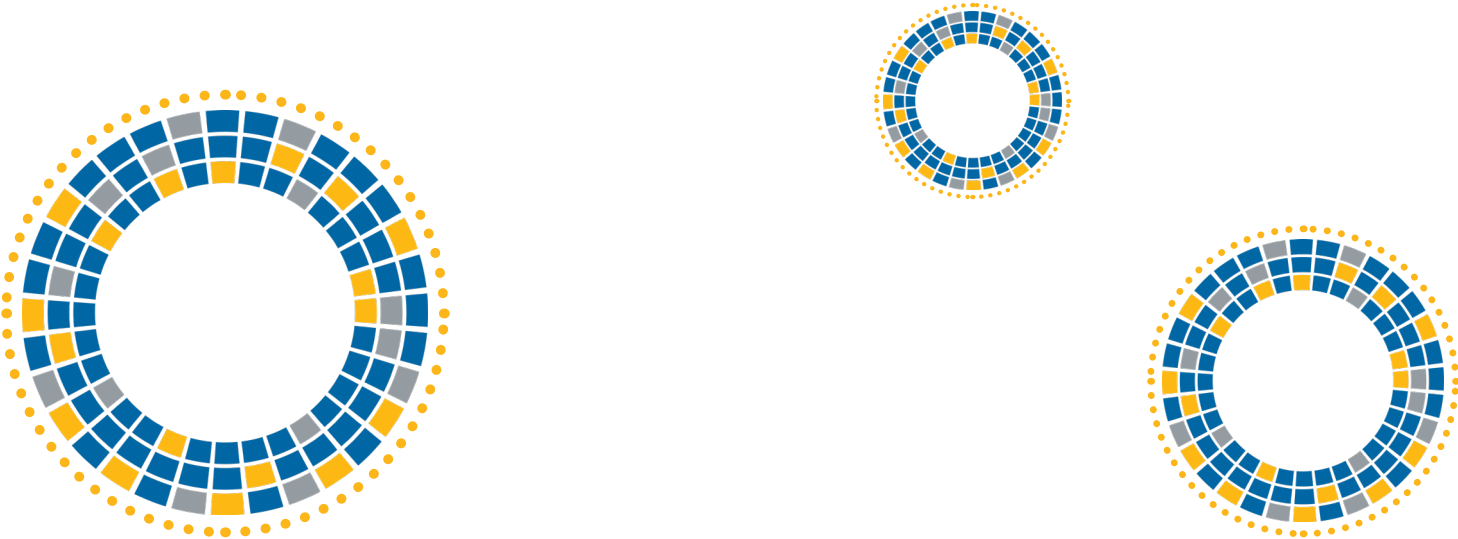
Alternate Analysis of Francophones

The same methodology and approach as outlined above was applied to Sault Ste. Marie's Francophone population. The results estimate that between **5.2** and **5.5** per cent of all new in-migrants must be Francophones for the city to maintain its 2016 proportion of Francophones in the core working-age population at **4.1** per cent.

Table 3: Estimated Number and Proportion of Required Francophone In-Migrants in Sault Ste. Marie

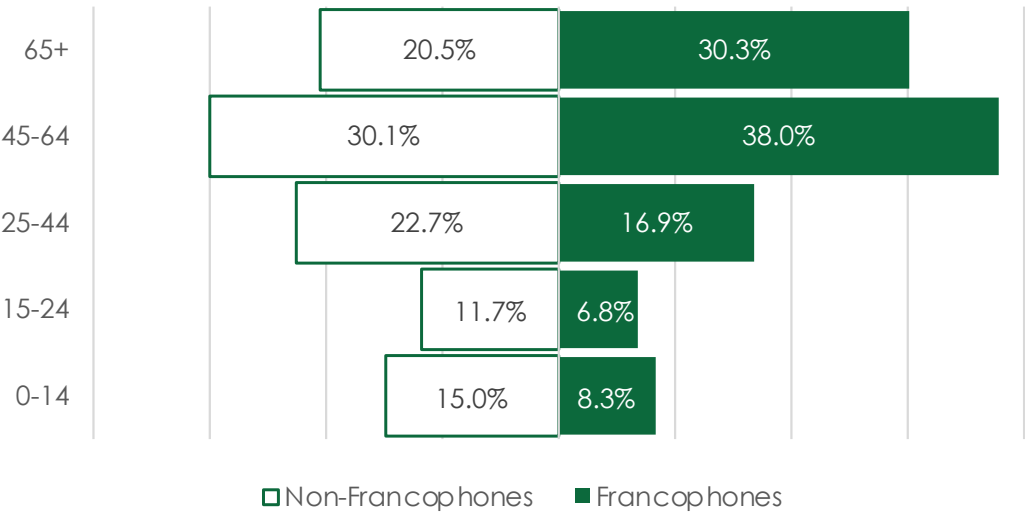
	Estimated required in-migrants, over 10- year period (range)	% of total in-migrants
Total core working-age population	14,767 to 16,540	--
French-speaking, core working-age population	812 to 865	5.2% to 5.5%
Non-French-speaking, core working-age population	13,955 to 15,675	94.5% to 94.8%

A contributing factor to the percentage disparity is the differences in age breakdown between the Francophone and non-Francophone populations. Francophones in Sault Ste. Marie are, on average, older than non-Francophones. In fact, 30.3 per cent of the Francophone population is over 65, while only 20.5 per cent of the non-Francophone population is in that age group. Also, a higher percentage, 38.0 per cent, of all Francophones are approaching retirement age (45 to 64), compared to 30.1 per cent of non-Francophones. Finally, only 6.8 per cent of the Francophone population will be entering the core working-age population in the next ten years (those currently ages 15 to 24) while 11.7 per cent in the non-Francophone population will become core working-age in the same period.

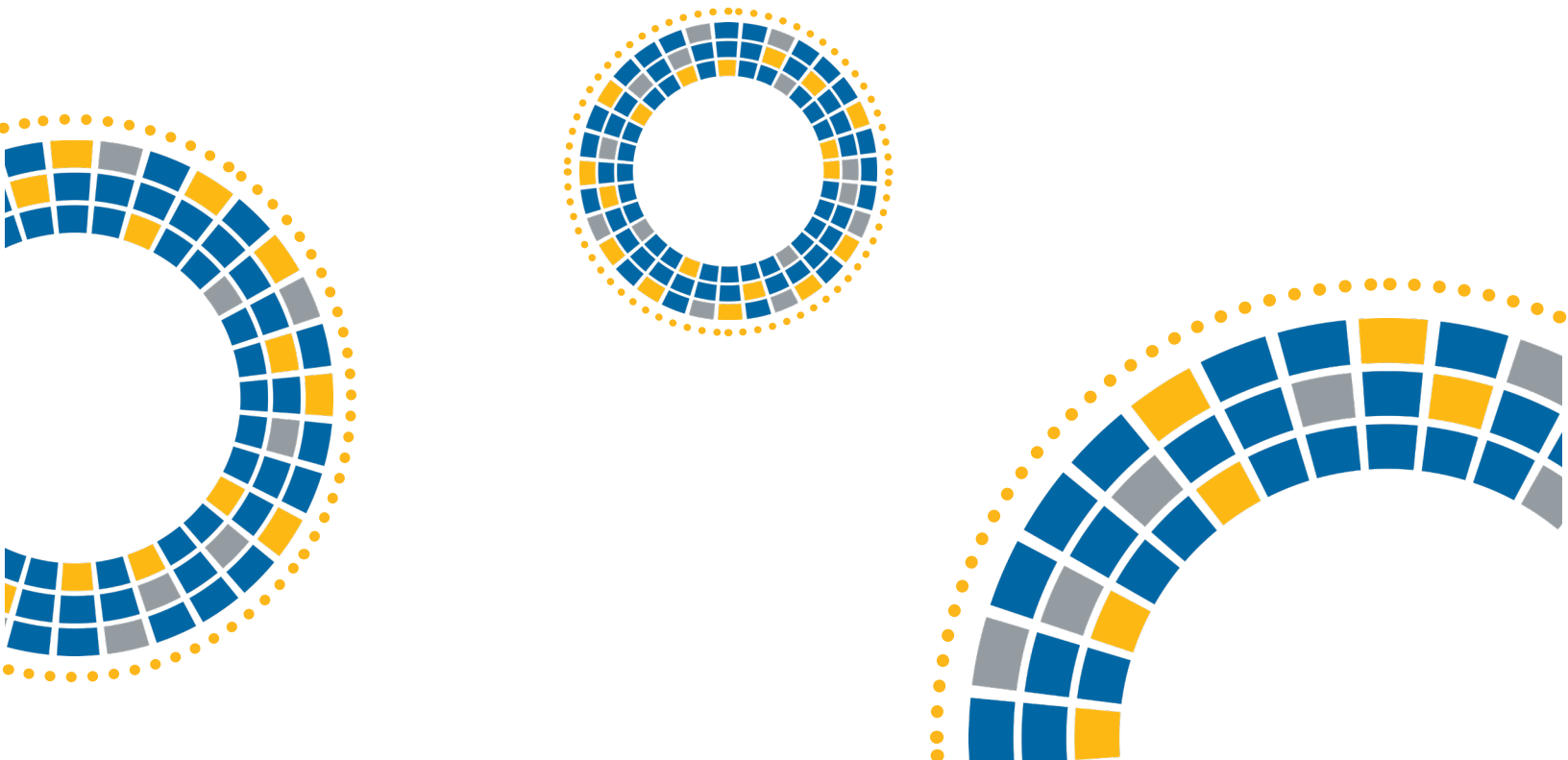


These findings indicate that, compared to non-Francophones, the Francophone population will be aging out of the labour force at a higher rate, while also having a lower proportion of their population about to enter the core working-age population.

Figure 2: Age Distribution of Francophones and Non-Francophones in Sault Ste. Marie



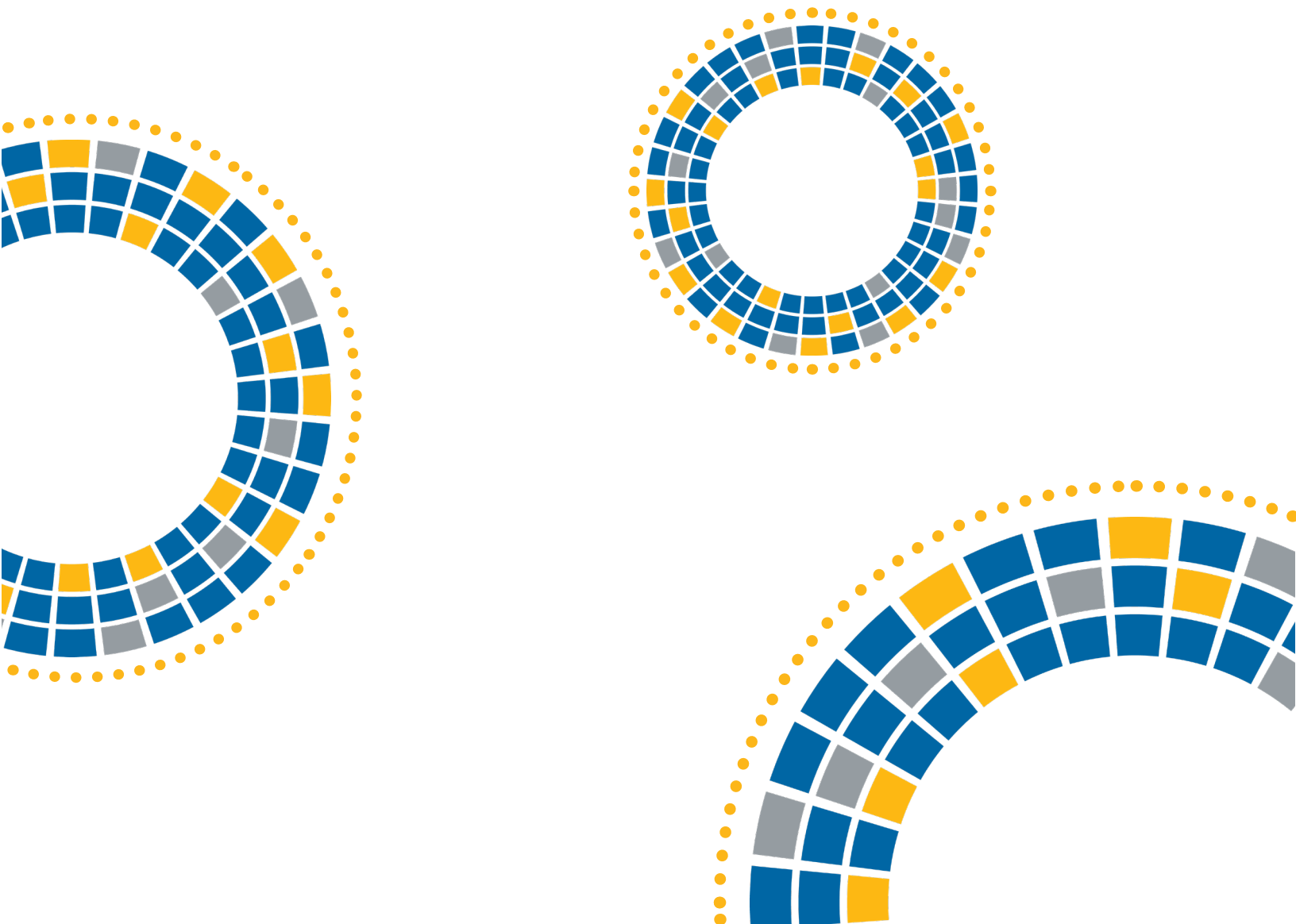
Source: Author's calculations. Statistics Canada, 2016. Target Group Profile of the Francophone Population. Custom Tabulation. Community Data Program (CDP).



Conclusion

The above analysis provides an estimated range of required in-migrants to Sault Ste. Marie in order to maintain a constant proportion of French speakers to the total core working-age population. The analysis demonstrates that to maintain this percentage at 8.6 per cent, it is estimated that the City of Sault Ste. Marie would require between **851** and **1,039** French-speaking in-migrants between 2016 and 2026. This amounts to between **5.8** and **6.3 per cent** of all in-migrants to Sault Ste. Marie during that period. The estimated required proportion of in-migrants is lower than the current proportion of French speakers in the core working-age population because the French-speaking population is younger than the non-French-speaking population.

When looking at the Francophone population, an estimated range of **812** to **865** Francophone in-migrants in the core working-age population are needed between 2016 and 2026 to maintain its share in the core working-age population at 4.1 per cent. This range represents **5.2** to **5.5** per cent of all in-migrants to Sault Ste. Marie during that period. The estimated required proportion of in-migrants is higher than the current proportion of Francophones in the core working-age population because the Francophone population is older than the non-Francophone population.



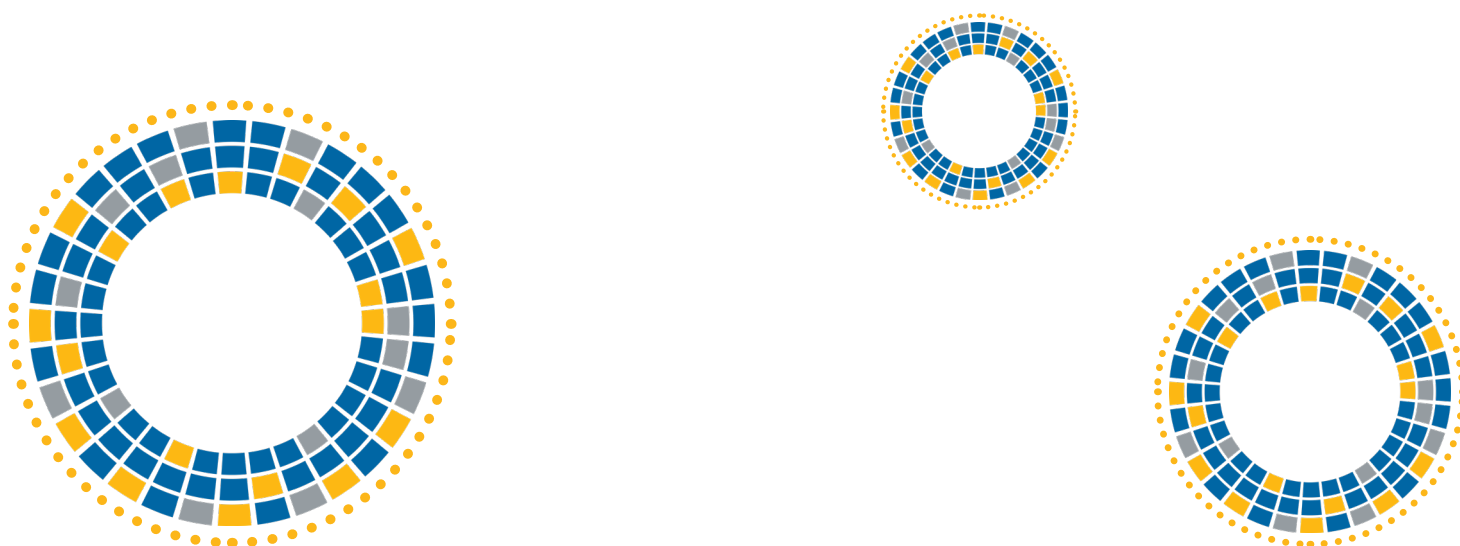
Policy Recommendations

Though this paper focused largely on the needed number of in-migrants to the City of Sault Ste. Marie, attraction is just one part of the solution. Retention and full integration of the existing population is also necessary. With many municipalities in Northern Ontario poised to experience an increase of seniors in the coming years, the cities must not only attract French-speaking and Francophone youth migrants, but also retain those already in the population and ensure their full participation in the labour market.

To aid in the attraction and retention of the French-speaking and Francophone populations in order to maintain the current proportion of the core working-age population, the following can be done:

1. As discussed in detail in Northern Policy Institute's Northern Attraction series (2019), an attraction and retention strategy⁵ can be created, specifically for each municipality, with an emphasis on meeting French-speaking and Francophone targets and providing a welcoming community for these demographic groups.
2. Assess what assets are available to French speakers and Francophones in each municipality: are they well-identified and easy to access? Sault Ste. Marie, in collaboration with other regions in Northern Ontario, is encouraged to undertake a mapping exercise to identify organizations and associations that serve French speakers and Francophones. Ideally, this would be done within the existing welcoming portals available for northeastern and northwestern Ontario, maintained by the Timmins and Thunder Bay Multicultural Associations, respectively.
3. Focus attraction efforts beyond international in-migrants, to also include domestic and secondary migrants.
4. Pursue community and employer outreach to communicate the benefit and need for French-speaking and Francophone migrants in the community and in the labour force; and,
5. The City of Sault Ste. Marie is partaking in the Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot (RNIP) program, a community-driven economic immigration program. With specific points allotted to potential candidates decided by the Community Selection Committee, communities are encouraged to assess the weight given to language skills, specifically pertaining to the official languages.

French-speaking and Francophone migrants are crucial to the longevity of both the language and culture associated with these demographic groups. Using the above estimates as a baseline, the City of Sault Ste. Marie has the targets needed to maintain a constant percentage of French speakers and Francophones in the core working-age population.



⁵ Part 4: Thinking Local: Best Practices and Solutions for Northern Ontario Communities discusses attraction, growth, and retention strategies by Christina Zefi.

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Appendix A: 2026 Population Projections Methodology

The 2026 population projections for the Census Agglomeration (CA) of Sault Ste. Marie were conducted by Dr. Bakhtiar Moazzami. Dr. Moazzami has taught Economics and Econometrics at Lakehead University since 1988. He has written reports for Northern Policy Institute relating to population projections and human capital, notably the Human Capital Series (2019) for the 11 Northern Ontario Districts.

The population projection model used to produce demographic forecasts in this report is based on the regional cohort component approach, which is typically used by statistical agencies and is considered a reliable method (Dion 2015). The model involves separate projections of the basic elements of population change. These components include:

- Region's resident population;
- Fertility;
- Mortality;
- Immigration; and,
- Emigration.

The model allows us to develop age, sex, and location-specific population projections given specific assumptions on births, deaths, and migration.

Births are calculated using fertility rates in Northwestern and Northeastern Ontario. These rates are assumed to remain consistent over the projection period.

Deaths are calculated using provincial estimates for death, and survival rates are based on the Life Tables for Canada 2017-2019, produced by Statistics Canada.

Net migration during the forecast period is assumed to be similar to the net flows during 2016-2020.

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

Come North – Population Growth in Ontario's Northern Regions - Conference Report, Proceedings and Action Items

Charles Cirtwill, Hilary Hagar, Rachel Rizzuto

French Speaking Migrants to Greater Sudbury: 2017-2026

Fenfang Li & Alex Ross

Connecting the Dots: Lessons from the International & Community Matchmaker Northwest Pilot

Anthony Noga

Taking Aim: French-Speaking Migration Targets

Mercedes Labelle

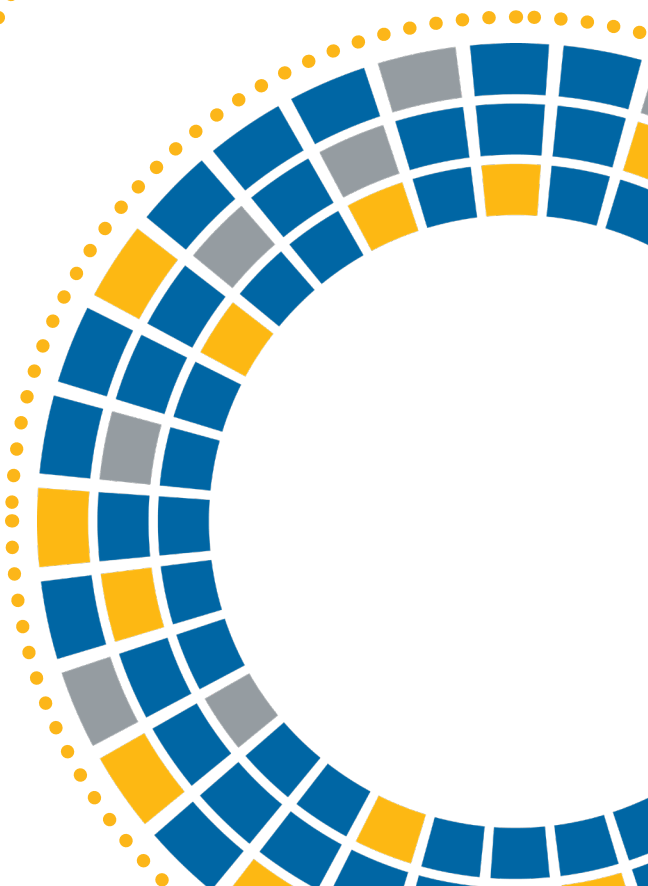
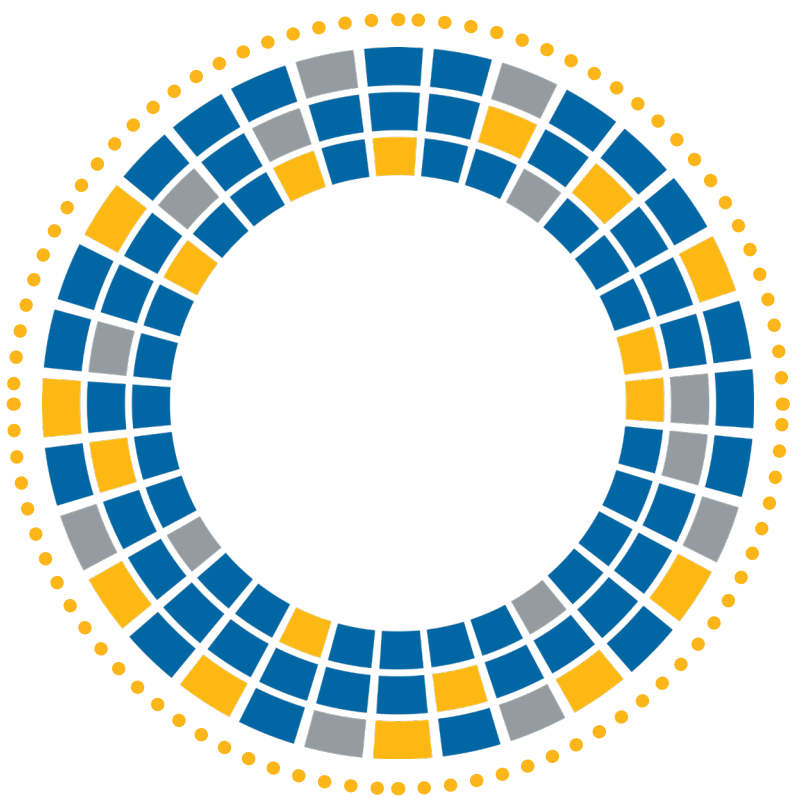
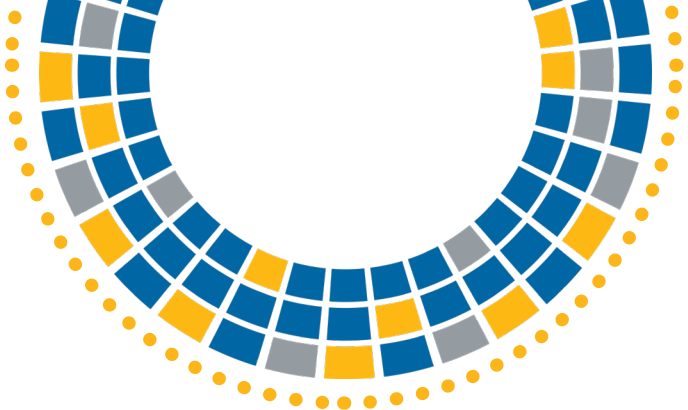
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