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Policy Note #57 | July 2023

# Community Immigration Pilot Making Economic 'Cents': How the Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot is Growing the Local Economy in Thunder Bay

By: Bryanne de Castro Rocha

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- Thunder Bay on Robinson-Superior Treaty territory and the land is the traditional territory of the Anishnaabeg and Fort William First Nation.
- Sudbury is on the Robinson-Huron Treaty territory and the land is the traditional territory of the Atikameksheng Anishnaabeg as well as Wahnapiitae First Nation.
- Kirkland Lake is on the Robinson-Huron Treaty territory and the land is the traditional territory of Cree, Ojibway, and Algonquin Peoples, as well as Beaverhouse First Nation.
- Each community 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.

This report was made possible through the support of our partner, Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation. 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.

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Published by Northern Policy Institute

874 Tungsten St.

Thunder Bay, Ontario P7B 6T6

ISBN: 978-1-77868-076-2

## About the Author

# Bryanne de Castro Rocha



Bryanne holds a Master of Arts in Political Science from the University of Calgary, where she analyzed the relationship between sustainable development, environmental clauses in international trade agreements, and agricultural lobbying. Her Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in International Relations explored the measurement and conceptualization of sustainable development. She is also interested in the relationship between mining operations and Indigenous communities in Canada and abroad.

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Thunder Bay Community Economic Development Commission is the city of Thunder Bay's lead economic development agency and champion for local growth.

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NPI is pleased to have the support of FedNor for this important work to assess the impact of the Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot in Northern Ontario.

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# Executive Summary

Immigration brings economic benefits to communities (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada 2020). However, most of the immigrants that come to Canada settle in three large cities: Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal. To better distribute the benefits of immigration in Canada, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada created the Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot (RNIP) and selected eleven rural or northern communities to participate. Five of these communities are in Northern Ontario, and the City of Thunder Bay is one of them.<sup>1</sup>

The RNIP helps to attract immigrants to smaller communities by providing them with a path to permanent residency. In turn, it gives communities the opportunity to select which workers have the most desired skills by their local industries and are the most likely to settle and stay in that northern or rural community in the long term. By doing so, the RNIP benefits both skilled immigrants and smaller communities at the same time.

In the City of Thunder Bay, the pilot was designed to run from November 2019 through December 2022.<sup>1</sup> After one year of the program being active, two questions arose: did the program, in fact, economically benefit the local economy? Would the program's extension and expansion benefit the community?

Answering these questions, this paper found that, in one year, the RNIP program in the City of Thunder Bay:<sup>2</sup>

- offered 229 jobs to its applicants;
- is estimated to have generated 92 other jobs in the local economy, totalling 321 jobs, and
- is estimated to have generated a total of \$11.6 million in wages in the local economy.

Therefore, the paper found that the RNIP program is estimated to have greatly benefitted the local economy in the City of Thunder Bay. Based on the results of the program's first year, the paper analyzed that the present continuation of the RNIP in the City of Thunder Bay and to other communities in the regions of Northern Ontario could bring multiple benefits to their local economies.

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<sup>1</sup> In September 2022, after this report was written, the Thunder Bay RNIP program was expanded to encompass the Thunder Bay and Rainy River districts, including: the City of Thunder Bay, the Town of Atikokan, the Town of Fort Frances, the Town of Rainy River, the City of Dryden, the Town of Emo, the Municipality of Greenstone, the Town of Marathon, the Township of Dorion, the Township of Manitouwadge, the Township of Nipigon, the Township of Schreiber, the Township of Terrace Bay, the Township of Red Rock, the Municipality of Sioux Lookout, and the Township of Ignace.

<sup>2</sup> After writing, the RNIP program was extended until August 2024.

<sup>3</sup> Assuming one year of full-time work for all 229 applicants based on the average worked hours and wage information for 2021.



## Introduction

Immigrants positively contribute to the local economy. They pay taxes that fund public services, spend their money on “goods, housing and transportation,” stimulating the economy, and allow employers to find qualified workers for their businesses (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada 2020). All this creates a ripple effect in multiple other economic factors, such as the income and spending of other parties (Mago 2014, 183). Economic impact analyses (EIAs) study this ripple effect of an initial investment on a local economy (Moazzami 2019, 5).

This paper asks what the impact of Thunder Bay’s Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot (RNIP) is on the local economy.<sup>4</sup> The program’s data show that, even though it is still a pilot, it already benefits the local economy through increasing local earnings and creating jobs. Expanding Thunder Bay’s RNIP to other communities would multiply these benefits.<sup>5</sup>

# EIA of Thunder Bay’s RNIP Program for All Industries on the Local Economy<sup>6</sup>

This analysis intends to measure the total economic impact of Thunder Bay’s RNIP on the economy of Thunder Bay. Multiple industries participated in the program, but because the goal is to analyze its total impact, all

industries that participated in the pilot are included in one group. The table and figure below present the estimation of Thunder Bay RNIP’s economic impact on the local economy of Thunder Bay.

**Table 1. Economic Impact Analysis of Thunder Bay’s RNIP for All Industries on the Local Economy**

	Local Wages	Local Jobs
Initial wages and jobs	\$ 8,720,032	229
Direct	\$ 1,341,424	37
Indirect	\$ 224,085	6
Induced	\$ 1,360,278	50
<b>Total wages and jobs</b>	<b>\$ 11,645,818</b>	<b>321</b>

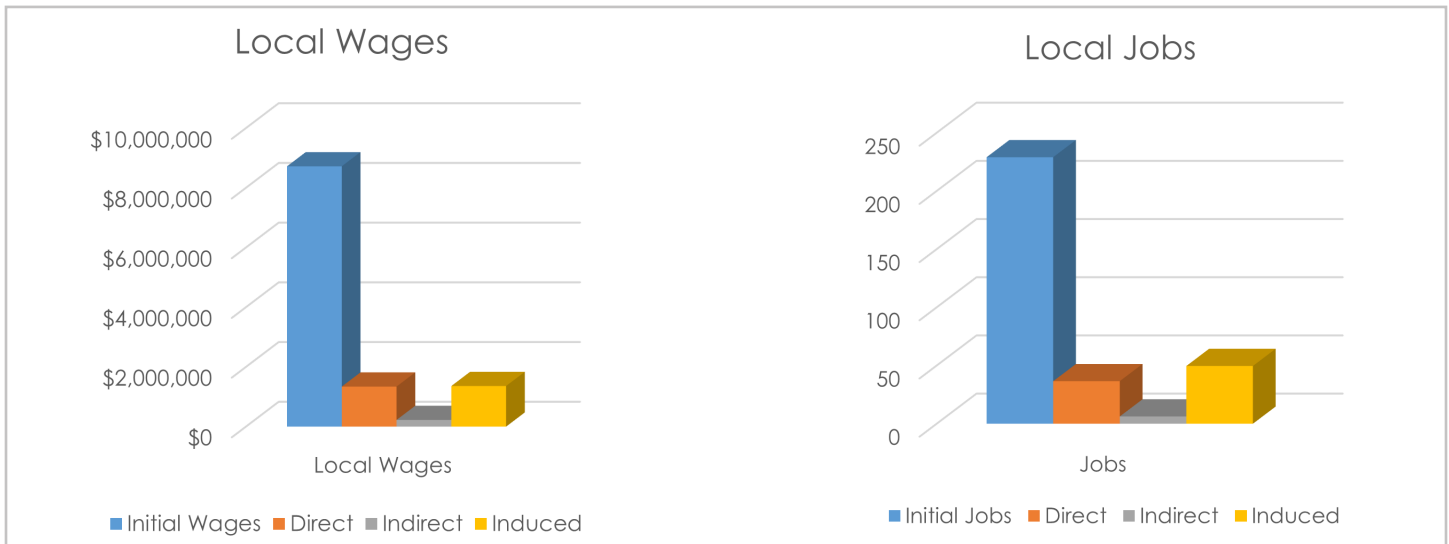
Source: Author’s calculations, on data from November 2019 to December 2021 provided by provided by Thunder Bay Community Economic Development Commission (CEDC) and Ontario’s Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs 2022.

<sup>4</sup>For the purposes of this policy note, the local economy comprises the economy of the Thunder Bay census subdivision (CSD). “Census subdivision (CSD) is the general term for municipalities (as determined by provincial/territorial legislation) or areas treated as municipal equivalents for statistical purposes (e.g., Indian reserves, Indian settlements, and unorganized territories). Municipal status is defined by laws in effect in each province and territory in Canada” (Statistics Canada 2017). This policy note used the definition of CSD from Census 2016, as data for regional multipliers were based on this definition (Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs 2022).

<sup>5</sup>As noted previously, the geographic boundaries of the program were expanded in September 2022 to include other communities.

<sup>6</sup>All results presented in this section are estimations, not observed values. The methodology used to perform this analysis can be found in Appendix A.

**Figure 1. Economic Impact Analysis of Thunder Bay's RNIP for All Industries on the Local Economy**

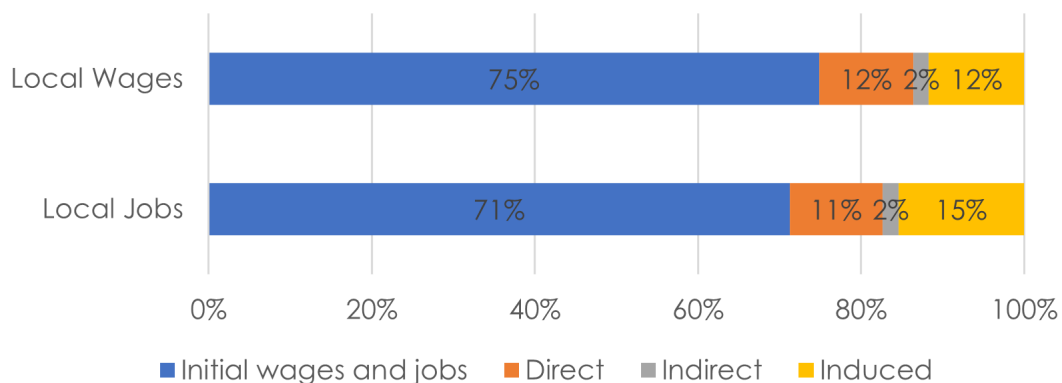


Source: Author's calculations, based on data from November 2019 to December 2021 provided by provided by Thunder Bay CEDC and Ontario's Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs 2022.

The numbers above mean that Thunder Bay's RNIP generated \$11.6 million in local wages in one year (direct, indirect, and induced). This value is 1.34 times higher than the total amount paid in wages to applicants in the program, calculated to be \$8.7 million. Thus, the employment of these applicants in Thunder Bay generated another \$2.9 million in local wages for the local economy. Therefore, for every one dollar paid in wages to applicants, the pilot generated 0.34 additional dollars in wages for the local economy.

Though the program itself does not directly create jobs, it does provide an immigration pathway to aid employers in attracting talent to fill vacant positions. The pilot initially offered 229 jobs for applicants, which created another 92 jobs for the local economy. Therefore, the program is estimated to have resulted in around 321 direct, indirect, and induced jobs for the local economy in one year, which is four additional jobs in the local economy for every ten jobs filled by its applicants.<sup>7</sup>

**Figure 2. Economic Impact Analysis of Thunder Bay's RNIP for All Industries on the Local Economy in Percentages**



Source: Author's calculations, based on data from November 2019 to December 2021 provided by provided by Thunder Bay CEDC and Ontario's Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs 2022.

The figure above presents the direct, indirect, and induced impact as a percentage of the total economic impact on local wages and jobs. Induced impacts accounted for 12 per cent of the total impacts on local wages and 15 per cent of the impact on jobs. Direct

impacts accounted for 11 and 12 per cent, and indirect impacts for two per cent of total impacts on both wages and jobs in the local economy. Therefore, induced impact for local jobs were the most significant economic impacts on the local economy.

<sup>7</sup> Assuming one year of full-time work for all 229 applicants based on the average worked hours and wage information for 2021.

# Conclusion

This policy note asked what the economic impact of Thunder Bay's Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot is on the local economy? Because the analysis measured the program's total impact, it included all industries that participated in the pilot. Data showed that for every one dollar offered to applicants in wages, the pilot generated an estimated 1.34 dollars of wages for the local economy. Furthermore, the pilot created four additional jobs in the local economy in one year for every ten jobs initially offered to its applicants.

These figures represent multiple positive economic impacts of Thunder Bay's RNIP program. They demonstrate how this program can positively contribute to the economy, increasing local earnings and creating jobs in the city of Thunder Bay. The results of this economic impact analysis suggest that Thunder Bay's RNIP has benefitted the economy beyond the initial value invested by the program in total labour income. The program has also benefitted workers beyond those directly affected by the initial 229 job offers. This analysis shows that the continuation of Thunder Bay's RNIP program and its possible expansion to other communities in Northern Ontario is estimated to bring various benefits to the local economy and workers.





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# Appendix A

## Methodology

Two main steps were taken to perform the economic impact analysis. The first was to calculate the total value in wages offered to applicants of Thunder Bay's RNIP. The goal was to know how much applicants would have made in wages in one year of work. To calculate this amount, first, the number of applicants was multiplied by the average wage per hour for their occupation in 2021 for their occupation, according to their National Occupational Classification (NOC) codes. Second, this amount was multiplied by the average number of hours worked in 2021 for each NOC code (Statistics Canada 2022).<sup>8,9</sup> Therefore, the final value in wages represents the total income earned by all applicants in one year.<sup>10</sup>

Consequently, the impact on local wages was expressed in terms of the economic impact of 229 applicants in one year of full-time work for all industries on the local economy of Thunder Bay.

The second step was to calculate the regional multipliers used in this paper. To do so, the multipliers of all industries were aggregated. These industries were those which made job offers for applicants in the studied pilot so that results would be specific for the pilot's impact. Please refer to table 2 for a list of all industries that participated in the program and their North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes.

**Table 2. List of All Industries that Participated in Thunder Bay's RNIP and Respective NAICS**

NAICS	Industry
23	Construction
31-33	Manufacturing
41	Wholesale Trade
44-45	Retail Trade
48-49	Transportation and Warehousing
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing
54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
56	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services
61	Educational Services
62	Health Care and Social Assistance
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation
72	Accommodation and Food Services
81	Other Services
91	Public Administration

Source: data from November 2019 to December 2021 provided by Thunder Bay CEDC in 2022.

Data for multipliers for each industry for the geography of the City of Thunder Bay (CSD) were received from the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) (Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs 2022).<sup>11,12</sup> Instructions from Economic Modeling

Specialists (Emsi) were used to aggregate these multipliers for all industries that participated in Thunder Bay's RNIP (Economic Modeling Specialists 2022). Table 3 shows the aggregated multipliers that were used in this paper.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>8</sup> The number of applicants, the NOC code list, and the average hourly wage for each NOC code was provided by Thunder Bay CEDC. For a full list of this information, please refer to Appendix B.

<sup>9</sup> The number of usual hours worked per week for each NOC code was retrieved from the Labour Force Survey. This paper made a weighted average of the hours worked in 2021 for each NOC code based on the number of weeks of each month in 2021. Values were available for one-digit NOC codes (broad occupational categories). However, the classification provided by Thunder Bay CEDC was of four-digit NOC codes. Therefore, each four-digit code was matched to its one-digit code category (Statistics Canada 2018, Statistics Canada 2022). For example, NOC code 1 from the Labour Force Survey was used for NOC codes 1212 and 1215. Unfortunately, data for usual hours worked per week by NOC code at the provincial level were not available for full-time employees. Data at the national level were used since RNIP's applicants must be full-time workers (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada 2020).

<sup>10</sup> Therefore assuming that all applicants worked full-time for at least one entire year, based on the average worked hours and average wages for 2021.

<sup>11</sup> Data on multipliers received from OMAFRA were based on data extracted from Emsi Q3 2021 Data Set (Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs 2022).

<sup>12</sup> OMAFRA used geographic boundaries for the City of Thunder Bay CSD from Statistics' Canada 2016 Census since multipliers refer to the year of 2019, prior to the 2021 Census.

<sup>13</sup> Reference period of 2019, which was the latest reference period available.

**Table 3. Multipliers for All Industries in Thunder Bay’s RNIP for Economic Impacts on the local economy**

	Local Wages	Local Jobs
Initial wages and jobs (input)	\$1	1
Direct	\$0.15	0.16
Indirect	\$0.03	0.03
Induced	\$0.16	0.22
<b>Total wages and jobs (output)</b>	<b>\$1.34</b>	<b>1.40</b>

Source: Author’s calculations based on data from Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs 2022.

The multipliers above were used to estimate the impact on local wages generated and local jobs created.<sup>8</sup> These impacts were estimated for three different rounds of economic activity: direct, indirect, and induced impacts.<sup>9</sup> The total impact is the sum of the three previous impacts. Local wage multipliers represent the impact generated by one dollar of wage income provided for Thunder

Bay’s applicants. Each one dollar of wages offered for applicants generated 1.34 dollars of total local wages (in estimation). Multipliers for jobs represent the impact generated by each job offered to applicants in the pilot. For example, every ten initial jobs offered to applicants in Thunder Bay’s RNIP are estimated to have created four additional jobs in the local economy.



<sup>8</sup> Multipliers for impact on gross domestic product and taxes were not available at the local level for Thunder Bay CSD.<sup>6</sup> Reference period of 2019, which was the latest reference period available.

<sup>9</sup> "Direct impacts refer to immediate economic outcomes occurring as the result of" Thunder Bay's RNIP activity, which is the earnings and the jobs created for Thunder Bay's applicants; indirect impacts refer to purchases or the economic activity by those that generated the direct effects, which is the impact of expenditure by Thunder Bay's RNIP applicants; and induced impacts refer to "earnings over and above the direct and indirect impacts, generated by re-spending of employment income from direct and indirect employment," which is the spending of third parties paid by Thunder Bay RNIP's applicants (Moazzami 2019, 7).

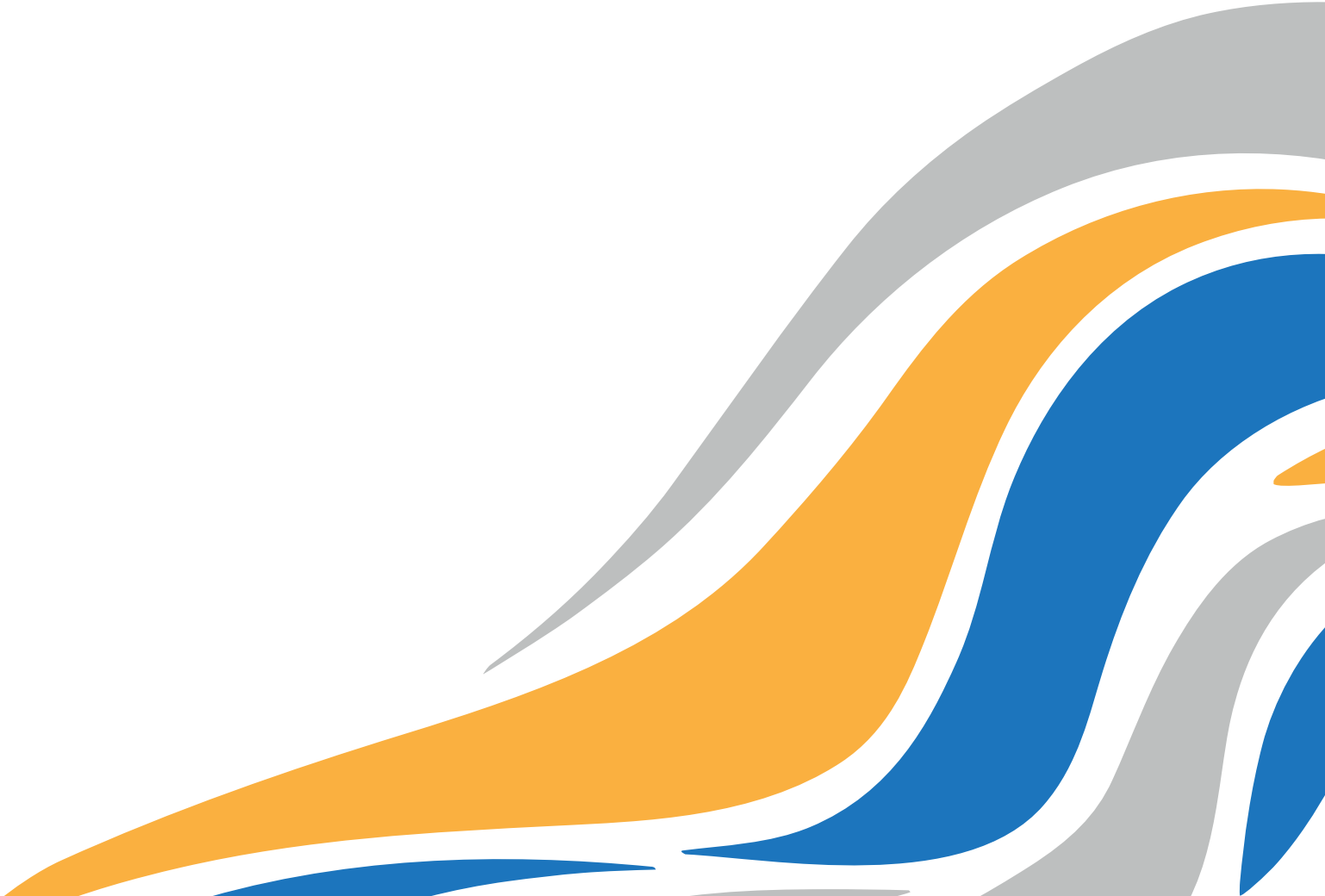
## Appendix B

**Table 4. Complete List of Job Titles Filled by Thunder Bay RNIP's Applicants for all Industries by NOC Code as of December 2021—Ordered from Most to Least Frequent NOC Codes**

Job title	NOC	Average hourly wage in dollars (\$)	Number of Applicants
Cooks	6322	15.32	32
Security guards and related security service occupations	6541	15.75	21
Nurse aides, orderlies and patient service associates	3413	19.32	21
Food service supervisors	6311	15.54	19
Licensed practical nurses	3233	24.22	19
Chefs	6321	15.84	11
Restaurant and food service managers	631	17.31	10
Administrative assistants	1241	18.23	8
Chemical technologists and technicians	2211	18.67	6
Transport truck drivers	7511	26.94	6
Administrative officers	1221	18.93	5
Automotive service technicians, truck and bus mechanics and mechanical repairers	7321	25.90	5
Light duty cleaners	6731	14.88	4
Social and community service workers	4212	19.54	4
Home support workers, housekeepers and related occupations	4412	17.30	4
Supervisors, supply chain, tracking and scheduling co-ordination occupations	1215	20.71	3
Retail and wholesale trade managers	0621	18.33	3
Other automotive mechanical installers and servicers	7535	15.17	3
Registered nurses and registered psychiatric nurses	3012	25.75	3
Purchasing agents and officers	1225	25.98	3
Air pilots, flight engineers and flying instructors	2271	28.50	3
Other customer and information services representatives	6552	15.00	2
Construction trades helpers and labourers	7611	15.00	2
Geological and mineral technologists and technicians	2212	19.25	2
Supervisors, finance and insurance office workers	1212	22.31	2
Retail sales supervisors	6211	15.95	2
Bakers	6332	15.00	2
Civil engineering technologists and technicians	2231	20.00	1
Medical laboratory technicians and pathologists' assistants	3212	18.20	1
Correctional service officers	4422	28.98	1
Education policy researchers, consultants and program officers	4166	24.04	1
Construction millwrights and industrial mechanics	7311	25.00	1
Physicists and astronomers	2111	25.83	1
Mechanical engineering technologists and technicians	2232	21.63	1
Civil engineers	2131	24.04	1
Production logistics co-ordinators	1523	22.00	1

Industrial and manufacturing engineers	2141	23.00	1
Bricklayers	7281	22.00	1
Construction managers	0711	30.00	1
Aircraft mechanics and aircraft inspectors	7315	19.00	1
Managers in social, community and correctional services	0423	28.15	1
Oil and solid fuel heating mechanics	7331	28.00	1
Air traffic controllers and related occupations	2272	22.61	1
Other medical technologists and technicians (except dental health)	3219	16.00	1
Dental assistants	3411	20.19	1
Coaches	5252	17.81	1
Executive assistants	1222	21.54	1
Electrical and electronics engineering technologists and technicians	2241	19.00	1
Retail salespersons	6421	18.00	1
Hotel front desk clerks	6525	16.39	1
Butchers, meat cutters and fishmongers - retail and wholesale	6331	15.00	1

Source: data from November 2019 to December 2021 provided by Thunder Bay CEDC in 2022.



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