

**#KNOWTHENORTH**  
**#CONNAISSEZENORD**

Research Report | June 2026

# Serving More People Than You Can Tax:

The Fiscal Impact of Municipal “Fringe Populations” in Northern Ontario

**By:** William Dunstan

**NORTHERN**  
POLICY INSTITUTE

INSTITUT DES POLITIQUES  
**DU NORD**

Giwednong Aakomenjigewin Teg  
b ΔC2-4σ-4ʹ P-∇∇.σʹ <Dʹʹq-ΔbΓʹ  
Institu dPolitik di Nor  
Aen vawnd nor Lee Iway La koonpayeen

[northernpolicy.ca](http://northernpolicy.ca)

# Who We Are:

## President & CEO

Charles Cirtwill

## Board of Directors

Pierre Bélanger (Chair)  
 Dr. Heather Hall (Vice Chair)  
 Dr. Brian Tucker (Treasurer)  
 Charles Cirtwill (President & CEO, Acting Secretary)  
 Kaylie Dudgeon  
 Jim Maddar

Derek Parks  
 Eric Rutherford  
 Barrie Brayford  
 Marc Serré  
 Meghan Dokuchie

## Advisory Council

Johanne Baril  
 Martin Bayer  
 Katie Elliot  
 Neil Fox  
 Shane Fugere  
 George Graham

Gina Kennedy  
 Winter Dawn Lipscombe  
 Dr. George C. Macey  
 John Okonmah  
 Bill Spinney

## Research Advisory Board

Dr. Hugo Asselin  
 Dr. Harley d'Entremont  
 Dr. Clark Banack  
 Riley Burton  
 Kim Falcigno  
 Dr. Katie Hartmann

Dr. Peter Hollings  
 Brittany Paat  
 Dr. Barry Prentice  
 Dr. David Robinson  
 Dr. David Zarifa

## Land Acknowledgement

Northern Policy Institute (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 here and thankful to the generations of people who have taken care of these lands.

Our main offices:

→ Thunder Bay is located in the Robinson-Superior Treaty territory, and the land is the traditional territory of the Anishnaabeg and Fort William First Nation. This place is where, with the contribution of the Métis people in this area, a small thriving community formed into what has now become Thunder Bay.

→ Timmins is located on the traditional Lands of Mattagami First Nation, Flying Post First Nation, and Matachewan First Nation, home to many Ojibway, Cree, Oji-Cree, Algonquin and Métis people. The city is situated in Treaty 9 territory (also known as the James Bay Treaty), which is steeped in the rich Indigenous history of many First Nations, Metis and Inuit People.

→ Each community in Northern Ontario is home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples.

We recognize and appreciate the historic connection that Indigenous peoples have to these territories. We support their efforts to sustain and grow their nations. We also recognize the contributions that they have made in shaping and strengthening local communities, the province, and Canada.

## Permission Statement

NPI encourages the re-use and redistribution of its published materials provided such reuse or redistribution is done at no cost to the end user. We also ask that the end use be consistent with NPI's mandate as a federally registered charity for educational purposes dedicated to supporting evidence-based investigation of policy options and impacts. We are especially pleased when our material is used by, or in support of, youth. Permission is hereby given for reuse of our published material on this basis provided that proper credit is given to NPI as the original source. We would also appreciate being advised of such re-use or redistribution wherever possible via email at [communications@northernpolicy.ca](mailto:communications@northernpolicy.ca)

This report was made possible through the support of our many partners. Northern Policy Institute expresses great appreciation for their generous support but emphasizes the following: The views expressed in this report are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Institute, its Board of Directors, or its supporters. Quotation with appropriate credit is permissible.

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

© 2026 Northern Policy Institute  
 Published by Northern Policy Institute  
 874 Tungsten St.  
 Thunder Bay, Ontario P7B 6T6

## About the Author



### William Dunstan



William Dunstan is Vice President, Research at Northern Policy Institute. He first came to Northern Ontario through NPI's Experience North program in 2021, and he has spent time living in Hearst, Timmins, and Kirkland Lake. William has a Bachelor of Public Affairs and Policy Management from Carleton University and a Master of Public Policy from the University of Calgary.



# Table of Contents

Executive Summary .....	6
Introduction and Background on Unorganized Areas .....	7
Research Methods .....	8
Basic Explanation .....	8
Estimating Fringe Populations .....	8
Measuring The Relationship Between the Relative Size of Fringe Populations and Municipal Spending .....	9
Data Limitations .....	11
Results: The Relationship Between Fringe Populations and Municipal Spending .....	12
Contextualizing Results .....	16
Understanding the Data .....	17
Why are Fringe Populations Associated with Greater Spending on Certain Services? .....	17
Why are Fringe Populations Associated with Lower Spending on Certain Services? .....	18
Reverse Causation: What if Greater Spending Leads to Larger Fringe Populations? .....	18
Conclusion and Policy Options .....	20
References .....	22
Appendix: Results of Fringe Population Calculations .....	24



# Executive Summary

Municipal leaders in Northern Ontario have long expressed concerns about the financial impact of serving "fringe populations." In this context, a municipality's fringe population refers to the group of people (1) who live in unorganized areas close to the municipality and (2) for whom that municipality is the main population centre they interact with in their social and economic life. Directly measuring the fiscal impact of fringe populations is difficult because municipalities cannot easily track what portion of their spending goes to serving non-residents. This report adopts an alternative approach and measures the relationship between the relative size of municipalities' fringe populations and their per capita spending. This approach cannot determine the fiscal impact of fringe populations in specific communities; however, it can reveal if, across Northern Ontario municipalities, fringe populations are associated with greater spending.

Indeed, the data show that Northern Ontario municipalities with larger fringe populations relative to their official population do tend to spend more per resident. Across all municipalities, a larger fringe population is associated with greater overall spending. Specifically, those with larger fringe populations tend to spend more on Protection Services (which includes police and fire), Recreation and Cultural Services, and Social and Family Services, but there are variances depending on the size of the community. For example, in more populous municipalities, larger fringe populations are associated with greater spending on Protection Services. In less populous municipalities, larger fringe populations are associated with greater spending on Recreation and Cultural Services.

These statistical relationships provide strong evidence that some residents of unorganized areas benefit from municipal services without living in and paying property taxes to nearby municipalities. This produces three problems. First, it may be financially challenging for municipalities to serve more people than they can tax. Second, if two groups of people (residents and fringe populations) benefit from municipal services, it is unfair if one group pays less based on where they live. Finally, fringe populations can also be disadvantaged. Local government arrangements in Northern Ontario have created a situation where some residents of unorganized areas rely on services provided by a nearby municipality but have no democratic input into decision-making regarding these services because they cannot vote in municipal elections or compel municipal leaders to listen to their concerns.

Municipalities, residents of unorganized areas, and the Government of Ontario should work together to find solutions that ensure people in all parts of Northern Ontario have access to adequate services, pay their fair share for these services, and have a voice in decision-making. Possible options for reform include municipal annexations of certain unorganized areas or, more ambitiously, adopting a system of regional government in Northern Ontario modelled on British Columbia's system of regional districts.



# Introduction and background on unorganized areas

In Northern Ontario, the land outside of incorporated municipalities and First Nations reserves is divided into sixteen different "unorganized areas" where there is no government below the province. This arrangement creates unique challenges for funding and delivering services to residents of unorganized areas, sometimes referred to alternatively as "unincorporated areas." In this report, the term "unorganized area" refers specifically to the sixteen unorganized areas in Northern Ontario and "unincorporated area" refers to the broader concept of territory that does not have its own municipal government.

To be clear, an absence of municipal government does not mean that unorganized areas of Northern Ontario receive no services and have no property taxes. In unorganized areas, the Ontario government provides certain services typically provided by municipalities. Additionally, in parts of some unorganized areas, volunteer-run local services boards (LSB) and local roads boards (LRB) deliver certain services (Ontario 2025b; 2025c). To fund services delivered by the provincial government or local boards, property owners in unorganized areas pay the Provincial Land Tax (PLT; Ontario 2025d). There is debate, however, regarding the adequacy of the PLT and the services delivered in unorganized areas. Readers seeking more information about issues relating to service delivery and funding in unorganized areas can consult the Northern Policy Institute (NPI) publication *Time to Reorganize: Why Northern Ontario Should Follow BC's Lead in Local Governance* (Noga 2021). The critical piece of context for this analysis is that the quality and breadth of services are often lower in unorganized areas than in municipalities, which may encourage residents of these areas to seek services in municipalities.

It is equally important to understand that many people living in Northern Ontario's unorganized areas have strong ties to incorporated municipalities. Of the 34,450 people living in unorganized areas, 32,295 (or 94 per cent) reside within 50 kilometres of a municipality (Author's calculations from Statistics Canada 2022a; 2023a). Among residents of unorganized areas who commute to work, 85 per cent commute to an incorporated municipality in Northern Ontario (Author's calculations from Statistics Canada 2022c). These individuals who live in unorganized areas near, and have strong economic and social ties to, incorporated municipalities are referred to as fringe populations. For decades, there has been extensive debate across Northern Ontario concerning the extent to which fringe populations place demands on municipal services. However, researchers who have studied this topic have concluded that there has been insufficient measurement of the fiscal impact of fringe populations on municipalities. Noga (2021) notes that many Northern Ontario municipalities have concerns about the cost of residents of unorganized areas using services in their communities without paying municipal property taxes. Some municipalities also identified that they spend money to provide certain services in unorganized areas, such as responding to fire calls outside their municipal boundaries. Ultimately, Noga concludes that there is uncertainty as to the fiscal impact of fringe populations on Northern Ontario municipalities. Rochon (2014) discusses various shortcomings of non-government bodies created to provide limited services in some unorganized areas, which may contribute to residents of those areas continuing to use services provided by municipalities. Nickerson (1992) describes similar debates taking place in the 1970s and 1980s over the extent to which residents of unorganized areas use services they do not pay for.

Of particular interest for this analysis, Nickerson (1992) notes that a 1988 task force on municipal annexations in Northern Ontario referred to a financial study (conducted at an unspecified time before 1988) that found municipalities with nearby developments in unorganized areas generally had greater expenditures. Unfortunately, there does not appear to be additional information available regarding this study, which makes it difficult to explore its conclusions further and assess its methodology. Moreover, the governance, service delivery arrangements, and demographics of Northern Ontario's unorganized areas have evolved considerably since the 1980s (Noga 2021; Rochon 2014). Therefore, even if the original study were available, it cannot be assumed that trends observed before 1988 persist today.

# Research methods

The methods used for this analysis can be divided into two broad parts. First, the methods for estimating the fringe population of municipalities. Second, the methods for analyzing the relationship between these fringe populations and municipal spending. Both are described in detail in this report and are supplemented with explanations for certain methodological choices. Readers who only desire a basic explanation of the approach taken in this analysis can read the following paragraph and skip the remainder of this section.

## Basic explanation

This analysis includes both a calculation the size of the fringe population of each Northern Ontario municipality and a statistical analysis to see if municipalities with larger fringe populations spend more, both overall and on specific services. The fringe populations calculated for each municipality are the number of people living in unorganized areas for whom that municipality is the largest nearby community. For example, the calculation of Hearst's fringe population is 932, which means that it is the largest nearby community for the 932 people living in unorganized areas. Once we have these fringe population numbers, we can see if there is a relationship between these populations and municipal spending. Specifically, to account for the fact that municipalities have different populations, this analysis focuses on the relationship between the relative size of fringe populations and per capita spending (that is, spending divided by the number of people living in the municipality). The relative size of a municipality's fringe population is its fringe population divided by the municipality's population. For example, Hearst's fringe population of 932 is 19.4 per cent of its municipal population of 4,794. These numbers are used to measure (after controlling for several other factors that might influence municipal spending) whether municipalities with relatively larger fringe populations tend to spend more per resident, and by how much.

## Estimating fringe populations

Methods are needed to determine a municipality's fringe population because such populations do not align with formal jurisdictional boundaries. Fringe populations are economically and socially connected to municipalities despite being located outside municipal boundaries. At the same time, no municipality's fringe population area is coterminous with any of Northern Ontario's sixteen unorganized areas, most of which are thousands of square kilometres in size.

To estimate the fringe population for each Northern Ontario municipality, each dissemination block (DB) located in an unorganized area was matched with the most populous incorporated municipality within a radius of 50 kilometres. Then, for each municipality, the population of each dissemination block matched to it was summed together. The result is the municipality's estimated fringe population.

Fifty kilometres was used as the limit for a municipality's fringe population because this represents a reasonable limit as to how far most individuals will regularly travel to work, shop, and access services. As described by Marchetti (1994), across history and cultures, people tend to adjust their living and working arrangements such that average commute times are approximately 30 minutes one way. The commuting patterns of people living in the unorganized areas of Northern Ontario today align with this principle. Among unorganized area residents who commute to work, 61 per cent commute fewer than 30 minutes one way and 83 per cent commute fewer than 45 minutes (Statistics Canada 2022c). As mentioned earlier, 85 per cent of these individuals are commuting to incorporated municipalities. Road speeds vary across Northern Ontario, but 30 to 45 minutes of travel time roughly equates to the time needed to travel to a community that is 50 kilometres away. Where multiple municipalities are within 50 kilometres of a DB, it is matched with the most populous municipality because that is the most logical "hub community" for residents of said DB. The largest community in an area likely has the most employment opportunities and services.

Specifically, R programming is used to do the following:

1. Calculate the distance between the representative point of each DB in the sixteen unorganized areas of Northern Ontario and the representative point for the Census Subdivisions (CSD) representing the 144 incorporated municipalities in Northern Ontario;
2. Identify all DB-CSD pairings that are 50 kilometres apart or closer;<sup>1</sup>
3. Match each DB with the paired CSD that has the largest population in the 2021 census; and
4. For each CSD, sum the 2021 population of its matched DBs to produce that CSD's (or municipality's) fringe population estimate.

To determine the "relative size" of a municipality's fringe population for the second part of this analysis, fringe population is divided by the CSD population. Table 7 in the Appendix shows the estimated fringe population for each municipality, as well as its relative size.

Of note, this method only considers geographical proximity between DBs and CSDs, even though the concept of fringe populations also includes socioeconomic ties. This narrow approach is necessitated by data limitations.

That said, the CSD-to-CSD commuting data from the 2021 census (Statistics Canada 2022c) can be used to gauge the representativeness of the fringe population estimates used for this analysis. To do this, one first calculates how many people commute from unorganized areas to each municipality. Then, calculate each municipality's share of the total number of workers who commute from unorganized areas to Northern Ontario municipalities. For instance, 14.96 per cent of individuals who commute from unorganized areas to a Northern Ontario municipality commute to Thunder Bay. Next, each municipality's share of commuters from unorganized areas can be compared to its share of all municipal fringe populations. For example, of the 32,295 people who live in unorganized areas and within 50 kilometres of a municipality, 4,608 (or 14.27 per cent) are part of Thunder Bay's fringe population. Across all Northern Ontario municipalities, there is a 0.98 correlation between these two sets of numbers. In other words, the fringe population estimates presented here closely match commuting flows reported in the census. Accordingly, we can conclude that these fringe population estimates are representative of economic ties between DBs in unorganized areas and municipalities. Furthermore, some geographers have argued that because individuals can generally be expected to use services near where they live or work, labour market areas identified using commuting data may be used as a reasonable approximation of service use areas (Munro, Alasia, and Bollman 2011; Tolbert and Sizer 1996). Therefore, these distance-based fringe population estimates should be seen as fairly representative of the real fringe populations that might use municipal services.

## Measuring the relationship between the relative size of fringe populations and municipal spending

Because Northern Ontario municipalities do not track or report how much of their annual spending can be attributed to serving non-residents—which would be near impossible for some service types—the fiscal impact of fringe populations for individual municipalities cannot be determined. However, comparing overall per capita spending on various types of services by municipalities to the relative size of their fringe populations can reveal whether the presence of substantial fringe populations is, in general, associated with greater municipal spending. If residents of unorganized areas are, in fact, heavy users of certain municipal services, it can be expected that municipalities with relatively large fringe populations will have greater per capita spending on those services. That is because these municipalities would be, in practice, serving larger populations. This analysis measures whether such a relationship exists and how strong it is.

---

<sup>1</sup> In this step, all pairings between DBs in Manitoulin, Unorganized, West Part, and CSDs located outside Manitoulin are excluded. If this is not done, some DBs are matched with CSDs on the north shore of Lake Huron that are less than 50 kilometres away in distance but in fact require several hours of travel from western Manitoulin Island.

This analysis uses population numbers from Statistics Canada and municipal spending data from the Financial Information Return (FIR) published for Ontario municipalities. Population data is taken from the 2021 census and FIR data from 2020, 2021, and 2022. As of the time of writing, 2022 is the most recent year for which nearly all Northern Ontario municipalities have completed and submitted their FIR.

Multivariate regression analysis is used to assess the relationship between the relative size of municipalities' fringe populations and per capita spending on various types of services. Numerous factors can influence municipal spending decisions. Therefore, including multiple variables in this analysis can help to distinguish the relationship between municipal spending and the relative size of municipalities' fringe populations specifically.

This analysis looks at six sets of municipalities. The first includes all Northern Ontario municipalities for which spending data are available. This group is used to measure the relationship between fringe populations and municipal spending for Northern Ontario as a whole. The other five sets of municipalities consist of smaller groupings that include only municipalities whose populations fall within various ranges. The goal here is to measure whether the relationship between fringe populations and municipal spending is quantifiably different in different types of communities. It is conceivable, for example, that a municipality that acts as a regional centre for services and economic activity might receive more frequent visits and greater intensity of service use from its fringe population than a sparsely populated township. As a result, fringe populations could have a different fiscal impact on these larger centres. Specifically, the five additional groupings analyzed are: (1) the 25 most populous municipalities in Northern Ontario; (2) the 31 municipalities in Northern Ontario that contain an area that meets Statistics Canada's (2022b) definition of a population centre—a population of at least 1,000 and a population density of 400 persons or more per square kilometre—and for which municipal spending data are available; (3) the 32 municipalities with a population between 2,500 and 15,000 and for which municipal spending data are available; (4) the 31 municipalities with a population between 1,000 and 2,499 and for which municipal spending data are available; and (5) the 60 municipalities with a population below 1,000 and for which municipal spending data are available.

### **Dependent variables – measures of per capita municipal spending**

The dependent variable in each regression is a measure of per capita municipal spending. A separate analysis is performed for eight measures of per capita municipal spending to determine the relationship that specific elements of municipal spending have with larger fringe populations. For each Northern Ontario municipality, the following measures of spending were collected from Schedule 40 of the FIR and converted to per capita figures:

- total municipal expenditures
- spending on Protection Services (includes fire, police, building inspections)
- spending on Transportation Services (includes roads, traffic operations, transit)
- spending on Environmental Services (includes water services, waste collection)
- spending on Health Services (includes ambulances, hospitals, public health)
- spending on Social and Family Services (includes childcare, seniors' housing)
- spending on Recreation and Cultural Services (includes parks, recreation programs, libraries)
- the sum of spending on the six above service categories

Detailed explanations of what is included in each service category in the FIR can be found in the Functional Classification of Expenses and Revenues guide (Ontario 2024). "Total municipal expenditures" includes spending on all services and other expenses. The six service categories analyzed independently in this analysis were chosen because they have a reasonable possibility of facing demands from fringe populations. For each variable, the figures for 2020, 2021, and 2022 are included as separate observations. Therefore, each analysis includes three observations per municipality.

## Independent variables

The following independent variables are included in the regression analysis. Unless otherwise indicated, the data source is Statistics Canada's 2021 Census of Population.

- the relative size of a municipality's unorganized fringe population (calculated as described earlier)
- the average income of a municipality's residents
- the average age of a municipality's residents
- the population of a municipality
- the population density of a municipality
- the percentage of private dwellings in a municipality occupied by usual residents (intended to control for the presence of seasonal residents and mobile workers)
- the Index of Remoteness for a municipality (a measure of how distant a community is from other population and service centres; Statistics Canada 2023b)
- the relative size of a municipality's "non-unorganized nearby population"<sup>2</sup>

## Data limitations

This analysis is impacted by modest data limitations affecting both the dependent and independent variables. For the dependent variables, four municipalities were excluded from this analysis because they had not submitted their FIR for all three years being analyzed: Atikokan, Ignace, Manitowadge, and Nipigon. With these municipalities excluded, the analysis includes 140 out of 144 Northern Ontario municipalities (or 97 per cent).

Regarding the independent variables, due to small populations, Statistics Canada does not release age statistics for one of the remaining 140 municipalities and income statistics for twelve of these municipalities. In an earlier version of this analysis (Dunstan, 2025), the author addressed this limitation by including three model specifications in the regression analysis. One model included all eight variables and excluded 12 municipalities for missing data. A second model excluded the income variable and excluded one municipality for missing data. A third model excluded the average income and average age variables and contained all 140 municipalities. When these three models were tested on an equal number of observations, the first model regularly produced the highest adjusted R<sup>2</sup>—a measure of how well a model fits the data, accounting for the number of variables included. For this reason, in this analysis, the most comprehensive model is used and only municipalities for which income and age statistics are available are included.

---

<sup>2</sup> This is calculated similarly to unorganized fringe populations. It is essentially a measure of the number of people living in other types of census subdivisions (primarily municipalities and First Nations) for whom a given municipality is the most populous community within a 50-kilometre radius. This variable is intended to control for the possibility that residents of other types of communities also travel to larger nearby municipalities and place demands on their services.



# Results: The relationship between fringe populations and municipal spending

Among the 140 Northern Ontario municipalities that have completed and submitted the FIR for 2020, 2021, and 2022, there is a highly statistically significant relationship between the relative size of a municipality's fringe population and its total per capita spending on Protection Services and Recreation and Cultural Services. Additionally, there are weak to moderately significant relationships between the relative size of fringe populations and per capita spending on Health Services and Social and Family Services, as well as total expenditures. Notably, however, these relationships differ between different sets of municipalities. In more populous communities, larger fringe populations are associated with greater spending on Protection Services and less spending on Health Services and Transportation Services. There is also no relationship between fringe populations and overall spending. In communities with fewer than 1,000 residents, larger fringe populations are associated with greater overall spending and greater spending on Recreation and Cultural Services. The forces behind these relationships are discussed later.

Tables 1 to 6 summarize the observed relationship between the relative size of fringe populations and various measures of per capita municipal spending for the three sets of municipalities. The coefficients in these tables represent the expected change (in dollars) in per capita municipal spending for a one-unit increase in the relative size of a municipality's fringe population. In this case, as the relative size of fringe populations is measured as a percentage of the municipality's population, one unit is equivalent to a municipality's official population. To illustrate with an example, in Table 1, the coefficient for "Protection" is 457. That means that if a municipality had an official population of 1,000 people and a fringe population of 1,000, it would be expected to spend \$457 more per capita each year on protection services than it would if it had no fringe population.

No Northern Ontario municipality has a fringe population as large as its official population (see Appendix). The following "contextualizing results" section discusses these results in the context of a typical municipal budget using a more representative fringe population size.

**Table 1: Association between relative size of fringe populations and per capita spending, all municipalities in Northern Ontario with submitted FIRs for 2020, 2021, 2022**

	Coefficient	Standard Error	P-value
Total Expenditure	1,452	788	0.066
Sum of Six Service Categories	1,385	620	0.026
Environmental	440	269	0.103
Health	-425	150	0.005
Protection	457	99	<0.001
Recreation and Cultural	517	136	<0.001
Social and Family	364	179	0.043
Transportation	223	223	0.318

**Source:** Author's calculations.

**Table 2: Association between relative size of fringe populations and per capita spending, municipalities in Northern Ontario containing population centres and with submitted FIRs for 2020, 2021, 2022**

	Coefficient	Standard Error	P-value
Total Expenditure	-804	876	0.362
Sum of Six Service Categories	-340	742	0.648
Environmental	-96	191	0.617
Health	-513	226	0.026
Protection	843	176	<0.001
Recreation and Cultural	-64	147	0.664
Social and Family	523	444	0.242
Transportation	-1,033	376	0.007

**Source:** Author's calculations.

**Table 3: Association between relative size of fringe populations and per capita spending, 25 most-populous municipalities in Northern Ontario for 2020, 2021, 2022**

	Coefficient	Standard Error	P-value
Total Expenditure	-158	826	0.849
Sum of Six Service Categories	31	717	0.966
Environmental	-21	209	0.922
Health	-521	225	0.023
Protection	928	158	<0.001
Recreation and Cultural	83	135	0.542
Social and Family	562	438	0.203
Transportation	-1,001	376	0.010

**Source:** Author's calculations.



**Table 4: Association between relative size of fringe populations and per capita spending, municipalities in Northern Ontario with populations between 2,500 and 15,000 and submitted FIRs for 2020, 2021, 2022**

	Coefficient	Standard Error	P-value
Total Expenditure	209	810	0.797
Sum of Six Service Categories	533	735	0.470
Environmental	215	234	0.361
Health	-400	146	0.008
Protection	918	120	<0.001
Recreation and Cultural	-15	177	0.931
Social and Family	634	404	0.120
Transportation	-819	368	0.029

**Source:** Author's calculations.

**Table 5: Association between relative size of fringe populations and per capita spending, municipalities in Northern Ontario with populations between 1,000 and 2,500 and submitted FIRs for 2020, 2021, 2022**

	Coefficient	Standard Error	P-value
Total Expenditure	511	955	0.594
Sum of Six Service Categories	196	775	0.801
Environmental	-96	191	0.617
Health	-513	226	0.026
Protection	843	176	<0.001
Recreation and Cultural	-64	147	0.664
Social and Family	-798	242	<0.001
Transportation	-76	63	0.052

**Source:** Author's calculations.



**Table 6: Association between relative size of fringe populations and per capita spending, municipalities in Northern Ontario with populations below 1,000 and submitted FIRs for 2020, 2021, 2022**

	Coefficient	Standard Error	P-value
Total Expenditure	4,040	1,937	0.038
Sum of Six Service Categories	1,604	1,480	0.280
Environmental	820	706	0.247
Health	-144	338	0.671
Protection	-116	202	0.566
Recreation and Cultural	1,186	307	<0.001
Social and Family	424	321	0.188
Transportation	164	481	0.733

**Source:** Author's calculations.



## Contextualizing results

To put these regression results into context, I compared what an average municipality would be expected to spend on various services if it had (1) no fringe population, or (2) a fringe population equivalent to 10 per cent of its official population (e.g., a fringe population of 100 for a municipality of 1,000 people).

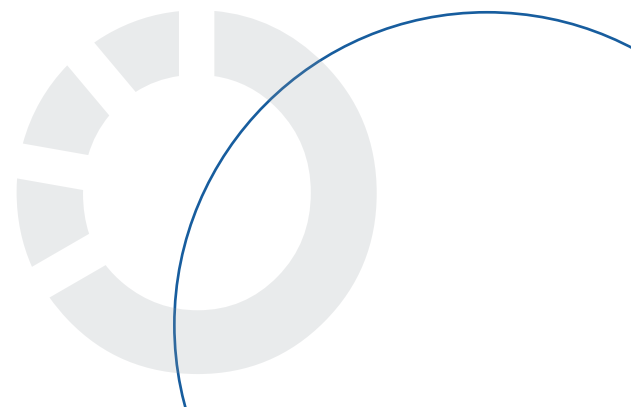
Between 2020 and 2022, the average municipality in Northern Ontario spent \$3,811 per capita annually. On average, a municipality with a fringe population equivalent to 10 per cent of its official population would be expected to spend \$145 more per capita annually than a municipality with no fringe population. Looking only at the six highlighted service categories (which do not encompass all municipal spending), that same municipality would be expected to spend \$138 per capita more on Protection Services, Recreation and Cultural Services, Health Services, Environmental Services, Social and Family Services, and Transportation Services combined.

We can also use the observed relationships summarized in Table 1 to determine how much that same community would be expected to spend on specific service categories. Again, note that these individual categories do not encompass all spending, and thus do not sum to the same total listed earlier. Compared to municipalities with no fringe population, a municipality with a fringe population equivalent to 10 per cent of its official population would be expected to spend:

- \$45 per capita less on Health Services annually
- \$46 per capita more on Protection Services annually
- \$52 per capita more on Recreation and Cultural Services annually
- \$36 per capita more on Social and Family Services annually

For the average Northern Ontario municipality, an additional \$145 per capita in total expenditures is equivalent to a 3.8 per cent increase in spending. Relative to a fringe population one-tenth the size of a municipality's official population, these spending differences are significant. If this greater spending is, in fact, attributable to service demands from fringe populations, then they have a sizeable marginal impact on municipal finances. Nevertheless, the total impact on municipal finances is likely modest in most cases. As shown in the Appendix, most municipalities' fringe populations are equivalent to less than 10 per cent of their official population, and only eight municipalities have estimated fringe populations equivalent to 20 per cent or more of their official population. Therefore, responses to service demands from fringe populations likely represent only a small share of overall spending for most municipalities.

For municipalities with fewer than 1,000 residents, however, fringe populations are associated with greater additional spending. Among the 60 municipalities with populations below 1,000 and sufficient data to be included in this analysis, average annual per capita spending between 2020 and 2022 was \$3,862. For these municipalities, having a fringe population equivalent to 10 per cent of their official population is associated with an additional \$404 per capita in annual spending. That is equivalent to a 10.4 per cent increase in spending.



# Understanding the data

The results described above raise several interesting questions. This section explores the causes and implications of some of the relationships observed in the data.

## Why are fringe populations associated with greater spending on certain services?

Overall, and in more populous municipalities, having a relatively larger fringe population is associated with greater per capita spending on Protection Services. This is not surprising. A greater number of people present in a community can be expected to increase demands on these services. In particular, more people being in a community likely leads to more incidents requiring police intervention. Indeed, the association between larger fringe populations and greater per capita spending remains when considering police spending by itself.

Interestingly, although some municipal fire departments respond to calls in unorganized areas (Noga 2021), there is no statistically significant relationship between the relative size of fringe populations and spending on Fire Services. There is considerable fire protection capacity in unorganized areas, however, which may reduce the demands on many municipal fire departments to serve fringe populations. Fire protection is the service most widely provided by LSBs, and there are dozens of fire departments (run by LSBs and volunteers) located in unorganized areas (Noga 2021). Some individual municipalities may spend more to provide fire services to fringe populations, but this does not occur widely enough to show up as a trend in the data.

Relatively larger fringe populations are also associated with greater per capita spending on Social and Family Services. This relationship, too, has a plausible explanation. Residents of fringe areas may use services and programming that receive at least some municipal funding, particularly those involving childcare or directed to seniors. Furthermore, it is possible that "higher-needs" individuals self-select into living within municipal boundaries. Within a given area, individuals and families may have the option to live in (1) a denser core within the municipality, closer to most services, or (2) an unorganized area farther away from most services. Families with young children or seniors in need of support—that is, two demographics that can be expected to more heavily use Social and Family Services—may be more likely to choose the first option. If this happens, the proportion of higher-needs individuals in the municipality may be higher than their proportion of the area population (municipality plus fringe population). All else being equal, this will result in higher per capita spending on Social and Family Services for the municipality. Further research is required to confirm whether this is indeed occurring.

Additionally, relatively large fringe populations are associated with greater per capita spending on Recreation and Cultural Services when considering all municipalities in Northern Ontario together and in municipalities with populations below 1,000, but not in larger communities. A likely explanation for these trends is that many Recreation and Cultural Services, such as libraries and sports facilities, require a minimum level of demand to be viable. For smaller municipalities, fringe populations may be especially impactful in boosting demand to meet that minimum threshold, encouraging greater spending.

It is worth mentioning that Recreation and Cultural Services is one service category for which municipalities have considerable ability to recoup some costs of serving non-residents. Services like libraries and sports facilities are among the types of services that can be feasibly funded through user fees (Kitchen and Tassonyi 2012). Municipalities, therefore, can charge non-residents who use certain Recreation and Cultural Services. For example, the City of Dryden (2025) issues free library cards to Dryden residents, but most non-residents must pay \$70 per year. Therefore, even in the absence of wider reforms to address issues relating to fringe populations, municipalities that provide non-residents with Recreation and Cultural Services have viable options to raise revenue from these users. Overall, Northern Ontario's smaller municipalities—those with populations of 1,000 or fewer—appear to have a

unique relationship with their fringe populations. In addition to being the only group of communities where there is a relationship between fringe populations and recreation and cultural spending, these municipalities are the only ones where relatively larger fringe populations are associated with greater total spending but not with greater combined spending on the six service categories highlighted in the analysis. Looking further into the FIR data, this is largely attributable to the fact that small municipalities with relatively large fringe populations tend to spend more per capita on "general government." This spending category covers a range of administrative and management activities that do not involve directly delivering services. Why do these communities spend more on general government? That is another question that requires further research. One possibility is that service demands from fringe populations create additional governance challenges that encourage municipalities to invest in greater administrative capacity.

## Why are fringe populations associated with lower spending on certain services?

Another more surprising finding is that relatively large fringe populations are associated, in communities of different sizes, with lower per capita spending on Health Services, Social and Family Services, and Transportation Services. The finding regarding Transportation Services is particularly surprising because in the literature discussing non-resident service use, roads are often cited as a service that receives significant demand from non-residents who travel to a community for work or to access services (City of Edmonton 2024; Keough 2015). Most likely, these trends are not related to demands on these specific service categories. Fringe populations are unlikely to reduce overall demands on any municipal service. Instead, the most plausible explanation for why municipalities with relatively large fringe populations tend to spend less on certain services is that it is a response to greater demands for spending on other services. There are two options facing a municipality that needs to spend more on a given service due to demands from non-residents. First, it can tax its residents more to fund greater overall spending. Second, it can make up for increased spending in one area by reducing spending in another. Some municipalities in Northern Ontario appear to have selected the second option. It is worth clarifying that these two options are not mutually exclusive: a municipality could increase overall spending while making targeted cuts.

This possibility of municipalities choosing to reduce certain spending in response to fiscal pressures from fringe populations points to an important consideration when interpreting the results of this analysis. That is, the fact that a relatively larger fringe population is not associated with greater spending on a particular service category does not necessarily mean that these populations place no demands on said service category in most municipalities. If a municipality is, in practice, providing a service to a population larger than its official population, it could choose to increase spending to offer the same service level to that larger population. Alternatively, the municipality may instead choose to reduce per-person service levels to save money. A municipality with a large fringe population could spend the same amount per capita as a municipality with no fringe population, because although the first municipality serves a larger population, it also offers a reduced level of services per person. Therefore, the results of this analysis might not capture all fiscal pressures associated with fringe populations.

## Reverse causation: what if greater spending leads to larger fringe populations?

Most of this analysis has focused on the possibility that larger fringe populations cause municipalities to spend more. However, it is possible that the reverse occurs: independent choices by municipalities to spend more on certain services could encourage more people to live in nearby unorganized areas. Whichever factor drives the association between greater per capita spending by municipalities and larger fringe populations, the outcome is likely the same: some people living in unorganized areas benefit from municipalities' services without paying taxes to those municipalities.

When people consider where to live, we can imagine them as shopping between locations in search of the one that they will most enjoy, considering both costs and benefits. One significant factor to consider is the tax and service mixes offered in different communities (Tiebout 1956). In Northern Ontario, tax and service mixes can act as both a push and a pull factor that leads people to settle in a particular municipality's fringe area. Many people choose to live in unorganized areas because they offer a location that is quieter or closer to nature. Someone who wants to live in an unorganized area, but is undecided as to where, could be *pulled* toward living in the fringe area of a higher-spending municipality because this location provides the benefits of living in an unorganized area while also offering access to high-quality services in a nearby municipality. Conversely, greater spending on services may *push* some people to live outside a municipality's boundaries. Greater spending typically requires higher taxes. As municipal taxes increase, some individuals may find it more attractive to live in the municipality's unorganized fringe to avoid them. Living in an unorganized fringe area can be especially attractive from a tax and service mix perspective if residents of fringe areas can still benefit from many municipal services.

Even if municipalities do not increase spending *in response* to fringe populations, there are still reasons to believe residents of fringe areas place demands on municipal services. First, as mentioned earlier, many people living in unorganized areas commute to municipalities for work (Statistics Canada 2022c). These individuals are present in the municipality at least some of the time and almost certainly place at least some demands on services. Second, the estimates of municipalities' fringe populations used in this analysis show that 32,295 of the 34,450 people living in unorganized areas in Northern Ontario live within 50 kilometres of an incorporated municipality. Unorganized areas in Northern Ontario cover a vast amount of space. The fact that 94 per cent of unorganized area residents choose to live close to municipalities suggests there are some benefits to doing so, which may include access to municipal services. Third, as discussed earlier, some municipalities have policies relating to providing certain services to non-residents, sometimes specifically residents of unorganized areas (City of Dryden 2025; Noga 2021). The fact that municipalities introduced these policies suggests that they receive service demands from fringe populations. In sum, even if larger fringe populations are a product of greater municipal spending (rather than the other way around), fringe populations still likely benefit to some extent from municipal services they do not pay for.



## Conclusion and policy options

The question of whether municipal fringe populations financially burden municipalities by placing demands on services they do not pay for has provoked a fierce debate in Northern Ontario. Using municipal spending data, this analysis provides evidence that some residents of unorganized areas benefit from municipal services that they may not pay for. Municipalities with larger fringe populations relative to their official population tend to spend more per capita on certain services. When considering all municipalities in Northern Ontario for which financial data are available, larger fringe populations are also associated with greater total spending. For most municipalities, however, this additional spending is likely a modest share of total spending.

It must be emphasized that municipalities should not conclude from this evidence that fringe populations are bad or undesirable. While some residents of fringe areas likely benefit from some municipal services without paying, communities also benefit from their fringe populations. Most notably, fringe populations support the local economy, both as workers and consumers. Statistics Canada (2022c) data show that many workers living in unorganized areas commute to incorporated municipalities, supporting local businesses and service providers. Put differently, it should not be assumed that a community would be better off without a fringe population. Nevertheless, this analysis suggests that there is an asymmetry in many parts of Northern Ontario between who pays for municipal services and who benefits from them. Municipalities' concerns about the fiscal impact of fringe populations appear to be legitimate, and these concerns deserve attention from the Ontario government. Governments have limited time and resources; therefore, they must prioritize certain issues over others. The evidence presented in this analysis suggests that issues relating to municipal fringe populations in the North should be a higher priority in Ontario. To be clear, these issues include both the challenge of ensuring Northern Ontario municipalities can adequately fund the services they are being asked to provide and the challenge of ensuring people living in unorganized areas can access services and have a voice in decision-making about these services.

A detailed analysis of options for reform is beyond the scope of this measurement-oriented report. Still, it is possible to identify broad directions the Ontario government could explore—in collaboration with municipalities and residents of unorganized areas—to address issues relating to municipal fringe populations.

One option is municipal annexation. Through annexation, the provincial government would add the territory containing a fringe population to an existing municipality. Ontario has added portions of unorganized areas to municipalities before, at times upon request from municipalities and fringe populations (Nickerson 1992; Ontario 2022). Annexation can potentially benefit both. The municipality can gain the ability to tax all its service users. Fringe populations may enjoy better services, and greater influence over decisions related to them, as part of the municipality than as part of an unorganized area. That said, municipal annexation is not a panacea. While fringe populations may have strong social and economic ties to a municipality, the two often represent distinct communities. Residents of the two communities may have different preferences regarding tax and service levels, as well as other local government policies. In short, municipal annexation should be considered, but on a case-by-case basis. Sometimes, the best option for municipalities and fringe populations may be to continue governing themselves separately.

The fundamental challenge for local government in Northern Ontario is that it has vast regions containing communities—in incorporated municipalities and unorganized areas—that are both connected and distinct. In this context, there can be benefits to coordination between communities regarding some services and local government issues. At the same time, other issues may be best left to individual communities.



Noga (2021) argues that Northern Ontario could solve this governance puzzle by adopting a regional government model based on British Columbia's regional district system. Regional districts establish a loose federation of municipalities and unincorporated communities. Some have also expanded to include First Nations. Notably, regional districts are permitted to provide different service mixes to different parts of the district—for example, offering fewer services in unincorporated areas compared to incorporated municipalities—while charging differentiated tax rates accordingly. This arrangement allows regional districts to provide services that align with the preferences of diverse communities while minimizing the issue of residents of some communities "free riding" on others (British Columbia 2006; Cashaback 2001). Adopting regional districts in Northern Ontario would be a substantial reform, but it could alleviate the fiscal challenges that fringe populations sometimes create for municipalities while benefiting both parties.

Whatever solution is chosen, benefiting both municipalities and fringe populations should be the goal. The evidence suggests that fringe populations do pose a financial burden for municipalities by placing demands on certain services without paying municipal property taxes. This should be addressed, but not as a zero-sum exercise. Municipalities and fringe populations are interdependent and should seek mutually beneficial solutions.



## References

- British Columbia. 2006. Primer on Regional Districts in British Columbia. [https://www.slrd.bc.ca/sites/default/files/pdfs/Primer\\_on\\_Regional\\_Districts\\_in\\_BC.pdf](https://www.slrd.bc.ca/sites/default/files/pdfs/Primer_on_Regional_Districts_in_BC.pdf).
- Cashaback, David. 2001. Regional District Governance in British Columbia: A Case Study in Aggregation. Institute on Governance. <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/122231/RegionalDistrict.pdf>.
- City of Dryden. 2025. "Library Cards and Membership". Accessed October 20, 2025. <https://www.dryden.ca/recreation-leisure/library/library-cards-and-membership/>
- City of Edmonton. 2024. Fiscal Gap - An Assessment of Factors Contributing to the City of Edmonton's Operation and Capital Funding Shortfalls. <https://pub-edmonton.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=236515>.
- Dunstan, William. 2025. Serving More People Than You Can Tax: The Fiscal Impact of "Fringe Populations" on Northern Ontario Municipalities. Unpublished Master's Project - University of Calgary. <https://ucalgary.scholaris.ca/items/386e4acf-27e8-4989-8bf4-8aacf351b08a>
- Keough, Sara Beth. "Planning for growth in a natural resource boomtown: challenges for urban planners in Fort McMurray, Alberta." *Urban Geography* 36, No.8 (June 2015): 1169-1196. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02723638.2015.1049482>.
- Kitchen, Harry, and Almos Tassonyi. "Municipal Taxes and User Fees." In *Tax Policy in Canada*, by Heather Kerr, Ken McKenzie and Jack Mintz. Canadian Tax Foundation, 2012.
- Marchetti, Cesare. 1994. "Anthropological invariants in travel behavior." *Technological Forecasting and Social Change* 47, No. 1 (September 1994): 75-88. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0040-1625\(94\)90041-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/0040-1625(94)90041-8).
- Munro, Anne, Alessandro Alasia, and Ray Bollman. 2011. "Self-contained labour areas: A proposed delineation and classification by degree of rurality." *Rural and Small Town Canada Analysis Bulletin* 8, No. 8 (December 2011): [https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection\\_2011/statcan/21-006-X/21-006-x2008008-eng.pdf](https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2011/statcan/21-006-X/21-006-x2008008-eng.pdf).
- Nickerson, Dean. 1992. Issues in the Unorganized Areas of Northern Ontario. Western University - MPA Major Research Papers. [https://localgovernment.uwo.ca/resources/docs/research\\_papers/1992/Nickerson,%20Dean%20-%201992.pdf](https://localgovernment.uwo.ca/resources/docs/research_papers/1992/Nickerson,%20Dean%20-%201992.pdf).
- Noga, Anthony. Time to Reorganize: Why Northern Ontario Should Follow BC's Lead in Local Governance. Northern Policy Institute, 2021. [https://www.northernpolicy.ca/upload/documents/publications/reports-new/noga-unincorporated\\_en.01.03.2021.pdf](https://www.northernpolicy.ca/upload/documents/publications/reports-new/noga-unincorporated_en.01.03.2021.pdf).
- Ontario. 2024a. "Financial Information Return." Accessed October 20, 2025. <https://efis.fma.csc.gov.on.ca/fir/index.php/en/financial-information-return-en/>.
- . 2025a. "FIR by Year and Municipality." Accessed October 20, 2025. <https://efis.fma.csc.gov.on.ca/fir/index.php/en/reports-and-dashboards/fir-by-year-and-municipality/>
- . 2024b. FIR Functional Classification of Expenses and Revenues. <https://efis.fma.csc.gov.on.ca/fir/wp-content/uploads/fir-files/municipal-reporting/fir-instructions/2024/FIR2024%20Functional%20Categories.pdf>.
- . 2025b. "Local Roads Area (LRA) - boundaries and local roads." Last modified September 19, 2025. <https://geo-hub.lio.gov.on.ca/documents/eb916af951c840aaab5d9491c3ac4ef4/about>.
- . 2025c. "Local service boards." Last modified March 26, 2025. <https://www.ontario.ca/page/local-service-boards>.

- . 2022. "Municipal restructuring activity summary table." Last modified January 27, 2022. <https://data.ontario.ca/dataset/municipal-restructuring-activity-summary-table/resource/389bb315-fe73-45a8-8e82-7ab880c1d737>.
- . 2025d. "Provincial Land Tax." Last modified September 29, 2025. <https://www.ontario.ca/document/provincial-land-tax>.
- Rochon, Denis. "Policy issues related to the governance of local service boards in Northern Ontario." *Papers in Canadian Economic Development* 11 (March 2014): 1-27. <https://openjournals.uwaterloo.ca/index.php/pced/article/view/3918>.
- Statistics Canada. 2022a. "2021 Census – Geographic Attribute File." Last modified July 8, 2024 <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/geo/aip-pia/attribute-attribs/index2021-eng.cfm?year=2021>.
- . 2023a. "Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population." Last modified July 8, 2024. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E>.
- . 2023b. "Index of Remoteness." Last modified January 4, 2023. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/17-26-0001/172600012020001-eng.htm>.
- . 2022b. "Population centre (POPCTR)." Last modified July 7, 2023. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/ref/dict/az/definition-eng.cfm?ID=geo049a>.
- . 2022c. Table 98-10-0459-01 Commuting flow from geography of residence to geography of work by gender: Census subdivisions. Last modified October 20, 2025. <https://doi.org/10.25318/9810045901-eng>.
- Tiebout, Charles M. "A Pure Theory of Local Expenditures." *The Journal of Political Economy* 64, No. 5 (October 1956): 416-424. [https://fbaum.unc.edu/teaching/PLSC541\\_Fall08/tiebout\\_1956.pdf](https://fbaum.unc.edu/teaching/PLSC541_Fall08/tiebout_1956.pdf).
- Tolbert, Charles, and Molly Sizer. *U.S. Commuting Zones and Labor Market Areas: A 1990 Update*. United States Department of Agriculture, 1996. <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/resources/volii/cmz90.pdf>.



# Appendix: Results of fringe population calculations

\*In addition to the 59 municipalities with fringe populations listed here, 85 municipalities were determined to have no fringe population.

**Table 7: Fringe population of Northern Ontario municipalities, 2021**

Census Subdivision (CSD)	CSD Population	Fringe Population	Fringe Population as % of CSD Population
Dryden	7,388	3,764	50.9%
Whitestone	1,075	370	34.4%
Moosonee	1,512	495	32.7%
James	348	111	31.9%
Conmee	798	202	25.3%
Gore Bay	808	204	25.2%
Kirkland Lake	7,750	1,882	24.3%
Machin	1,012	202	20.0%
Callander	3,964	780	19.7%
Hearst	4,794	932	19.4%
Kenora	14,967	2,902	19.4%
Carling	1,491	255	17.1%
Chapleau	1,942	317	16.3%
Cochrane	5,390	816	15.1%
Terrace Bay	1,528	225	14.7%
Temiskaming Shores	9,634	1,177	12.2%
Fort Frances	7,466	880	11.8%
Atikokan	2,642	293	11.1%
McDougall	2,744	268	9.8%
Huron Shores	1,860	155	8.3%
Espanola	5,185	393	7.6%
Gillies	441	33	7.5%
Sault Ste. Marie	72,051	5,264	7.3%
Wawa	2,705	182	6.7%
Dubreuilville	576	38	6.6%
The Archipelago	979	51	5.2%
Emo	1204	62	5.1%
Ear Falls	9,24	46	5.0%
North Bay	52,662	2,240	4.3%
Thunder Bay	108,843	4,608	4.2%
Shuniah	3,247	136	4.2%
Hornepayne	968	40	4.1%

Macdonald, Meredith and Aberdeen Additional	1,513	58	3.8%
Blind River	3,422	124	3.6%
Chapple	763	25	3.3%
Oliver Paipoonge	6035	197	3.3%
Lake of the Woods	308	10	3.2%
Powassan	3,346	95	2.8%
East Ferris	4,946	138	2.8%
Nipissing	1,769	46	2.6%
South Algonquin	1,055	21	2.0%
Nipigon	1,473	28	1.9%
Markstay-Warren	2,708	48	1.8%
Marathon	3,138	50	1.6%
Kapuskasing	8,057	115	1.4%
Burpee and Mills	382	5	1.3%
Manitouwadge	1,974	23	1.2%
Elliot Lake	11,372	118	1.0%
Perry	2,650	27	1.0%
Iroquois Falls	4,418	44	1.0%
Greater Sudbury	166,004	1,435	0.9%
Ignace	1,206	10	0.8%
Sioux Lookout	5,839	40	0.7%
Timmins	41,145	224	0.5%
Prince	975	5	0.5%
Central Manitoulin	2,235	10	0.4%
West Nipissing	14,583	61	0.4%
Parry Sound	6,879	10	0.1%
Red Lake	4,094	5	0.1%



# About Northern Policy Institute

*Northern Policy Institute is Northern Ontario's independent, evidence-driven think tank. We conduct research, analyze data, and disseminate ideas. Our mission is to grow Northern Ontario by supporting evidence-based decision-making through education and direct community engagement.*

*We believe in partnership, reconciliation, collaboration, communication, and cooperation. Our team seeks to do inclusive research that involves broad engagement and delivers recommendations for specific, measurable action. Our success depends on our partnerships with other entities present in or passionate about Northern Ontario.*

*Our permanent locations are in Thunder Bay and Timmins. During the summer months, we have satellite offices in other regions of Northern Ontario staffed by teams of Experience North placements. These placements are for university and college students working in your community on issues important to you and your neighbours.*

## Related Research

### **Circularizing the Economy**

**Linzi Redekop and Bryanne de Castro Rocha**

### **Time to Reorganize: Why Northern Ontario Should Follow BC's Lead in Local Governance**

**Anthony Noga**

### **Value for Money? The Effect of Sudbury's 2001 Amalgamation on Municipal Expenditures**

**Jamed Cuddy**

To stay connected or get involved, please contact us at:

**info@northernpolicy.ca**    [www.northernpolicy.ca](http://www.northernpolicy.ca)



# Office Locations

