

Northwest Labour Market Analysis Report

APRIL 2026



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North Superior
Workforce Planning Board
Commission de planification
de la main-d'œuvre du
Nord Supérieur

Canada 

**EMPLOYMENT
ONTARIO**

Ontario 

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Land Acknowledgement

Northwest Training and Adjustment Board

The Northwest Training and Adjustment Board's Directors and staff recognize that we gather on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabe and Métis Peoples within the Kenora and Rainy River Districts. It is our hope that the information that is gathered and shared through the work of the Northwest Training and Adjustment Board will assist in the process of truth and reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples and augment the intended sharing of resources that these lands provide to its residents.

North Superior Workforce Planning Board

NSWPB respectfully acknowledges the First Peoples whose traditional territories we live and work. We are grateful for the privilege of having our office situated on these lands and extend our gratitude to all generations who have cared for this land. The NSWPB office is in the City of Thunder Bay, situated on Robinson Superior Treaty territory, the traditional land of the Anishinaabeg and Fort William First Nation. Our service area encompasses more than forty communities, each home to diverse First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples. NSWPB recognizes and values the deep historical connection these communities have to their territories. We stand in support of their efforts to sustain and grow their nations, while also honoring the significant contributions they have made in shaping and strengthening local communities, the province, and Canada as a whole.

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EmployNext acknowledges the traditional lands of the Indigenous Peoples within our region, including the Anishinaabe, Cree, Oji-Cree (Anisininew), Métis, and Inuit. Our work spans the lands and waterways within Treaty No. 3, Treaty No. 5, Treaty No. 9, the Robinson Superior Treaty, as well as territories that remain unceded. We honour the sovereignty and inherent rights of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples, and the stewardship they continue to uphold across these territories. As partners working within these lands, we are committed to advancing reconciliation through action by building respectful relationships, fostering mutual trust, and supporting economic and workforce pathways defined by Indigenous Peoples in these territories.

Joint Disclaimers

EmployNext has prepared the Northwest Labour Market Analysis Report using the most current data available from Statistics Canada, publicly accessible sources, administrative datasets, and local insights. The findings may be influenced by data availability, collection cycles, confidentiality requirements, and geographic limitations. While every effort has been made to ensure accuracy and completeness, EmployNext makes no representations or warranties regarding the data and assumes no responsibility for any errors, omissions, or interpretations arising from its use. EmployNext is not liable for any decisions made or actions taken based on the information contained in this report.

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The **North Superior Workforce Planning Board** (NSWPB) recognizes the potential limitations inherent in this local labour market report and is dedicated to addressing areas that may require further analysis and action. The data presented in this report reflects the most current and accurate information available as of the publication date. This document may be freely cited or reproduced, provided that appropriate attribution is made to the NSWPB as the source. However, the NSWPB assumes no liability for any consequences resulting from errors or omissions contained within this report.

The material contained in this report has been prepared by the **Northwest Training and Adjustment Board** using the most current data available at the time of analysis from Statistics Canada, Taxfiler, Canadian Business Counts, other publicly available sources, and local consultations and applied labour market intelligence. Findings are influenced by data availability, collection cycles, confidentiality requirements, and geographic limitations.

While the information is drawn from sources considered to be reliable, no representation or warranty, express or implied, is made as to its accuracy or completeness. In providing this material, the Northwest Training and Adjustment Board assumes no responsibility or liability for its use or interpretation.

Background

This report represents a collaboration of three organizations supporting Northwestern Ontario's labour force: EmployNext, the Northwest Training and Adjustment Board (NTAB), and the North Superior Workforce Planning Board (NSWPB). The analysis presents a current state and future outlook for the Northwest economic region and the three Districts within it: Thunder Bay, Rainy River, and Kenora. The EmployNext future outlook builds on the Labour Market Plans from NTAB and NSWPB, to share custom insights with the region and enhance access to labour market research. This future outlook provides a forecast for economic conditions, demographic trends, labour supply, labour demand, and the labour market outlook by occupation. Bringing the analysis together for all Districts ensures that the labour market dynamics are covered in one resource for the region.

EmployNext powered by Serco

EmployNext is the Service System Manager for Integrated Employment Services for Northwestern Ontario. EmployNext is committed to making labour market information (LMI) accessible, relevant, and actionable for job seekers, employers, and community partners. To support this work, EmployNext has partnered with NTAB and NSWPB to develop a joint LMI report for Northwestern Ontario. We also acknowledge the valuable contributions of Literacy Northwest, who are responsible for supporting Get Set programs across the region. This collaboration is a natural fit, allowing for combined expertise and resources to provide a comprehensive, data-driven understanding of regional labour market trends, employment opportunities, and workforce challenges across Northwestern Ontario.

Northwest Training and Adjustment Board

The Northwest Training and Adjustment Board's 2026 to 2029 Local Labour Market Plan outlines how the Kenora and Rainy River Districts are responding to ongoing economic shifts, including changes in trade, supply chains, technology, and population trends. Consultations with employers and community partners confirmed five continued and expanded priorities: (1) External Forces and Workforce Sector Shifts; (2) Population Dynamics and Workforce Enablers; (3) Skills, Training, and Learning Pathways; (4) Entrepreneurship and Local Business Growth; and (5) Inclusion, Equity, and Workforce Participation. With strong demand in sectors such as mining, construction, health care, and public administration, alongside challenges related to housing, childcare, skill gaps, and worker attraction, the plan highlights coordinated actions and community initiatives that aim to build a resilient labour force and support regional growth through 2029.

North Superior Workforce Planning Board

The Local Labour Market Plan (LLMP) is crucial to the Thunder Bay District as it provides data-driven insights and strategic direction to address workforce challenges, economic trends, and employment opportunities in the region. By analyzing labour market demands, skills gaps, and demographic shifts, the LLMP helps businesses, job seekers, educators, and policymakers make informed decisions to strengthen the local economy. It also supports initiatives that promote workforce inclusion, skill development, and industry growth, ensuring that the region's labour market remains resilient, adaptive, and aligned with emerging opportunities.

Introduction

Purpose

This joint labour market analysis provides a snapshot of current and future labour market conditions across the Northwest economic region, including the Thunder Bay, Rainy River, and Kenora Districts. It examines key indicators; such as demographics, skills and experience, and employment, to assess current labour market performance and identify high-opportunity occupations characterized by strong wages and employment prospects. The analysis also includes a forward-looking forecast that considers demographic shifts and economic growth to evaluate anticipated labour supply and demand across occupations in the region.



Source: [GeoSearch](#)

Scope and Approach

The scope of work includes current labour market conditions, prepared in collaboration with the Northwest Training and Adjustment Board and North Superior Workforce Planning Board, and a future outlook by EmployNext for occupations in all census Districts. In addition, the wider geographical analysis for each Workforce Planning Board can be found in later sections of this report to get a more granular view of labour market information for the three census Districts.

The map above shows the Northwest economic region (the blue shaded area) and the three census Districts within it. The future labour market delivers an outlook for the 818 occupations across 20 industries, based on job openings and potential labour supply. This is used to develop a set of high opportunity occupations. Key variables within this analysis include demographics, employment, gross domestic product (GDP) by industry, and labour demand and supply across 818 occupational groups. Our forecast covers a 10-year period (2024-2035), enabling us to see how each component is expected to perform over the near and medium-term.

The scope of work includes an analysis of current labour market conditions, developed in collaboration with the NTAB and the NSWPB, along with a future occupational outlook by EmployNext for all census Districts. Additional sections of this report provide more detailed geographic analysis for each Workforce Planning Board. The future outlook examines 818

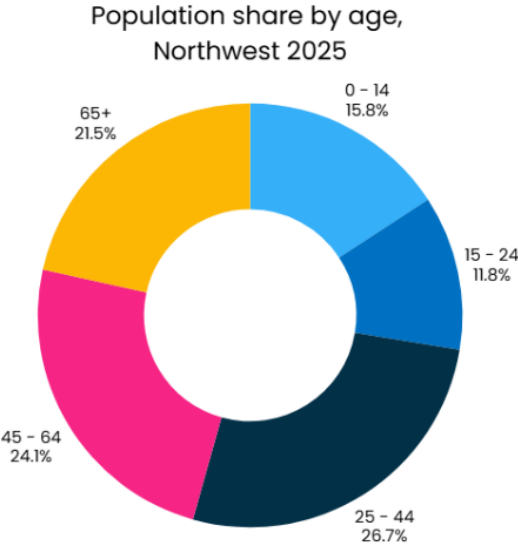
occupations across 20 industries, based on projected job openings and labour supply, to identify high-opportunity occupations. Key variables include demographics, employment, GDP by industry, and occupational labour supply and demand. The 10-year forecast (2024–2035) provides insight into expected near- and medium-term labour market trends.

New to the 2026 report, is an overview of Indigenous workforce participation within the broader labour-market context. It summarizes the significant role Indigenous populations will play in meeting long-term workforce demand across the three census Districts. It also outlines persistent employment gaps and structural barriers that must be addressed to fully leverage this critical segment of the region’s future labour force.

Current State Executive Summary

Regional Population Dynamics

In 2025, the Northwest Economic Region has an estimated population of 251,145, a 0.27% increase from 2024, with an aging profile and a mature labour force. Adults aged 65 and over account for 54,067 residents (21.5% of the population). Children aged 0–14 represent 15.8%. The largest working age cohort is 25–44 (67,131), followed by those aged 45–64 (60,601), indicating a significant share approaching retirement age. Population patterns vary across Districts, with Kenora maintaining a comparatively younger profile and Rainy River experiencing a net outflow among those aged 18–24. In Thunder Bay, natural decreases are increasingly offset by immigration and nonpermanent residents¹.



Thunder Bay District reflects similar aging trends from across the region with 36,237 individuals aged 65+. Kenora District shows stronger inflows among ages 25–44. Rainy River District remains the smallest population base at 19,964, with 4,806 residents aged 65+, and continues to experience youth outmigration.²

Indigenous Peoples represent 49.7% of Kenora, 29.7% of Rainy River, and 16.2% of Thunder Bay Census Division populations and have significantly younger age structures compared to non-Indigenous residents. Indigenous cohorts represent a critical long-term source of new workers. Unemployment rates remain higher for Indigenous Peoples (11.0% vs. 7.7% among non-Indigenous), and First Nations have the highest rate (11.7%).³

Employment Ontario and Get SET programming provide a critical pathway to engage individuals not currently participating in the workforce, with approximately 80% of Employment Services clients reporting no income or reliance on government benefits.

1 Statistics Canada for 2024 and Ontario Ministry of Finance projections (Summer 2025).

2 North Superior Workforce Planning Board (NSWPB). Thunder Bay Labour Market Report — February 2026. Thunder Bay, ON: NSWPB, 2026.

Northwest Training and Adjustment Board (NTAB). 2026–2029 Local Labour Market Plan Report: Kenora and Rainy River Districts. Dryden, ON: NTAB, 2026.

3 Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-404-X2016001, Table 14-10-0470-01, Catalogue no. 11627M2022059

Approximately 30% of Get SET participants are employed or self-employed, highlighting the importance of retention focused skill development.⁴

Labour Market Conditions

Northwestern Ontario continues to experience a structurally tight labour market, with unemployment below the Ontario average (4.6% vs. 7.7%) and participation rates lagging (61.1% vs. 65.3%). Business growth since 2023 has been modest and largely driven by self-employment. Labour supply constraints, rather than diminishing employer demand, continue to shape conditions. Hiring activity remains steady across health care, education, retail, transportation, manufacturing, and resource industries. An aging workforce is increasing retirement-related replacement demand.

Labour Force Characteristics, 2025

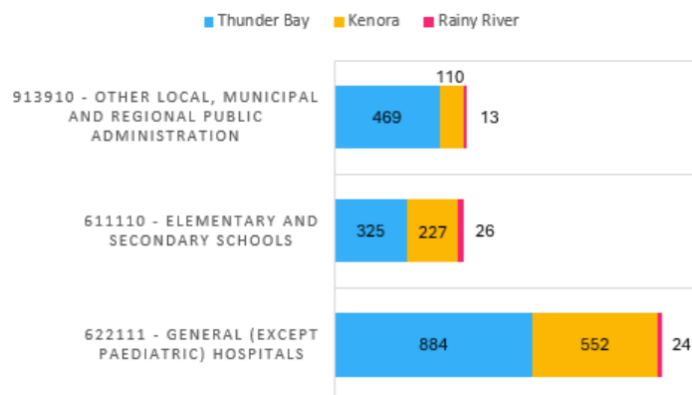
Characteristic	Northwest	Ontario	Canada
Employment Rate	58.3%	60.0%	60.8%
Unemployment Rate	4.6%	7.7%	6.8%
Participation Rate	61.1%	65.0%	65.3%

Health care and social assistance accounts for more than double the employment volume of the next largest sector. General hospitals employ 1,460 workers, making them the region's largest employer, followed by elementary and secondary schools (628 workers) and local public administration (592 workers). Home Health Care Services supports 533 workers. Retail roles (department stores and supermarkets) remain for notable employers.⁵

Labour Market Balance

These industries represent the strongest areas of employment concentration in the region.

- 622111-General (except Paediatric) Hospitals – 1,460 workers**
Hospital-based health care anchors the regional labour market, with supported by sustained demand for acute-care capacity and an aging population that increases the volume and complexity of care. The sector's size – 1,460 workers, the highest among all industries – signals ongoing reliance on clinical, technical, and support occupations and implies continued pressure on recruitment pipelines.
- 611110-Elementary and Secondary Schools – 628 workers**
Consistent K-12 enrolment sustains stable workforce needs grounded in K-12 enrolment patterns. This consistency is reinforced by the long-term nature of educational services, the ongoing requirement for trained educators, and the presence of auxiliary roles that support school operations. These demands collectively contribute to predictable employment pathways within the education system.
- 913910-Other Local, Municipal and Regional Public Administration – 592 workers**
Local governments provide essential community services and infrastructure oversight, supporting steady workforce needs of governments responsible for essential community services, infrastructure oversight, public safety functions, and regulatory roles.



Signal49 Research (Vicinity Jobs). Vicinity Jobs Labour Market Analytics Platform. Signal49 Research, 2026

⁴ Literacy Northwest Data Report 2024-2025 & EmployNext Data: ESCases. *EmployNext - ESCases IES Dashboard*. 1 March 2026. Report. 1 March 2026.

⁵ Signal49 Research (Vicinity Jobs). Vicinity Jobs Labour Market Analytics Platform. Signal49 Research, 2026.

High Level Employer Demand Patterns

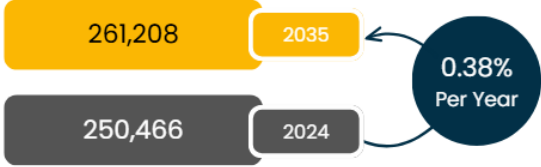
Across the region, hiring priorities emphasize communication, mobility/driving, frontline supervision and management, regulatory compliance, and customer service skills. Care specific skills, such as nursing and health sciences, remain for high-demand areas. Employers frequently require driving licences, First Aid, CPR, and WHMIS certifications. These requirements appear broadly across postings.

Implications for the Region

Northwestern Ontario's labour market is characterized by an aging population, constrained labour supply, persistent employer demand, strong reliance on health care and public administration, and continued importance of Employment Ontario and Get SET programs in supporting labour market engagement. Indigenous youth represent a critical future workforce source, and ongoing labour market tightness underscores the importance of newcomer attraction, retention, and workforce transition strategies.

Future State Executive Summary

Population of Region, 2024 vs. 2035



Source: 49 Census Divisions MOF Population Projections

Northwestern Ontario’s future labour market will be shaped by modest population growth driven primarily by newcomers and the comparatively large Indigenous youth cohort present across all Census Districts. While natural increase continues to decline; especially in the Thunder Bay District, where births remain well below deaths, immigration and nonpermanent residents will remain central to maintaining population stability. Federal changes replacing the former Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot (RNIP) with the Rural Community Immigration Pilot (RCIP), operating only in the City of Thunder Bay, will continue to concentrate on newcomer pathways within the region. Sustaining attraction and retention efforts will be essential as aging accelerates, and dependency ratios rise.

Labour demand is expected to remain strong across the Northwest. Employers continue to recruit heavily in health care, retail, manufacturing, education, transportation, and accommodation and food services, with mining and construction projected to drive additional job growth

over the coming decade. Modelling indicates continued gaps in Health and Trades/Transportation through 2033, and forecasts for the Thunder Bay District point to a worker shortfall unless labour supply increases through immigration, delayed retirements, and faster certification supported by expanded apprenticeship training and testing access. Vacancy levels across the region already signal a sustained imbalance between employer demand and available workers.

Real GDP for the Northwest economic region is projected to reach roughly \$14.1 billion by 2030, implying average real growth of about 1.4% per year, broadly in line with Ontario’s overall trend.⁶ However, this outlook remains vulnerable to external trade conditions. Ongoing tariff pressures on export exposed sectors such as forestry and manufacturing could dampen growth if they persist or intensify.

At the same time, persistent labour shortages pose an additional, structural drag on regional performance: quarterly job vacancies averaged over 5,100 positions in 2024, even as unemployment held near 4–5%, indicating too few available workers rather than too few jobs. These unfilled roles represent an estimated \$0.7 billion in foregone GDP in Northwestern Ontario alone. Across the broader North, labour shortages are already

⁶ Forecast based on EmployNext calculations

reducing GDP by nearly 4%.⁷ Together, these pressures suggest that without improvements in workforce attraction, retention, and mobility, labour constraints will continue to limit economic activity across the Northwest despite otherwise stable long-term growth fundamentals.

Labour supply pressures will intensify due to demographic change. Population projections indicate a gradual long-term decline across the Northwest, with slower contraction in Thunder Bay and more pronounced losses in smaller districts. The

region is entering a period of accelerated retirement turnover, with approximately 20% of the current labour supply expected to retire by 2035. Although the school-leaver cohort is projected to grow from 5,912 youth in 2025 to 6,526 by 2035, growth will not evenly offset aging and outmigration, particularly in rural areas. Strengthened school-to-work pathways, expanded training options, and responsive upskilling models will be needed to support youth transitions and bolster midcareer mobility.

Population Projection to 2035



Reference: Signal49 Research (Vicinity Jobs). Vicinity Jobs Labour Market Analytics Platform. Signal49 Research, 2026.

Looking ahead, employers across the region will continue to face sustained recruitment challenges, with the strongest demand pressures forecast in health care, construction and skilled trades, retail, education, and accommodation and food services. Larger service center districts such as Thunder Bay are expected to see the strongest employment growth, while smaller districts may experience slower expansion tied to demographic decline and limited net new employer growth. Across all districts, replacement hiring; rather than expansion, will remain the primary driver of job openings which reinforces the importance of long-term demographic renewal and coordinated regional workforce strategies.

⁷ NORTHERN ECONOMIST 2.0: Measuring the Cost of Labour Shortages in Ontario's North

Current State Analysis

Population Groups

The Northwest's age structure continues to tilt older, with seniors expanding and a rising dependency-to-worker ratio. In Thunder Bay District, seniors grew +28.6% since 2014 and the ratio (reached 0.56 in 2024, while natural decrease is increasingly offset by immigration and nonpermanent residents (a pattern that has been observed for several years). Immigration now accounts for most population growth across Northern Ontario, but nominee and newcomer volumes in the Northwest remain far below what is required to sustain the workforce. The region needs roughly 2,000 net migrants per year to maintain its workforce, yet current Ontario Immigration Nominee Program allocations capture only a fraction of demand.⁸ Retention challenges persist as well, with one year newcomer retention lower than in major centres due to housing constraints, limited settlement infrastructure, and underemployment.

Total Population Age Characteristics by Region (2025)⁹

	0-14	(15+)	15-24	25-44	45-64	65+
Northwest Economic Region	39,699	211,446	29,647	67,131	60,601	54,067
Thunder Bay District	22,076	135,564	17,473	43,414	38,440	36,237
Rainy River District	3,262	16,702	2,388	4,386	5,122	4,806
Kenora District	14,361	59,180	9,786	19,331	17,039	13,024

Indigenous Population and Labour Market Context

Indigenous Peoples constitute 49.7% of Kenora, 29.7% of Rainy River, and 16.2% of Thunder Bay Census Division populations, with far younger age cohorts compared to non-Indigenous residents.¹⁰ This positions Indigenous communities as the most critical long-term source of new workers in the region. At the same time, unemployment remains higher among Indigenous Peoples (11.0%) than among non-Indigenous populations (7.7%), with First Nations at 11.7%, underscoring persistent structural barriers to labour market

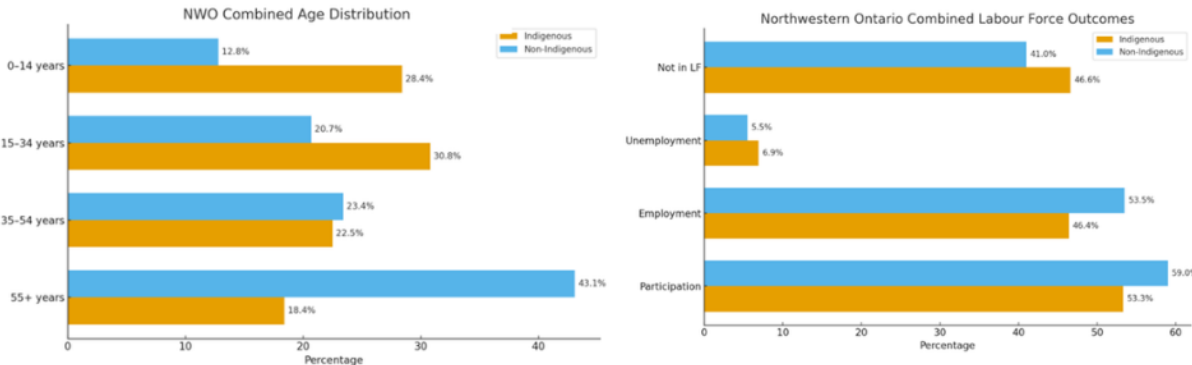
⁸ Microsoft PowerPoint - NPI Presentation - Kenora 25-07-08

⁹ Source: Ontario Ministry of Finance projections (Summer 2025).

¹⁰ Statistics Canada. 2022. Focus on Geography Series. 2021 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-404-X2016001. Ottawa, Ontario. Release date: February 9, 2022. Updated on: November 30, 2022. <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/as-sa/fogs-spg/index.cfm?Lang=E>

participation.¹¹ Note: Statistics Canada acknowledges that the Census consistently experiences *net under coverage*, with Indigenous people particularly affected, meaning that Indigenous populations in urban centres and regional labour markets are likely higher than reported, reinforcing the importance of planning for a larger Indigenous workforce than official statistics may indicate.

Northwestern Ontario Combined Age Distribution & Labour Force Outcomes ^{12 13}



Labour Force Conditions

Northwestern Ontario continues to operate within a tight labour market, where employer demand remains high and labour force growth is limited. Across the region, unemployment rates stay low and relatively stable (4.60% vs. 6.80% nationally), reflecting persistent hiring needs across multiple sectors rather than an oversupply of workers. Participation rates remain below provincial levels (61.1 vs 65.3% nationally), consistent with patterns observed in earlier years, and are influenced by demographic shifts affecting all three Districts.

Labour Supply

In 2025, Northwestern Ontario’s labour supply population aged 15 to 65 totaled approximately 174,088 individuals, with 85,538 females and 88,550 males. This represents a near even gender distribution, with males accounting for 50.9% and females 49.1% of the working age population—roughly 3,000 more males than females.¹⁴ In 2025, Northwestern Ontario had 5,912 youth aged 17–18, including 2,818 females and

¹¹ Statistics Canada. Table 14-10-0470-01 Labour force characteristics by Indigenous group living off reserve, annual. Release Date: January 9th, 2026. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1410047001>

¹² Statistic Canada. Indigenous identity population by gender and age: Canada, provinces and territories, census metropolitan areas and census agglomerations. Table 9810029201 / 9810029301. Release November 15, 2023.

¹³ Statistics Canada. Table 14-10-0470-01 Labour force characteristics by Indigenous group living off reserve, annual. Release Date: January 9th, 2026. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1410047001>

¹⁴ Statistics Canada. Table 98-10-0456-01 Place of work status by industry sectors, occupation broad category and gender: Canada, provinces and territories, census divisions and census subdivisions

3,094 males, with males outnumbering females in both age groups, creating a slightly stronger male pipeline entering the workforce.¹⁵

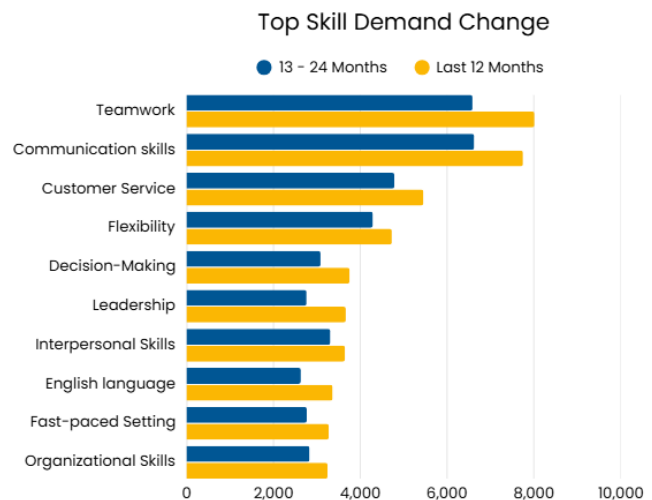
The age structure shows that males are slightly more represented in younger working age cohorts (15–34), whereas females make up a somewhat larger share of older working ages (55–65), indicating a higher concentration of near retirement workers on the female side. Weighted medians place the female median age at 39 and the male median age at 38, reflecting broadly similar but subtly older distributions among women. Overall, the 2025 labour supply profile points to a balanced yet aging workforce, with fewer young entrants relative to workers approaching retirement.

Employer Base and Sector Structure

Health care and social assistance account for more than double the employment volume of the next largest sector. The largest individual employers include General (except Pediatric) Hospitals (1,460 workers), followed by Elementary and Secondary Schools (628), Local/Municipal/Regional Public Administration (592), and Home Health Care Services (533). Retail remains significant via Department Stores (470) and Supermarkets and Grocery Stores (289).¹⁶

Labour Demand Signals (Postings, Skills, Credentials)

Across Northwestern Ontario, employer demand is shifting strongly toward people centered and frontline roles, backed by steady growth in construction, maintenance, and resource related work. In the most recent 12 months, Teamwork (8,015 postings) and Communication skills (7,750) were the two most requested skills, with Customer Service (5,456) also high; underscoring the region’s service centric hiring profile. Construction craft & site-readiness skills are climbing with strong gains in Carpentry (+114), Working at heights (+110), Blueprint Reading (+95), Forklifts (+83), Electrical systems/repairs (+62/+48), HVAC (+47), and Microsoft Project (+36). These reflect active projects needs and more structured site/program management needs. Likewise, mining-adjacent or plant-based skills are also ticking up. Employers posted more for Welding (+53), Excavators (+18), Skid steers (+16), Diesel engines (+16), Hoists (+13), SCADA (+12), Bucket trucks (+10), Backhoes (+9). Taken together, these patterns



¹⁵ Microsoft PowerPoint - NPI Presentation - Kenora 25-07-08

¹⁶ Signal49 Research (Vicinity Jobs). Vicinity Jobs Labour Market Analytics Platform. Signal49 Research, 2026.

suggest growing demand for mining-related and heavy industrial activity across the Northwest to support future project expansion.¹⁷

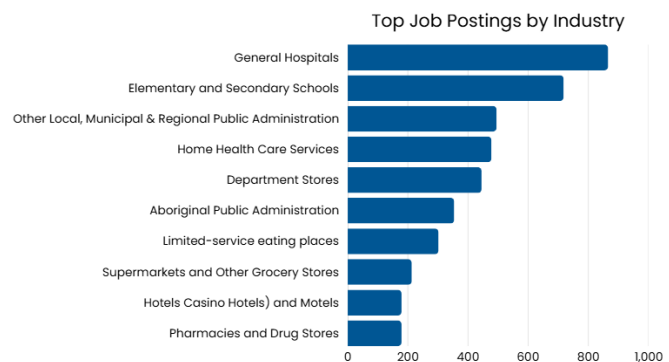


Across job postings in Northwestern Ontario, driving and safety credentials dominate baseline employer requirements. A full 30.3% of postings require a driver's license, making it the single most common credential by a wide margin, with commercial classes also present (AZ ~1.0%; DZ ~0.8%). In effect, nearly one in three job ads expects candidates to arrive license ready.

Safety and emergency readiness are also core requirements. Employers consistently request First Aid (~4.1%), CPR (~3.2%), and WHMIS (~2.1%), alongside site-specific safety training such as Working at Heights (~0.35%).

These credentials cut across sectors; from construction and industrial roles to customer-facing positions, reflecting a strong regional emphasis on workplace safety. Training programs that prioritize driver's licenses (including AZ/DZ), First Aid, CPR, WHMIS, and site-specific safety certifications will best position jobseekers to meet employers' clear baseline expectations across the Northwest.

Industry demand via postings remains broad-based and persistent, with general hospitals representing 5.9% of all job ads and home health care services 3.2%, supplemented by strong hiring in education (elementary and secondary schools) and public administration (municipal, regional, Indigenous).



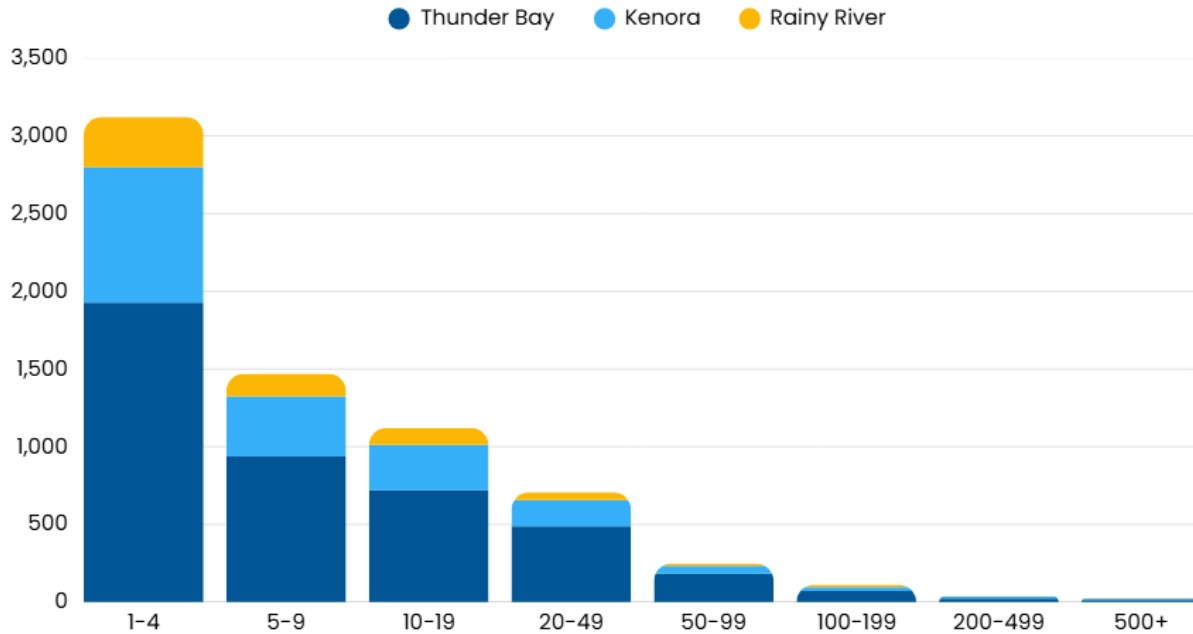
¹⁷ Signal49 Research (Vicinity Jobs). *Vicinity Jobs Labour Market Analytics Platform*. Signal49 Research, 2026.

Exploring Labour Market Trends, Northwest (Feb 2026):



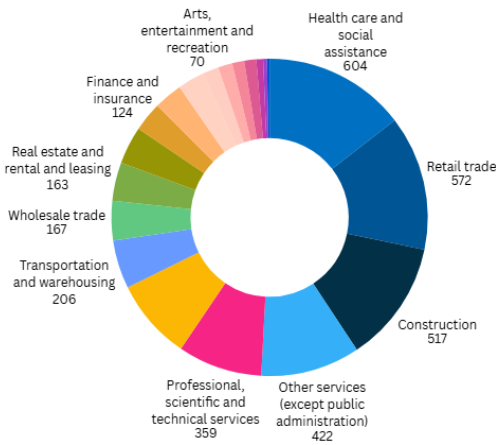
Business Counts by District

Employer Business Counts by Size (June 2025)¹⁸



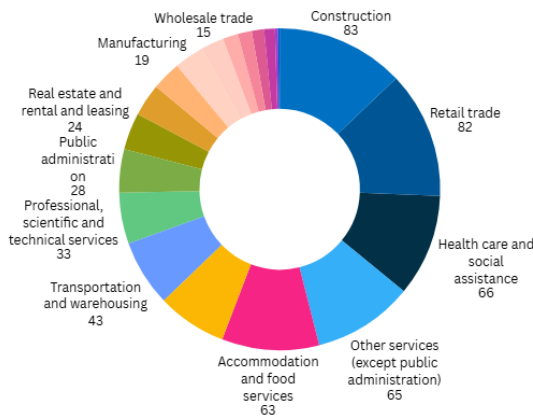
¹⁸ Statistics Canada. Table 33-10-1016-01 Canadian Business Counts, with employees, census metropolitan areas and census subdivisions, June 2025.

Thunder Bay District Total Businesses: 4,366



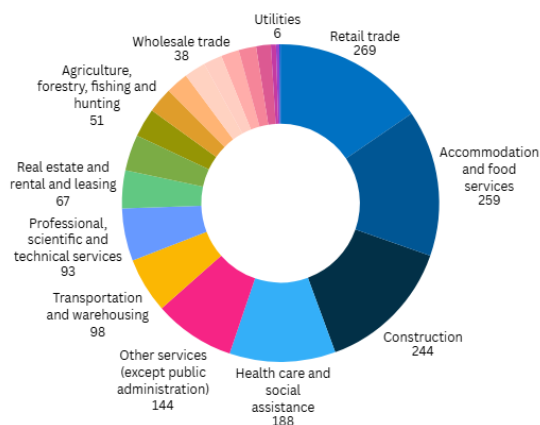
Health care & social assistance is the largest sector, ahead of retail and construction. The district exhibits a regional health services hub profile alongside strong retail and construction. Accommodation & food, transportation & warehousing, and wholesale support Thunder Bay's role as a distribution and service centre.

Rainy River District Total Businesses: 680



Construction and retail are nearly tied for largest sector shares, followed by health care & social assistance, other services, and accommodation & food. Agriculture/forestry/fishing/hunting and transportation & warehousing reflect the district's rural and resource-based character.

Kenora District Total Businesses: 1,910



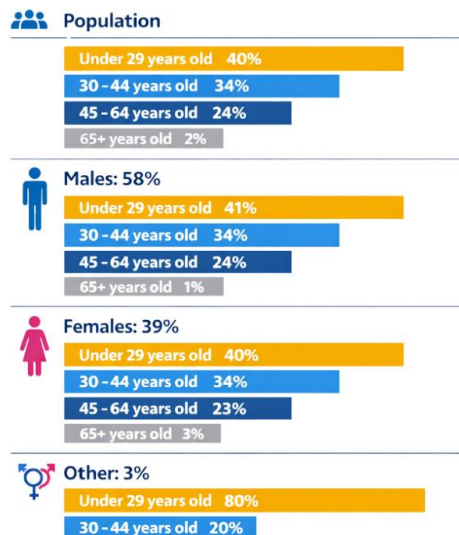
Retail, accommodation & food, and construction anchor a service/tourism-oriented economy with a strong trades base. Health care & social assistance and transportation & warehousing contribute meaningfully, with professional/technical services and real estate forming a diversified small enterprise ecosystem.

Workforce Pipeline & EO Program Participation

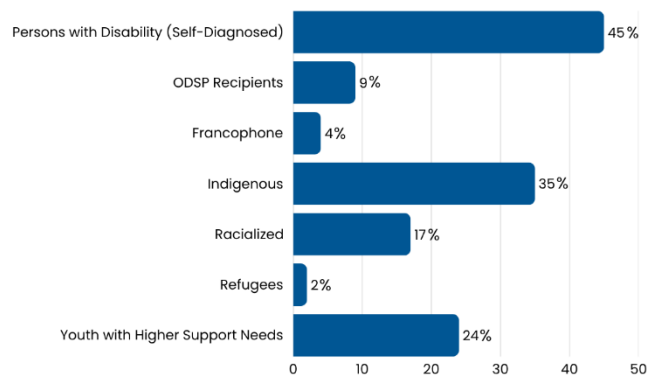
Employment Ontario (EO) Employment Services

From March 2025 to March 2026, EO clients show strong engagement with labour market opportunities; two top goal occupations closely align with outcomes, and wages in high-volume outcomes consistently exceed benchmarks. Retail appears less frequently among outcomes than among client goals. The client population served across the region reflects a dynamic and diverse demographic profile, with 40% under age 29, 34% aged 30–44, and strong participation across all age groups. Gender representation is similarly varied, comprising approximately 40% male, 39% female, and 3% gender diverse clients, with younger adults particularly well represented among gender diverse participants.

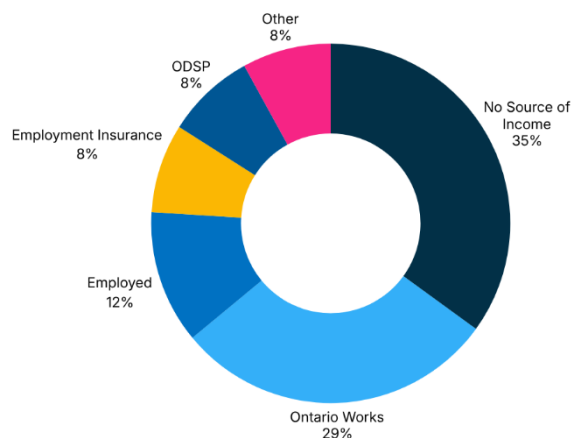
Demographic Breakdown



Specialty Populations



Income Source



A wide range of specialty populations engage with employment services, including Persons with Disabilities, Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) recipients, Francophone clients, Indigenous participants, Racialized communities, Refugees, and Youth with Higher Support Needs, illustrating the system’s broad reach and inclusivity. Socioeconomic indicators highlight both need and opportunity, with 35% of clients reporting no income and 28.8% supported by Ontario Works, emphasizing the essential role of employment and stabilization supports. Despite varied barriers across groups, many clients, particularly Francophone, Newcomer, and Racialized participants, achieve strong employment outcomes, demonstrating the effectiveness of targeted pathways. At the same time, clients facing more complex or structural challenges, including Indigenous participants and Persons with Disabilities, continue to make meaningful progress through coaching, skills

development, and wrap around supports. Together, these trends highlight the need for a service system that is increasingly responsive, adaptive, and capable of supporting diverse client journeys toward employment and greater stability.¹⁹

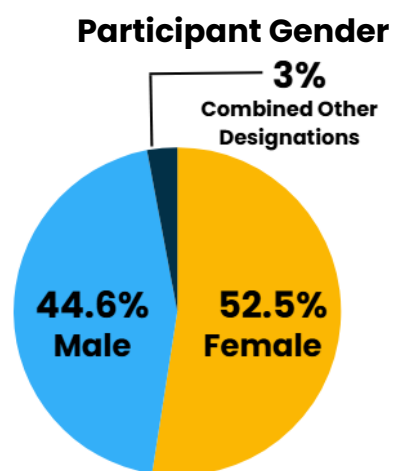
Top 3 Job Titles Goal	% of Market Share of NOC Goal	Average of Goal Hourly Wage	Actual Wage	Difference
Construction trades helpers and labourers	8.8%	\$ 20.81	22.04	\$ 1.23
Light duty cleaners	7.6%	\$ 17.95	19.5	\$ 1.55
Retail salespersons and visual merchandisers	6.5%	\$ 17.89	19.14	\$ 1.25

Top 3 Job NAIC Titles Outcome	% of Market Share of NAICS Industry	Average NAIC Goal Hourly Wage	Actual Wage	Difference
Construction trades helpers and labourers	6.1%	\$ 20.81	\$ 22.04	\$ 1.23
Light duty cleaners	5.3%	\$ 17.95	\$ 19.50	\$ 1.55
Food counter attendants, kitchen helpers and	4.7%	\$ 17.32	\$ 18.40	\$ 1.08

Top 3 Job NAIC Titles Outcome	% of Market Share of NAICS Industry	Average of EAP Outcome Wage
Supermarkets and other grocery retailers (except Convenience retailers)	5.2%	\$ 17.92
Full-Service Restaurants	4.9%	\$ 17.79
Gold and Silver Ore Mining	3.8%	\$ 30.97

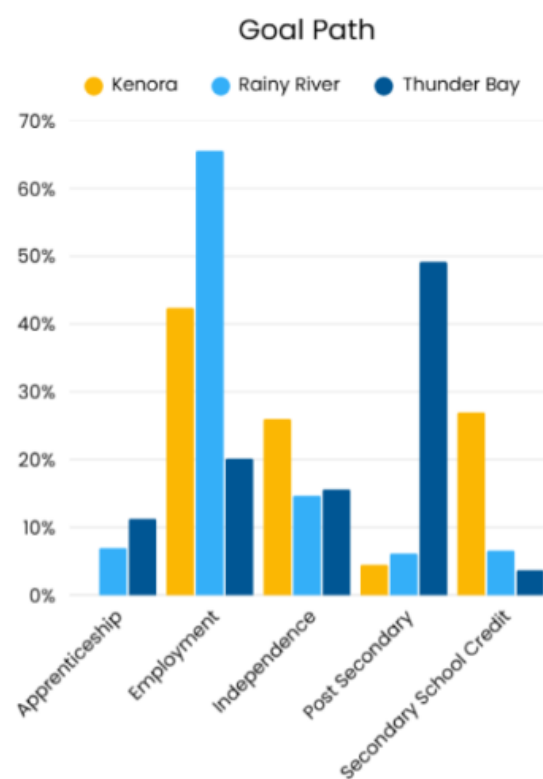
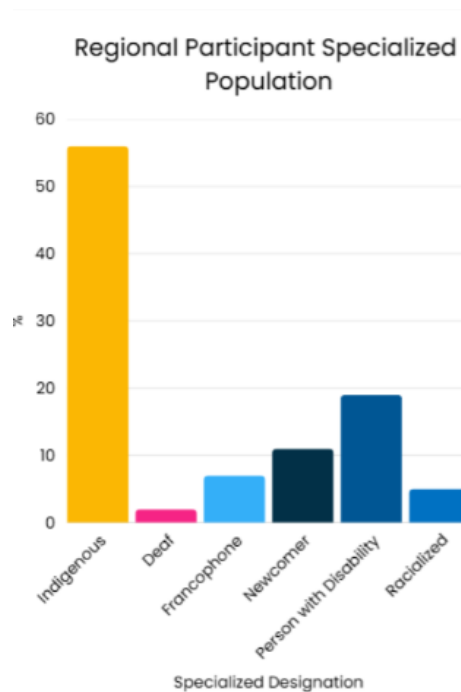
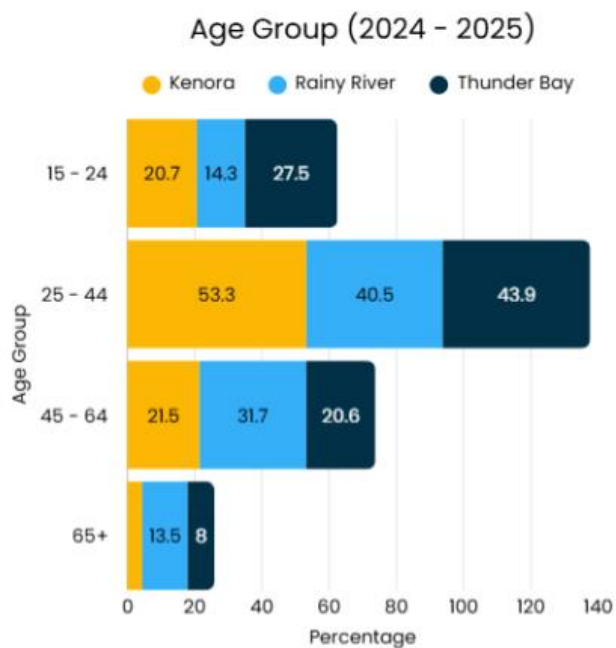
Get SET (formerly LBS)

Northwestern Ontario’s Get SET (formerly Literacy & Basics Skills) system is increasingly acting as both a buffer and a bridge in a labour market strained by structural change, tight labour supply, and shifting sector demands across the Thunder Bay, Kenora, and Rainy River Districts. Distinct demographic and participation patterns show varied learner needs. Rainy River has a strongly female-dominated population (69.4%), compared with a more balanced distribution in Thunder Bay and a male plurality in Kenora. Age profiles also differ: Thunder Bay has the youngest cohort with the highest share of learners aged 15–24; Rainy River has the greatest age diversity, including the highest proportion aged 65+; and Kenora is concentrated in the 25–44 range, reflecting a predominantly working age group.



Designated group representation varies even more sharply. Kenora has exceptionally high Indigenous representation (77.7%). Rainy River shows a contrasting pattern, with the highest share of Newcomers (36.1%) and minimal representation across other groups. Thunder Bay is the most diverse overall, with notable proportions of Francophone learners (10.6%), Persons with Disabilities (21.5%), and the region’s only identified Deaf participants. These differences reflect distinct cultural, linguistic, and accessibility needs across districts.

¹⁹ ESCases. *EmployNext - ESCases IES Dashboard*. 1 March 2026. Report. 1 March 2026. <https://employnext.escases.ca/app/report/ies-dashboard>.



Learner goals also diverge. Nearly two-thirds of Rainy River learners pursue Employment pathways, indicating a labour market-oriented profile. Thunder Bay is largely education-focused, with almost half pursuing Postsecondary goals and leading Apprenticeship participation. Kenora has the most balanced distribution, including the highest share working toward Secondary School Credit. Together, these patterns show that while the districts share a common mandate, their learner populations and goals are highly diverse. This diversity presents an opportunity to strengthen the regional talent pipeline through place-based approaches that improve employment outcomes and better equip learners to succeed in their local economies.

Source: Literacy Northwest Data Report 2024-2025

Apprenticeship—Current Snapshot

The workforce pipeline in the trades is improving but still short of replacement: Thunder Bay District has 1,519 active apprentices and 151 Certificates of Apprenticeship (2024–25); Kenora District has ~360 active apprentices (56 Certificates), and Rainy River District has ~150 (29 Certificates).²⁰ In Kenora and Rainy River specifically, many core trades are already skewing older—10 of 18 mining and 21 of 40 construction occupations in Kenora, and 5 of 9 mining and 5 of 11 construction in Rainy River have $\geq 20\%$ of workers aged 50+ (2021 Census). In Thunder Bay the overall age structure is older, reinforcing backfill needs as retirements rise.

To shorten time-to-hire, there is an emphasis on expanding micro-credentials, modular program design, and work-integrated learning, while strengthening Indigenous workforce participation, newcomer labour market integration, and youth entry pathways.

²⁰ Northwest Training and Adjustment Board (NTAB). 2026–2029 Local Labour Market Plan Report: Kenora and Rainy River Districts. Dryden, ON: NTAB, 2026.
North Superior Workforce Planning Board (NSWPB). Thunder Bay Labour Market Report — February 2026. Thunder Bay, ON: NSWPB, 2026.

Future State Outlook

Future Economic Conditions

Real GDP in the Northwest is projected to reach ~\$14.1B by 2030, implying ~1.4% average real growth per year, broadly consistent with Ontario’s trend²¹. Risks remain tied to external trade conditions, which continue to pressure forestry and manufacturing. Persistent labour shortages are a structural drag: ~5,100 average quarterly vacancies in 2024 alongside ~4–5% unemployment imply too few available workers, with ~\$0.7B in foregone GDP in Northwestern Ontario and nearly 4% GDP reduction across the broader North due to labour gaps.²² Monetary policy remains a secondary headwind/tailwind depending on financing conditions (policy rate 2.25% held Jan 28, 2026; MPR signals modest growth under trade uncertainty).

Sector Drivers & Headwinds

- Mining & local services. Ongoing mine operations and advanced exploration (e.g., Rainy River Mine; Drayton Black Lake) support direct jobs and drive demand in accommodation, food services, and local services.
- Power & related builds. Preparations and training tied to the power line development (E.g. Waasigan) are expected to support construction period employment and modest services tail as work proceeds.
- Forestry/manufacturing shocks & tariffs. Trade frictions weigh on parts of wholesale and administrative/support services; Interfor’s Ear Falls sawmill idled (Oct 2025) and other curtailments (e.g., Domtar’s Ignace mill idling; Thunder Bay Pulp and Paper newsprint shutdown) are sending localized shocks through supply chains and contractors. The Regional Tariff Response Initiative is being used locally to help affected firms adjust.

Rank	NAICS Industry (2_digit)	2025–2035 CAGR (real)
1	Accommodation & Food Services (72)	3.2% – 4.0%
2	Mining, Quarrying & Oil & Gas Extraction (21)	2.6% – 3.4%
3	Other Services, ex. Public Admin (81)	2.3% – 3.0%
—	Total, all industries	1.6% – 2.0%
Bottom 3	Wholesale Trade (41)	0.1% – 0.7%
	Administrative & Support, Waste Mgmt. &	0.0% – 0.6%
	Management of Companies & Enterprises (55)	–0.2% – 0.4%

Sources: Ontario Ministry of Finance; Financial Accountability Office of Ontario (FAO)

²¹ Forecast based on EmployNext calculations Note: Calculations made in January 2026

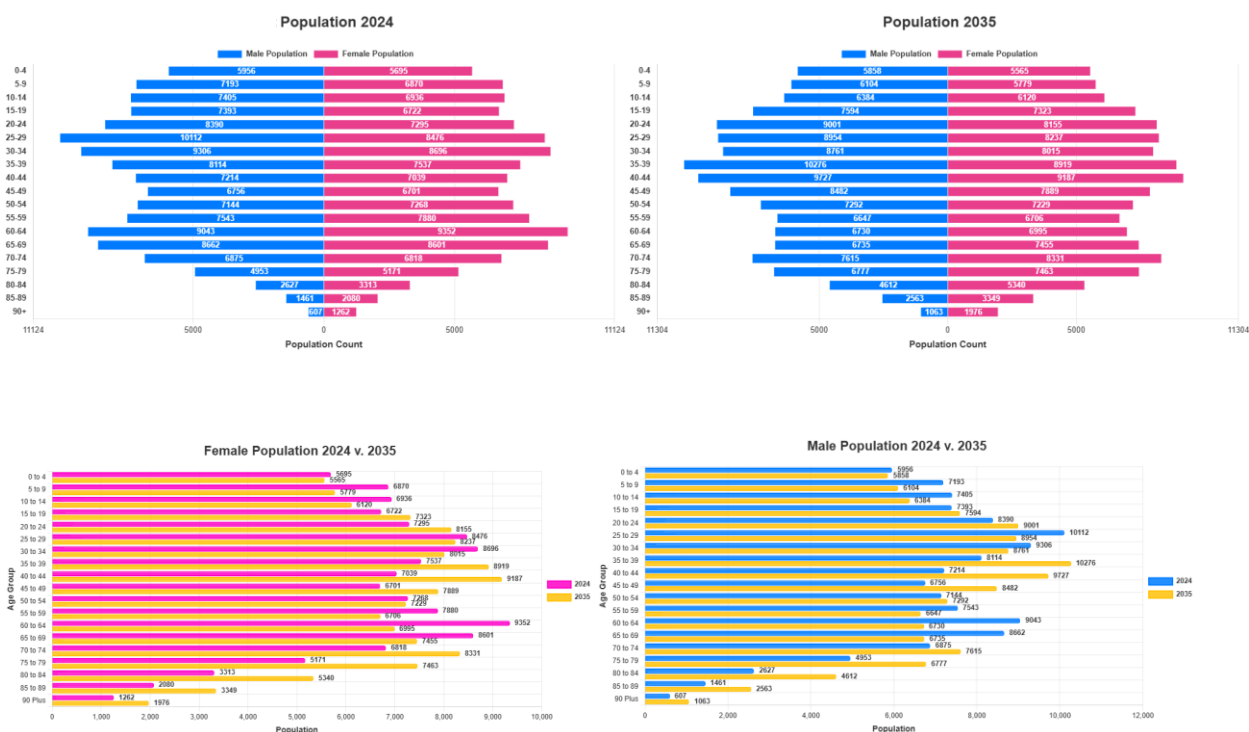
²² [NORTHERN ECONOMIST 2.0: Measuring the Cost of Labour Shortages in Ontario's North](#)

Demographic Trends

Regional population growth will remain modest and migration led, with newcomers and a comparatively large Indigenous youth cohort contributing to future growth. In contrast, natural increase continues to decline, particularly in Thunder Bay where births remain below deaths; immigration and nonpermanent residents increasingly offset this gap. The RNIP ended Aug 31, 2024; the RCIP now operates only in the City of Thunder Bay, concentrating newcomer pathways in the region and reinforcing the need for sustained attraction and retention efforts as aging accelerates and dependency ratios rise.

Population projections indicate a gradual long-term decline across the Northwest of ~0.4% per year (2021–2035); approximately a 5% overall contraction with slower decline in Thunder Bay (~ -0.3%/yr) and more pronounced losses in Rainy River (~ -1.1%/yr); Kenora declines ~ -0.4%/yr.

Population Charts - Pyramid 2024 vs. 2035



Source: Sources: Statistics Canada for 2024 and Ontario Ministry of Finance projections (Summer 2025).

Federal policy changes will lower permanent resident admissions and set temporary resident (TR) targets to reduce NPRs to ~5% of Canada’s population by end 2026, implying softer net migration in 2025–2027 for Ontario and the Northwest before normalization later

in the decade. This is expected to amplify aging and geographic imbalances, with pockets of elevated dependency ratios across communities in Thunder Bay, Kenora, and Rainy River.²³

Future labour force maintenance requirement: The region needs roughly 2,000 net migrants per year to sustain its workforce; current allocations and newcomer retention remain below this threshold.

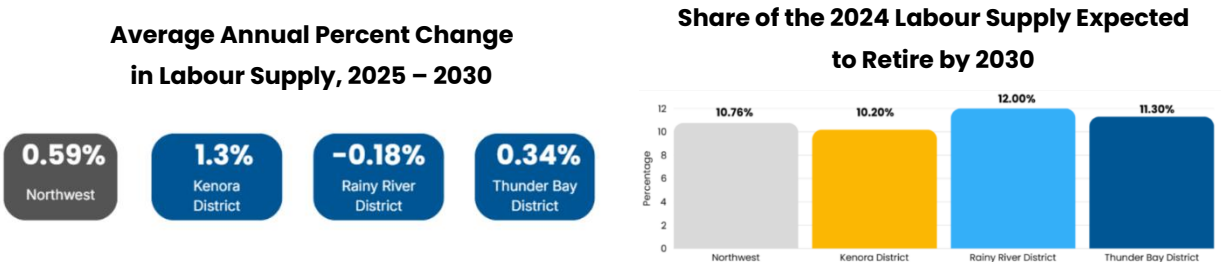
Labour Supply Outlook

Demographic & Retirement Outlook, 2024–2036

In 2026, the Northwest continues to operate in a tight labour market, with labour supply growing more slowly than employer demand across all three districts. NTAB’s 2026–2029 LLMP identifies limited growth in the number of employers with paid employees, even as total business counts rise, indicating that much of the region’s labour force pressure is driven by replacement hiring rather than expansion. Youth outmigration and an aging workforce further restrict local labour availability, particularly in rural communities across the Kenora and Rainy River Districts.²⁴

While Thunder Bay District is expected to see the largest supply increase in 2026 due to a higher concentration of training institutions and urban amenities, NSWPB’s 2026 updates confirm that employers continue to struggle to fill roles in health care, trades, and transportation despite modest labour force growth. Labour supply in Kenora District shows slight gains, while Rainy River District is projected to continue experiencing supply contraction linked to demographic decline.²⁵

Across the Districts, fewer school leavers and increasing retirements reduce the flow of new entrants into the labour force. These demographic dynamics contribute to sustained tightness through 2026 and beyond, with health care, skilled trades, community services, and transportation expected to face the most significant supply constraints.



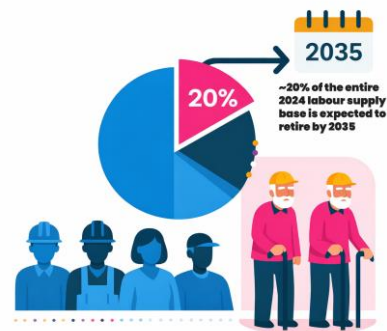
Source: Forecast Calculation from EmployNext; Vicinity Jobs Forecast Data

²³ Canada, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship. 2025–2027 Immigration Levels Plan. Government of Canada, 24 Oct. 2024, <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2024/10/20252027-immigration-levels-plan.html>.

²⁴ Northwest Training and Adjustment Board (NTAB). 2026–2029 Local Labour Market Plan — District-Level Indicators & Demographic Profiles. Dryden, ON: NTAB, 2026.

²⁵ North Superior Workforce Planning Board (NSWPB). Thunder Bay Labour Market Report — February 2026. Thunder Bay, ON: NSWPB, 2026.

Across the Northwest until 2030, labour supply growth is modest and uneven, with Kenora and Thunder Bay districts seeing slight gains, Rainy River experiencing a small decline, and all districts facing notable retirement pressures by 2030. Based on standard retirement assumptions (100% of workers aged 60–64 and 90% of those aged 55–59 retiring), approximately 20% of the entire 2024 labour-supply base is expected to retire by 2035, with total retirements ranging from ~19% to ~21% across conservative and aggressive

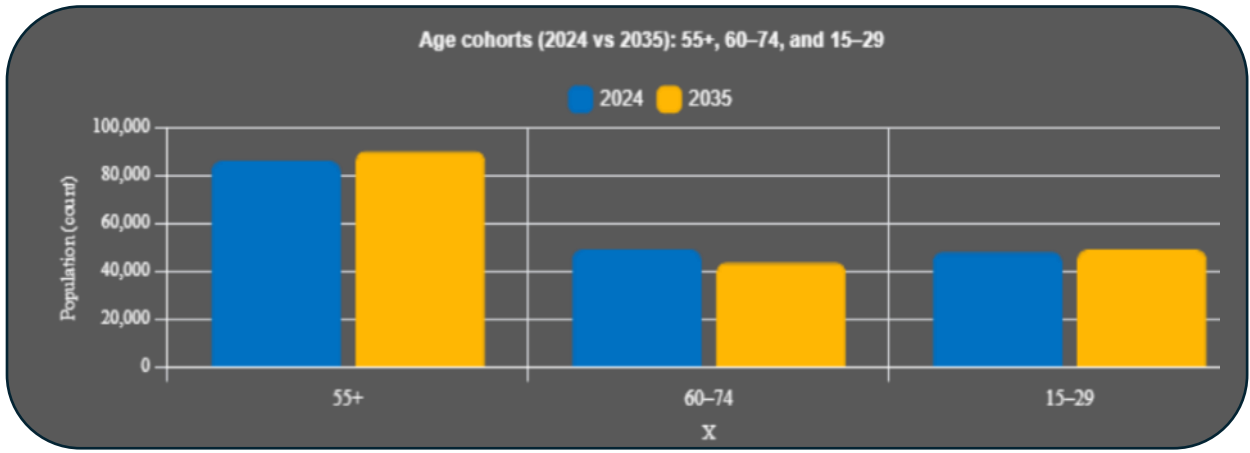


scenarios. These departures will be felt unevenly across the Northwestern region, with smaller districts, such as Rainy River, already facing declining populations, absorbing proportionally larger losses in experienced workers. The scale and pace of these retirements heighten the urgency of succession planning, knowledge transfer strategies, and active recruitment efforts across healthcare, trades, community services, education, and resource sector occupations.

Projections show the ‘School Leavers’ cohort increasing steadily: by 2029, the number of 17–18 year olds is expected to reach 6,286 (Females 3,049; Males 3,237), and by 2035 the cohort grows further to 6,526 (Females 3,216; Males 3,310), representing a 6.3% increase by 2029 and 10.4% by 2035 relative to 2025. Over time, the male share of these school leavers gradually declines from 52.3% (2025) to 50.7% (2035), indicating a narrowing gender gap in the future entrant pipeline. With 5,912 school leavers in 2025 growing to 6,526 by 2035, the entrant pipeline will continue to expand, gradually narrowing gender gaps and supporting early career labour demand. Yet demographic decline, outmigration, and the concentration of retirements in smaller districts mean that labour market pressures will remain unevenly distributed across the Northwest.

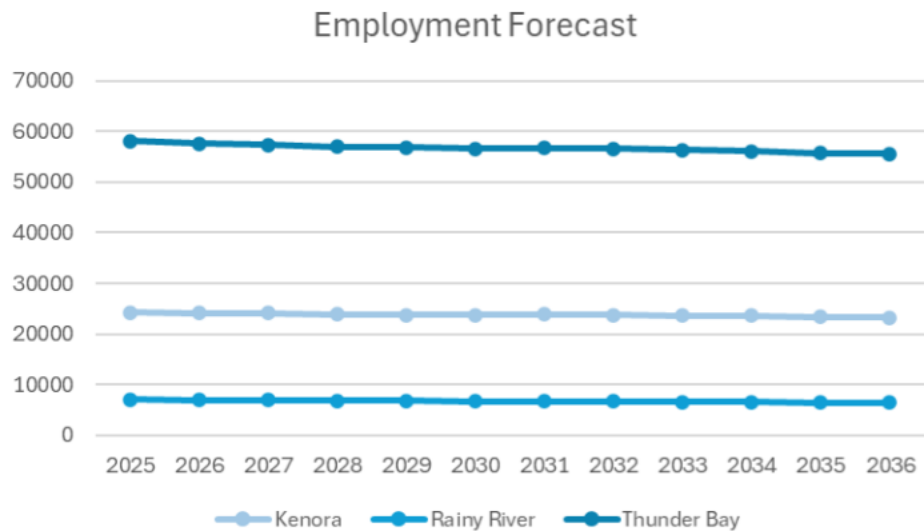
Taken together, Northwestern Ontario’s demographic and labour supply dynamics point toward a future defined by overall population decline but significant internal restructuring of the workforce. While the region is projected to contract by roughly 5% between 2021 and 2035, with steeper losses in districts like Rainy River, the 2024–2036 cohort projections reveal important countercurrents: growth in the 15–24 (+2,273) and 25–54 (+8,605) age groups, and a notable reduction in the older 55–64 cohort (–6,740). These transitions suggest that the region will benefit from a younger and more replenished labour pool than previously expected, even as it faces the reality that one in five current workers is poised to retire over the next decade.²⁶

²⁶ Signal49 Research (Vicinity Jobs). Vicinity Jobs Labour Market Analytics Platform. Signal49 Research, 2026.



Labour Demand Outlook

Hiring is expected to remain persistently high across the outlook, driven by major project activity, an aging workforce, and sustained vacancies. Employers continue to post strong demand in health care, retail, manufacturing, education, transportation, and accommodation & food services, with mining and construction expected to drive additional job growth. Forecasts to 2035 project continued hiring pressure and recruitment challenges across districts.



Source: Vicinity Jobs Data

Sectors with strongest demand pressure, 2026

- **Health care & social assistance** — strongest ongoing demand: Ongoing population aging increases demand for nurses, PSWs, and community care roles; nationwide shortages persist.
- **Construction & skilled trades** — project-driven growth: Continued project activity (e.g., Thunder Bay Correctional Complex build; regional infrastructure upgrades) sustains demand, but many trades already have a high share of 50+ workers, intensifying replacement needs.
- **Retail** — steady throughput hiring
- **Education** — consistent demand for classroom support roles
- **Accommodation & food services** — seasonal and operational demand
- **Mining & related services** - Operating mines and advanced exploration support direct and indirect employment across districts.

(Compiled from NTAB 2026 indicators and NSWPB 2026 releases)





Photo: Jaime Dantas

A Workforce for the Future

Navigating Regional Change

Local Labour Market Plan 2025 – 2026

Limitations

The North Superior Workforce Planning Board (NSWPB) recognizes the potential limitations inherent in this local labour market report and is dedicated to addressing areas that may require further analysis and action. The data presented in this report reflects the most current and accurate information available as of the publication date. This document may be freely cited or reproduced, provided that appropriate attribution is made to the NSWPB as the source. However, the NSWPB assumes no liability for any consequences resulting from errors or omissions contained within this report.



This Employment Ontario project is funded in part by the Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario.

Executive Summary

For over 28 years, the North Superior Workforce Planning Board (NSWPB) has been a cornerstone organization dedicated to addressing workforce development needs across the Thunder Bay District. As one of Ontario's 26 workforce planning boards, NSWPB plays a critical role in fostering a skilled, inclusive, and sustainable labour market through strategic collaboration with employers, industry associations, educational institutions, and community organizations. The board's mission is to address regional economic and workforce challenges while empowering both individuals and businesses to thrive in a dynamic labour market.

At the core of NSWPB's mandate is comprehensive labour market research, which offers valuable insights into employment trends, workforce gaps, and sectoral challenges. This research spans key industries such as mining, forestry, healthcare, construction, and services, ensuring that policymakers, businesses, and educators have the necessary data to make informed workforce planning decisions. These insights enable the region to proactively address labour shortages and emerging opportunities, fostering long-term economic resilience.

A fundamental pillar of NSWPB's work is promoting workforce inclusivity, with a dedicated focus on supporting Indigenous peoples, youth, newcomers, women, and visible minorities. The board spearheads aimed at reducing barriers to employment, fostering cultural awareness, and enhancing diversity within the workforce. By addressing systemic challenges and advocating for inclusive hiring practices, NSWPB plays a vital role in strengthening both the social and economic fabric of the region.

In addition to inclusivity, NSWPB champions innovative workforce solutions tailored to the unique needs of Thunder Bay and its surrounding communities. Through targeted programs and strategic partnerships, the board ensures that individuals from all backgrounds have access to meaningful employment opportunities, career advancement resources, and skills development programs.

NSWPB collaborates closely with businesses, post-secondary institutions, and government agencies to develop and implement industry-specific training programs. In partnership with the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development (MLITSD) and local training institutions, the board has played a pivotal role in supporting modular and apprenticeship training programs in high-demand fields such as mining, forestry, and the skilled trades. These programs ensure that workers get the specialized skills and certifications needed to excel in critical sectors that drive regional economic growth.

Recognizing the importance of immigration in addressing labour shortages, NSWPB actively supports immigration-focused workforce development strategies. By using initiatives such as Ontario's Regional Economic Development through Immigration Pilot (REDI) and Canada's Rural Community Immigration Pilot (RCIP), the Board facilitates employer connections with skilled newcomers while ensuring their smooth integration into the local labour market. These initiatives contribute to a more diverse and resilient workforce, enhancing economic sustainability across the region.

Youth workforce development remains a strategic priority for NSWPB. The board supports career exploration workshops, mentorship programs, and work-integrated learning initiatives to equip young professionals with the skills and experience needed for career success. By fostering strong school-to-work transitions, these programs help keep young talent within the region, addressing workforce sustainability challenges while ensuring that the next generation of professionals contributes to region's economic growth.

NSWPB envisions a resilient, dynamic, and inclusive workforce that drives long-term economic prosperity in the Thunder Bay District. By leveraging data-driven research, innovative programming, and strategic partnerships, the board continues to bridge labour market gaps, enhance workforce competitiveness, and shape policies that support sustainable economic development.

Vision

A strategically aligned labour force to meet demands across Northwestern Ontario.

Mission

Engaging community partners in leading collaborative workforce development planning. The North Superior Workforce Planning Board will:

- Build a strategic workforce readiness plan.
- Create a dynamic, responsive process to satisfy current needs and prepare people for emerging labour market opportunities within a global economy.
- Leverage community alliances to maximize labour market capacity and competitiveness.

Mandate

Leading in the creation of innovative labour market solutions by:

- Providing authoritative and evidence-based research.
- Identifying employment trends.

- Targeting workforce opportunities.
- Initiating workforce development strategies.

NSWPB, Board of Directors

Brent Boyko	Joesph Antony
David Farrell, Chair	Ken Miller
Doris Rossi	Lorna Hunda
Emily Willson	Roger Shott
Jesse Traer	Ryan Moore
John DeGiacomo, Vice Chair	



Acknowledgements

The development of the 2025–2026 Local Labour Market Plan for the NSWPB catchment area has been shaped by the invaluable input of many community stakeholders. We deeply appreciate the time, expertise, and perspectives shared by individuals and organizations, which have been instrumental in crafting a plan that reflects our current realities within an ever-evolving social and economic landscape. We also extend our gratitude to the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development of Ontario, whose support has been essential in addressing local labour market challenges and opportunities.

Land Acknowledgement

NSWPB respectfully acknowledges the First Peoples whose traditional territories we live and work. We are grateful for the privilege of having our office situated on these lands and extend our gratitude to all generations who have cared for this land.

The NSWPB office is in the City of Thunder Bay, situated on Robinson-Superior Treaty territory, the traditional land of the Anishinaabeg and Fort William First Nation. Our service area encompasses more than forty communities, each home to diverse First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples. NSWPB recognizes and values the deep historical connection these communities have to their territories. We stand in support of their efforts to sustain and grow their nations, while also honoring the significant contributions they have made in shaping and strengthening local communities, the province, and Canada as a whole.

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Thunder Bay District

The Thunder Bay District, Northwestern Ontario's largest by land area, is distinguished by its diverse landscapes and strategic role as a regional center for commerce, healthcare, and education. While historically anchored in the forestry and mining sectors, the district's economy has evolved to encompass healthcare, education, transportation, technology, and tourism, reflecting a dynamic and diversified economic landscape.

A key characteristic of the region is its significant Indigenous population, whose cultural and economic contributions are integral to the district's identity and development. Their involvement in resource management, entrepreneurship, and governance enhances regional economic sustainability while fostering a deeper commitment to reconciliation and inclusive growth.

Despite its economic strengths, the District faces demographic and labour market challenges, including an aging population, youth outmigration, and workforce shortages. To address these issues, strategic initiatives such as targeted immigration programs, workforce development strategies, and infrastructure investments have been implemented to stimulate population growth, enhance labour market participation, and sustain long-term economic prosperity.

As the region continues to adapt to emerging economic opportunities and workforce needs, the Thunder Bay District remains a critical driver of Northwestern Ontario's economic resilience, innovation, and cultural vibrancy.

Economic Snapshot of the District of Thunder Bay

The Thunder Bay District's economy is shaped by a mix of public services, resource-based industries, transportation, and a growing set of knowledge and institutional sectors, creating a labour market that is diverse but still anchored by some major employers. Employment growth is strongest in health care, social services, construction, transportation, and the skilled trades, while retail, hospitality, and service roles continue to generate a high volume of lower-wage, high-turnover jobs. Unemployment in the region typically trends slightly above the provincial average due to structural factors such as slower population growth, seasonal employment patterns, and the cyclical nature of resource-based industries; however, labour shortages in key occupations particularly health care, trades, and transportation mean that unemployment and job vacancies often coexist.

Projections suggest that unemployment will remain relatively stable or gradually decline as retirements accelerate and labour supply tightens, though pockets of higher unemployment may persist in rural areas or sectors undergoing technological change. Economic development

efforts continue to focus on strengthening value-added forestry and mining activity, expanding logistics and transportation capacity, supporting tourism and Indigenous economic partnerships, and leveraging post-secondary institutions to grow research, training, and innovation.

Tariffs and trade disruptions remain a risk for export-oriented industries such as forestry, manufacturing, and construction, where higher input costs or reduced market access can affect investment and employment. Population aging, limited immigration, and ongoing out-migration of young adults continue to shape the region’s long-term outlook, with labour shortages likely to intensify unless offset by stronger attraction, retention, and training strategies. Overall, Thunder Bay’s future growth will depend on its ability to manage demographic constraints, stabilize, and modernize its traditional economic base, and steadily build new opportunities in services, knowledge sectors, and value-added production.

Population Growth¹ (Chart 1, Chart 2, Table 1)

Thunder Bay’s population has grown slowly over the past decade, rising from 125,176 in 2014 to 133,063 in 2024, an increase of just 6.3 percent. Beneath this modest growth, however, the city’s age structure is shifting dramatically. The number of children has remained unchanged, increasing by only 0.6 percent, which signals a long-term challenge for school enrolment and future labour supply. The core working-age population has grown by just 1.5 percent, and even that small increase is due to recent gains after several years of decline.

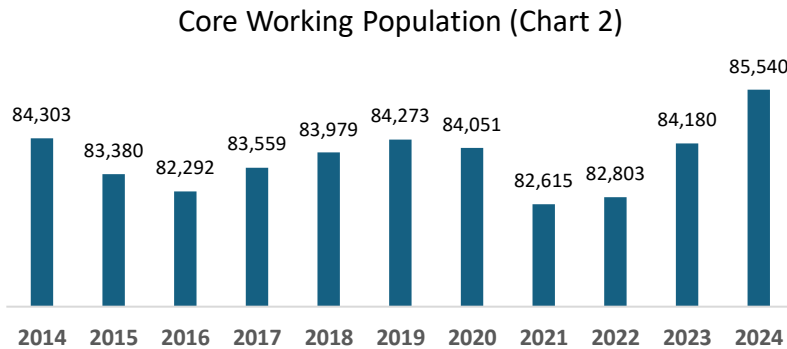
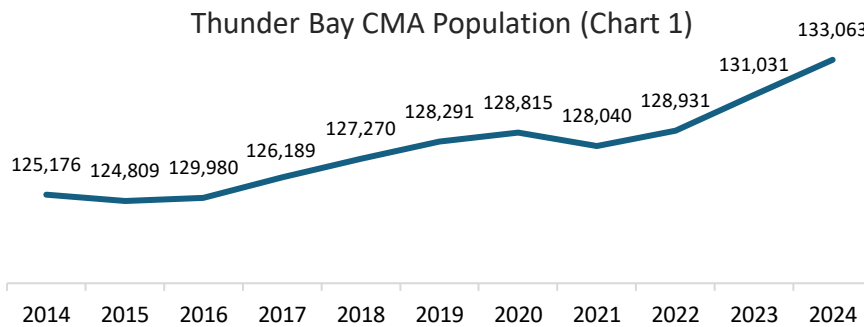


Table 1

Municipality	2006	2011	2016	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Thunder Bay CMA	127,038	124,912	124,980	128,040	129,009	131,123	133,305	133,765
Thunder Bay	109140	108359	107909	108843	NA	NA	NA	NA
Oliver Paipoonge	5757	5732	5922	6035	NA	NA	NA	NA
Shuniah	2913	2737	2798	3247	NA	NA	NA	NA
Neebing	2184	1986	2055	2241	NA	NA	NA	NA
Conmee	740	764	819	798	NA	NA	NA	NA
O'Connor	720	685	663	689	NA	NA	NA	NA
Gillies	544	473	474	441	NA	NA	NA	NA
Greenstone	4906	4724	4636	4309	NA	NA	NA	NA
Nipigon	1752	1631	1642	1473	NA	NA	NA	NA
Terrace Bay	1625	1471	1611	1528	NA	NA	NA	NA
Red Rock	1063	942	895	895	NA	NA	NA	NA
Marathon	3863	3353	3273	3138	NA	NA	NA	NA
Manitouwadge	2300	2105	1937	1974	NA	NA	NA	NA
Dorion	379	338	316	375	NA	NA	NA	NA
Total	137,886	135,300	134,950	135,986	129,009	131,123	133,305	133,765

Population Profile Change² (Chart 3)

Thunder Bay's 2023/2024 population change was shaped almost entirely by migration patterns, with non-permanent residents emerging as the dominant driver of growth. At the same time, the community continued to shrink through natural decline, as deaths significantly outnumbered births. This combination of strong international inflows but persistent natural decrease reflects a demographic profile characterized by an aging population, low fertility, and a diminishing share of younger residents.

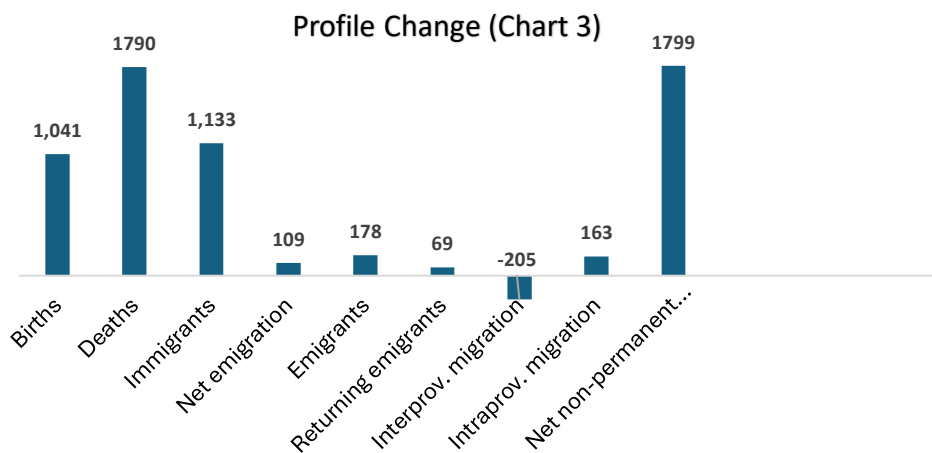
Natural population change remained firmly negative. In 2023/2024, the city recorded 1,041 births compared with 1,790 deaths, resulting in a natural decrease of 749 people. This ongoing loss is not a one-year anomaly, but part of a long-term trend tied to structural demographic factors. Thunder Bay has relatively few women in their peak child-bearing years, and fertility rates remain low. Meanwhile, the large cohort of older adults continues to push deaths upward. As a result, natural decline is expected to remain a major demographic challenge for the foreseeable future.

Migration was the only factor offsetting this decline, and even then, the composition of migration has shifted dramatically. Thunder Bay welcomed 1,133 new immigrants, but the most significant change came from the surge in non-permanent residents (NPRs). The city added 1,799 NPRs international students, temporary foreign workers, and asylum claimants making them the single largest source of population growth. Their numbers now exceed those of permanent immigrants and far surpass gains or losses from internal migration. This marks a notable shift in how the region grows, with temporary residents playing an increasingly central role.

Internal migration produced mixed results. The CMA experienced a net loss of 205 people to other provinces, continuing a long-standing pattern of out-migration to larger urban centres. However, this was partially offset by a gain of 163 people from within Ontario, suggesting that

Thunder Bay still attracts some movement from other parts of the province, even if it cannot fully counterbalance interprovincial losses. Emigration had only a modest impact: after accounting for returning emigrants, the net loss was 109 people.

Taken together, these trends show that Thunder Bay’s population growth now depends heavily on international mobility, particularly temporary residents while natural decrease and interprovincial out-migration continue to exert downward pressure. The region’s demographic structure, shaped by aging and low fertility, means natural decline will remain high in the coming years. This growing reliance on external inflows highlights both the opportunities and vulnerabilities in Thunder Bay’s population dynamics: while international arrivals can sustain short-term growth, long-term stability will require addressing the underlying demographic imbalance.



Demographic Dependency Ratio (DDR)⁴ (Table 2, Table 3)

The senior population has surged by 28.6 percent, making older adults the fastest-growing demographic group in the region. As a result, the total number of dependents children plus seniors has risen by 16.3 percent, driven entirely by aging rather than youth growth. These changes have pushed Thunder Bay’s dependency-to-worker ratio upward from 0.48 in 2014 to 0.56 in 2024, meaning there are now fifty-six dependents for every one hundred working-age adults. This rising ratio reflects increasing pressure on the labour force, municipal finances, and social services. The rapid growth of the senior population, especially those over seventy-five, will intensify demand for healthcare, long-term care, and accessible housing, while the stagnant number of children and limited growth in working-age adults point to future labour shortages and potential economic constraints.

Thunder Bay District Demographic Dependency Ratio (Table 2)

Group	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	% Change 2014-24
Children	17,966	17,925	17,971	17,950	18,029	18,031	18,034	18,048	17,991	18,003	18,069	0.6
Core Work	84,303	83,380	82,952	83,559	83,937	84,273	84,051	82,615	82,803	84,180	85,540	1.5
Seniors	22,907	23,504	24,057	24,680	25,304	25,987	26,730	27,377	28,137	28,848	29,454	28.6
Dependen	40,873	41,429	42,028	42,630	43,333	44,018	44,764	45,425	46,128	46,851	47,523	16.3
Total	125,176	124,809	124,980	126,189	127,270	128,291	128,815	128,040	128,931	131,031	133,063	6.3
DDR	0.48	0.51	0.51	0.52	0.52	0.52	0.53	0.54	0.55	0.56	0.56	14

(Table 3)

Municipality	DDR
Shuniah	0.71
Conmee	0.51
O'Connor	0.57
Gillies	0.54
Greenstone	0.61
Nipigon	0.75
Red Rock	0.74
Marathon	0.46
Manitouwadge	0.61
Dorion	0.71
Schrieber	0.59
Pic River First Nation	0.62
Pic Mober First Nation	0.54
Fort Willam First Nation	0.59

The District population is aging, increasing the dependency burden and reshaping the region’s economic, social, and infrastructure needs. Low natural increase, persistent out-migration, and rising senior shares are reducing the size of the working-age population while expanding demand for health care, housing supports, and age-friendly services. At the same time, fewer young adults and families may strain school enrolment, workforce renewal, and long-term growth unless stronger attraction and retention efforts take hold. These shifts represent a structural demographic transition that will influence planning, service delivery, and regional competitiveness well into the future.

Regional Unemployment Analysis (2021–2025)⁵ (Chart 4, Table 4)

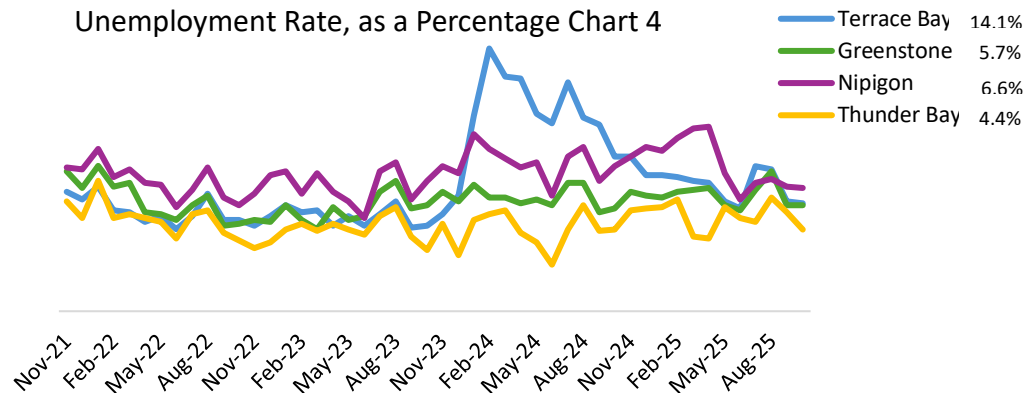
Unemployment trends across the four municipalities show a region with low but volatile labour-market conditions, shaped by small populations, seasonal industries, and shifting economic activity. Thunder Bay consistently maintains the lowest and most stable unemployment rate, while the three smaller municipalities—Terrace Bay, Greenstone, and Nipigon—experience higher variability and sharper swings.

Thunder Bay shows the strongest labour-market performance throughout the period. From late 2021 through 2025, unemployment often sits between 3% and 6%, with several months dipping below 4%. This stability reflects a more diversified economy, larger labour force, and less sensitivity to single-industry fluctuations. Even when unemployment rises temporarily—such as early 2024 and mid-2025 the increases are modest compared to surrounding communities.

Greenstone maintains a mid-range unemployment profile, between 5% and 7%, with small month-to-month changes. Its labour market appears steadier than Terrace Bay or Nipigon, due to ongoing mining, construction, and public-sector employment. While there are occasional peaks (e.g., early 2024 and mid-2025), the overall pattern is one of moderate, predictable unemployment. Terrace Bay shows the most dramatic volatility. After stable rates around 5–6% through 2022, unemployment spikes sharply in early 2024, reaching 14.1%, followed by several months above 10%. These swings suggest exposure to major employment shocks tied to mill operations, industrial downtime, or seasonal layoffs. Although the rate gradually declines through 2024 and 2025, it remains elevated compared to earlier years, showing a slower recovery.

Nipigon consistently records the highest unemployment rate among the four municipalities. Rates often range from 7% to 10%, with several peaks above 9% in 2024 and 2025. The pattern suggests a labour market heavily influenced by seasonal work, limited employer diversity, and sensitivity to small changes in labour demand. Even when unemployment falls temporarily, it rarely drops below 6%, pointing to structural challenges.

Across the region, the data reveals a clear hierarchy: Thunder Bay as the stable economic anchor; Greenstone with moderate, steady unemployment; and Terrace Bay and Nipigon showing significant volatility tied to smaller, more concentrated local economies. The sharp spikes in Terrace Bay and persistent high rates in Nipigon highlight the vulnerability of small northern municipalities to industry cycles, workforce shifts, and seasonal employment patterns.



Municipality	Unemployment Rate
Manitouwadge	13.2
Marathon	6.9
Schreiber	7.3
Red Rock	7.4
Dorion	9.4

Table 4

Sector Growth: Employment in the Northwest region grew by 6.0% year-over-year as of December 2025, adding roughly 6,200 jobs. **Mining Impact:** Communities like Marathon and Manitouwadge are heavily influenced by the Generation PGM and other critical mineral exploration projects, which drive demand for skilled trades. **Public Sector Stability:** Health care and social assistance remain the largest employers along the North Shore, currently facing high vacancy rates due to an aging workforce.

Job Posting Trends⁶ (Table 5)

In 2024, hiring activity in the region showed noticeable month-to-month fluctuation, with the number of companies hiring ranging from a high of 747 in January to a low of 370 in September. New job postings followed a similar pattern, peaking at 1,595 in January and dipping to 757 in August, while active job postings remained stable throughout the year, falling between 1,500 and 2,700. The early 2025 data show a mixed trend: although the number of companies hiring declined in several months compared to 2024, new and active job postings increased in most months, suggesting stronger employer demand despite fewer distinct employers participating in the labour market. Notably, April 2025 recorded substantial growth, with 899 companies hiring and 2,255 new job postings—significantly higher than the same month in 2024. Across all months, 2025 shows higher active job postings than 2024, indicating sustained or rising labour demand even as employer participation fluctuates. Overall, the data suggests a labour market that remains active and resilient, with job availability increasing into 2025 despite some contraction in the number of companies hiring.

Table 5

Month	2024			2025		
	# of Companies Hiring	# of New Job Posts	# of Active Job Posts	# of Companies Hiring	# of New Job Posts	# of Active Job Posts
2024-01	747	1,595	2,354	659	1,532	2,095
2024-02	686	845	2,068	704	1,420	2,269
2024-03	551	986	1,776	753	1,525	2,390
2024-04	545	1,022	1,848	899	2,255	3,031
2024-05	601	1,441	2,329	827	1,785	2,669
2024-06	631	1,264	2,677	717	1,447	2,241
2024-07	607	1,306	2,212	773	1,548	2,389
2024-08	520	757	1,882	821	1,577	2,363
2024-09	370	760	1,525	852	1,610	2,545
2024-10	623	1,368	2,140	822	1,418	2,426
2024-11	690	1,217	2,248	758	1,286	2,188
2024-12	623	932	2,157	663	1,148	1,942

Thunder Bay Labour Force⁷ (Table 6, Chart 5, Table 7)

Thunder Bay’s labour-market trends from 2018 to 2025 show a region with a steadily growing working-age population, a labour force that experienced a sharp pandemic-related decline before gradually recovering, and consistently low unemployment. The population aged fifteen and over increased slowly but steadily from about 106,000 in 2018 to 112,000 by 2024–2025, reflecting low natural growth but ongoing gains from immigration and non-permanent residents. The labour force peaked around 70,000 in 2018, fell to just over 62,000 during the early months of the pandemic, and then recovered to 72,000–73,000 by 2025, the highest level in the period. This rebound was supported by economic reopening, stronger employer demand, and increased participation from newcomers.

Employment followed a similar trajectory, rising through 2018–2019, dropping sharply in 2020, and then climbing to record highs of around 69,000–70,000 by 2024–2025. As a result, unemployment remained low for most of the period, typically between 3% and 4%, aside from a brief spike to nearly 8% during the pandemic. Overall, the data points to a tight labour market characterized by strong employer demand, modest labour-force growth, and structural constraints linked to demographic aging and the region’s growing reliance on migration to sustain its workforce.

Table 6

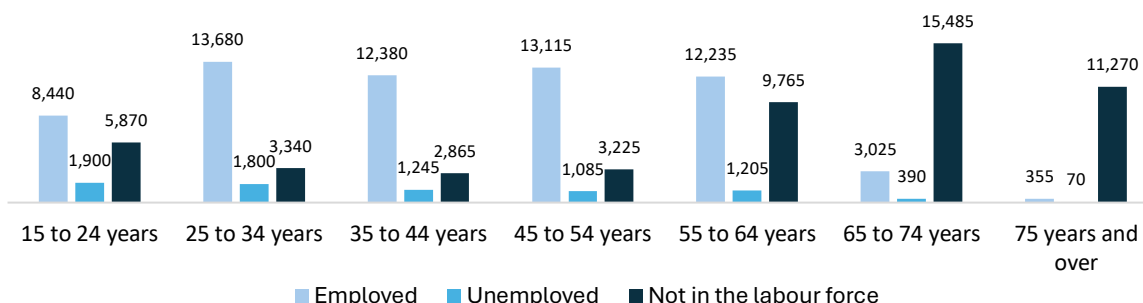
Month 2025	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Population	111.9	111.9	111.9	112	112	112	112	111.8	111.7	111.6	111.5	111.4
Labour force	67.8	66.7	66.5	66.6	67.4	68.9	70	71.7	72.2	72.7	72.9	73.1
Employment	64.1	63	63.3	63.3	64.2	65.4	67	68.1	68.5	69.1	69.7	70
Unemployment	3.70	3.70	3.20	3.20	3.20	3.5	3.4	3.6	3.7	3.6	3.2	3.1

Thunder Bay District’s labour-force profile shows clear differences in participation and employment across age groups, reflecting both the region’s demographic structure and its economic realities. Young adults aged 15 to 24 have low participation, with 8,440 employed, 1,900 unemployed, and a large group, 5,870 not in the labour force, indicating many are still in school or transitioning into work. Participation strengthens significantly in the core working-age groups: ages 25 to 34 record 13,680 employed and 1,800 unemployed, while ages 35 to 44 and 45 to 54 also show high employment levels and comparatively small unemployed populations.

These groups have the strongest attachment to the labour market and form the backbone of the district’s workforce.

Participation drops sharply beginning at age 55. Among those aged 55 to 64, 12,235 are employed but nearly 9,800 are not in the labour force, reflecting early retirement, health-related exits, or reduced workforce engagement. The decline becomes even more pronounced in older age groups: ages 65 to 74 include 3,025 employed and 15,485 not in the labour force, while among those 75 and older, 355 are still employed compared with more than 11,000 outside the labour force. Overall, the data highlight a labour market heavily concentrated in the 25–54 age range, with steep declines in participation after age 55, underscoring the district’s aging population and the growing challenge of maintaining labour-force capacity as older cohorts retire.

Labour Force Status by Age, Thunder Bay District, 2021 Census⁸ Chart 5



Full-time vs Part-time vs Casual⁹ (Table 7)

The NSWPB’s WorkSCAPE data shows notable shifts in both job type and job duration between 2024 and 2025, reflecting a labour market that is expanding but also changing in composition. Full-time employment grew from 14,250 to 16,664 positions, a 17% increase, while part-time work rose even more sharply up 69% from 2,595 to 4,396 jobs. The reported jump in casual employment, from 12 to 685 positions (+5,608%), is unusually large and reflect data anomaly rather than a true labour market shift. On the duration side, permanent positions increased, rising 33% from 14,355 to 19,071, suggesting stronger employer commitment to long-term staffing. Contract roles grew modestly by 12%, while temporary positions remained stable, increasing only 1% from 1,202 to 1,216. Overall, the data points to broaden employment growth, particularly in permanent and part-time roles, though the extreme spike in casual employment warrants further validation before interpretation.

Job type	2024	2025	Change	Job duration	2024	2025	Change
Full-time	14,250	16,664	+17%	Permanent	14,355	19,071	+33%
Part-time	2,595	4,396	+69%	Contract	1,300	1,458	+12%
Casual	12	685	+56%	Temporary	1,202	1,216	+1%

Table 7

Thunder Bay Tax Filer Information¹⁰ (Table 8)

The number of persons with income increased modestly between 2022 and 2023, rising from 96,000 to 98,160, with gains for both males and females. Growth occurred across every income threshold, showing broad upward movement in income distribution. While the number of individuals earning under \$5,000 also rose slightly, the most significant increases were concentrated in higher-income brackets, particularly those earning \$75,000 or more, suggesting strengthening earnings among higher-paid workers.

Gender disparities are still pronounced: males continue to outnumber females at every higher-income level, and the gap widens as income rises, reflecting persistent differences in occupational distribution, hours worked, and access to top-earning roles. Median income increased for all groups, with overall median income rising from \$45,410 to \$48,040. Males saw their median increase to \$54,430, while females reached \$42,550, maintaining a substantial gender income gap of \$12,000. Overall, the data points to a growing income-earning population, rising incomes across the distribution, and continued structural gender differences in earnings.

Table 8

Persons With income	Both Sexs	Both Sexes	Males	Males	Females	Females
Year	2022	2023	2022	2023	2022	2023
All persons with income	96,000	98,160	46,350	47,700	49,650	50,450
Persons with income under \$5,000	3,990	4,130	1,880	1,990	2,110	2,140
Persons with income of \$5,000 and over	92,010	94,030	44,470	45,720	47,530	48,310
Persons with income of \$10,000 and over	88,520	90,770	43,050	44,330	45,470	46,440
Persons with income of \$15,000 and over	83,080	85,860	40,890	42,370	42,200	43,490
Persons with income of \$20,000 and over	77,110	80,130	38,510	40,110	38,600	40,020
Persons with income of \$25,000 and over	70,940	74,990	36,040	38,050	34,900	36,940
Persons with income of \$35,000 and over	59,190	62,680	31,330	33,010	27,860	29,670
Persons with income of \$50,000 and over	43,150	47,030	24,100	25,890	19,050	21,140
Persons with income of \$75,000 and over	23,000	26,080	14,160	15,710	8,840	10,360
Persons with income of \$100,000 and over	11,790	13,870	7,830	8,970	3,960	4,900
Persons with income of \$150,000 and over	3,400	4,050	2,530	2,980	860	1,070
Persons with income of \$200,000 and over	1,390	1,620	1,020	1,170	370	450
Persons with income of \$250,000 and over	720	830	510	590	200	240
Median total income	45,410	48,040	51,940	54,430	40,040	42,550

Statistics Canada Table 11-10-0008-01 ¹⁰

After Tax Incomes¹⁰

Household trends across the Thunder Bay District between 2015 and 2020 show a region experiencing modest overall growth in household numbers alongside highly uneven changes in after-tax income across its communities. The District saw a 2.5% increase in households and an 8.5% rise in median after-tax income, with the City of Thunder Bay closely mirroring this pattern. Most rural municipalities experienced small to moderate household growth, while Shuniah, Dorion, and Neebing grew more rapidly, reflecting their appeal as lower-density residential areas. Income growth, however, varied widely. Several municipalities posted strong gains, including Gillies (14.2%), Nipigon (12.8%), Pic River 50 (16.9%), and Fort William 52 (25.9%), while Long Lake 58 and Whitesand saw exceptionally large increases of 51% and 80.5% respectively, likely tied to targeted investments, changing employment conditions, or shifts in

community-level income supports. In contrast, some areas experienced income declines, most notably Red Rock (−7.6%) and Manitowadge (−1.3%), suggesting localized economic challenges. Overall, the district’s income landscape is marked by broad improvement but significant disparities, with some communities advancing rapidly while others face stagnation or decline.

Business with Employee Counts¹¹ (Table 9)

The industry distribution data shows a business landscape dominated by small enterprises, with most sectors composed primarily of firms employing fewer than ten people, while only a few industries include employers with more than two hundred workers. Health care and social assistance is the largest sector, heavily concentrated on small operations but also containing the region’s highest number of large employers, including four organizations with five hundred or more workers. Retail trade and construction also represent major components of the local economy, each anchored by many small firms but supported by a modest number of mid-sized employers.

Ambulatory health care services, other services excluding public administration, and professional, scientific, and technical services further illustrate the dominance of small-scale operations, with most establishments employing fewer than ten people. Sectors such as accommodation and food services, specialty trade contractors, and transportation and warehousing show a more balanced spread across small and mid-sized firms, though large employers remain rare. Real estate, administrative and support services, repair and maintenance, and various retail subsectors also contribute significantly to the business base, again characterized by small establishments.

Only industries such as manufacturing, finance and insurance, educational services, and food and beverage retail show representation across all size categories, including occasional large employers. Overall, the data reflects an economy built on a broad foundation of small businesses, with only select sectors—particularly health care, education, and certain retail and manufacturing niches—supporting larger-scale operations.

A closer look at the distribution of firm sizes also highlights structural constraints and opportunities within the local economy. The overwhelming presence of micro-enterprises suggests a business environment driven by entrepreneurship and service-oriented activity, but it also points to limited scalability and fewer pathways for firms to grow into larger employers. This pattern may restrict the region’s ability to generate high-volume employment or attract major investment, placing greater importance on strengthening mid-sized firms and supporting growth-oriented sectors. At the same time, the presence of large employers in health care, education, and select industries provides a stabilizing anchor, offering consistent employment and economic resilience in an otherwise small-business-dominated landscape.

Table 9

Industry [NAICS]	Total (any size)	1 to 4	5 to 9	10 to 19	20 to 49	50 to 99	100 to 199	200 to 499	500+
Total, all industries	3,732	1,625	788	626	444	153	64	19	13
Health care and social assistance	536	292	86	82	37	16	17	2	4
Retail trade	482	114	137	122	70	27	9	3	0
Construction	446	193	104	62	60	18	8	1	0
Ambulatory health care services	411	284	51	47	14	6	7	1	1
Other services (except public administration) [361	184	103	43	21	7	2	1	0
Professional, scientific and technical services	335	207	47	38	29	11	2	1	0
Professional, scientific and technical services	335	207	47	38	29	11	2	1	0
Specialty trade contractors	269	122	65	34	35	10	3	0	0
Accommodation and food services	261	41	56	70	72	19	2	0	1
Offices of physicians	227	198	16	12	1	0	0	0	0
Food services and drinking places	209	20	48	63	63	14	0	0	1
Full-service restaurants and limited-service eating places	188	18	39	54	62	14	0	0	1
Unclassified	177	135	20	12	8	2	0	0	0
Transportation and warehousing	161	57	31	26	28	10	9	0	0
Wholesale trade	159	53	30	38	30	6	2	0	0
Real estate and rental and leasing	151	105	32	9	4	0	1	0	0
Administrative and support, waste management and remediation services	146	49	37	40	14	4	1	1	0
Religious, grant-making, civic, and professional and similar organizations	141	78	28	15	12	5	2	1	0
Administrative and support services	136	47	35	38	10	4	1	1	0
Construction of buildings	130	60	31	18	15	4	2	0	0
Real estate	126	91	27	6	1	0	1	0	0
Repair and maintenance	122	56	45	14	6	1	0	0	0
Manufacturing	113	35	34	17	18	5	1	2	1
Finance and insurance	105	40	19	23	15	4	2	2	0

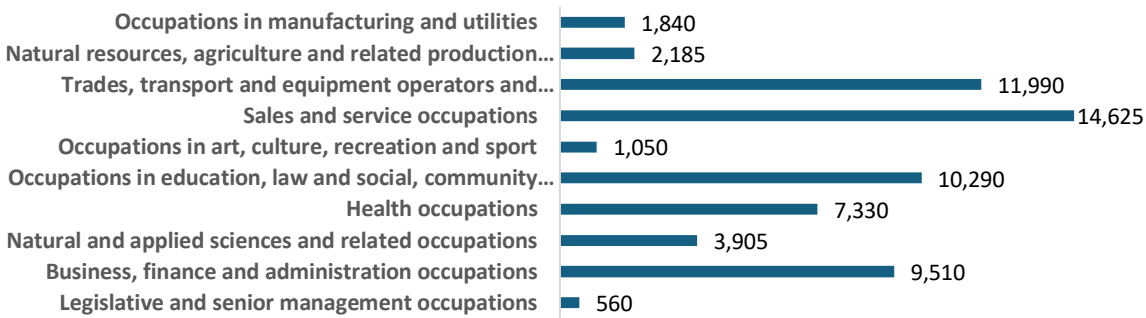
Distribution of the Employed labour Force¹² (Chart 6, Chart 7, Chart 8)

Thunder Bay District’s employed labour force in 2021 is concentrated in a few major occupational groups, reflecting the region’s service-oriented economy and its mix of public-sector, healthcare, and trades-based employment. Sales and service occupations form the largest share at 23.1%, highlighting the district’s reliance on retail, hospitality, and frontline service work. Trades, transport, and equipment operators follow at 19%, underscoring the importance of transportation, construction, and industrial trades across the region.

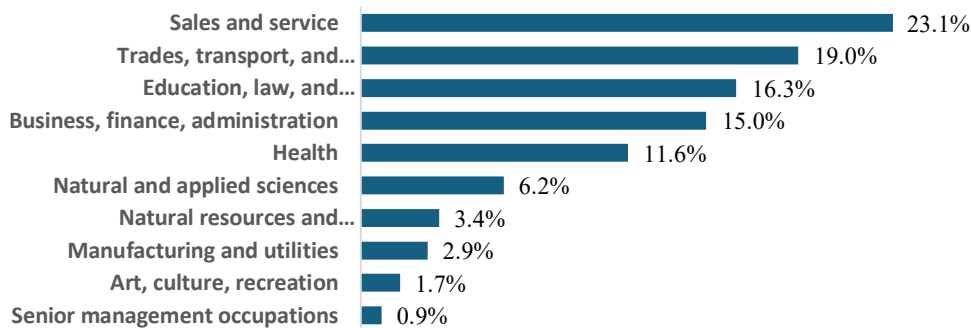
Business, finance, and administration occupations make up 15%, while health occupations represent a significant 11.6%, consistent with the district’s aging population and strong health-care sector. Natural and applied sciences (6.2%) and natural resources and agriculture (3.4%) represent smaller but important components tied to technical professions and resource-based industries. Manufacturing and utilities (2.9%) and arts, culture, recreation, and sport (1.7%) make up the smallest shares, indicating limited employment in creative and industrial production roles.

This distribution also reflects broader demographic and economic realities shaping the region’s workforce. The strong presence of health, education, and public-sector occupations aligns with Thunder Bay’s role as a service centre for Northwestern Ontario, drawing workers into stable institutional employment. At the same time, the relatively small share of workers in STEM, creative, and manufacturing roles suggests limited diversification into high-growth or innovation-driven sectors, pointing to potential challenges in attracting new industries and retaining younger, highly skilled workers.

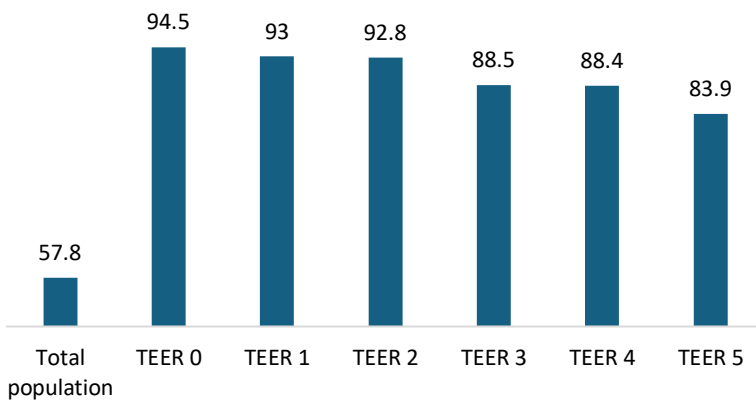
Distribution of labour force by broad sector, Thunder Bay District
Chart 6



Job Distribution, Thunder Bay District Chart 7



Participation Rate (%), Thunder Bay District Chart 8



Education – Men vs Women¹³ (Table 10)

The education profile of working men and women in the Thunder Bay District shows clear gender differences in both the level and type of credentials attained. Overall, women in the employed labour force are slightly fewer in number than men, but they hold more postsecondary education: 21,265 women have a postsecondary credential compared with 19,900 men. Women also surpass men in university-level attainment, with 9,865 holding a bachelor’s degree or higher compared with 7,460 men, and they lead across most university categories, including master’s degrees and doctorates. Men, however, dominate in trades-based education. They hold most of the apprenticeship and trades certificates 3,510 men versus only 650 women reflecting the gendered structure of skilled trades in the region. Men are also more

likely to have no certificate, diploma, or degree, while women are more concentrated in college and university pathways. Overall, the data reveal a labour force where women are more highly educated on average, particularly at the university level, while men are still more prevalent in trades and technical training, highlighting distinct educational pathways that align with the region's occupational patterns.

Highest Certificate, Diploma, or Degree	Men	Women
Total - Highest certificate, diploma, or degree	32,715	30,515
No certificate, diploma, or degree	3,290	2,115
High school diploma or equivalency	9,530	7,140
Post-secondary certificate, diploma, or degree	19,900	21,265
Postsecondary certificate or diploma below bachelor level	12,435	11,400
Apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma	3,510	650
Non-apprenticeship trades certificate or diploma	1,305	475
Apprenticeship certificate	2,205	175
College, CEGEP or other non-university certificate or diploma	8,345	10,130
University certificate or diploma below bachelor level	585	620
Bachelor's degree or higher	7,460	9,865
Bachelor's degree	4,940	6,665
University certificate or diploma above bachelor level	480	720
Degree in medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine, or optometry	345	265
Master's degree	1,380	1,890

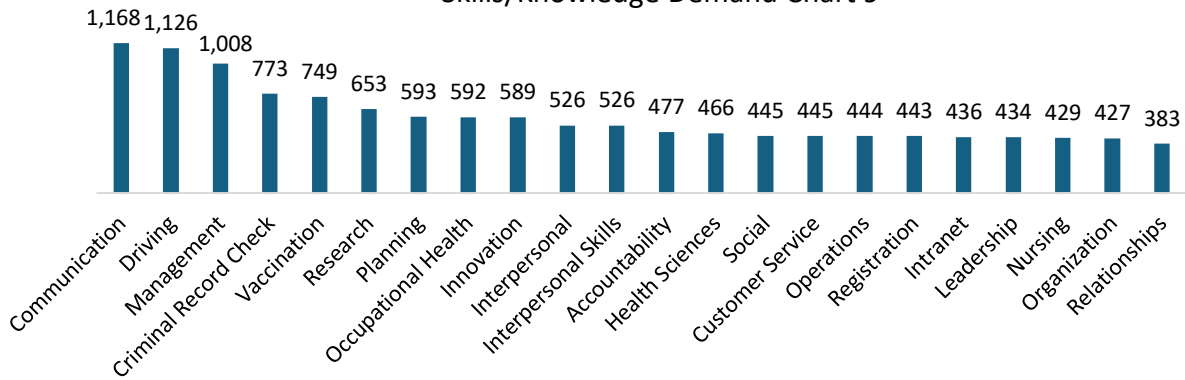
Table 10

Top 20 In-Demand Job Skills¹⁴

The distribution of skill and knowledge requirements across job postings shows a labour market heavily oriented toward communication, operational competence, and regulated work environments. Communication is the most often requested skill, followed closely by driving and management capabilities, showing strong demand for roles that involve coordination, mobility, and supervisory responsibilities. Many positions also require compliance-related attributes, including criminal record checks and vaccination, reflecting ongoing employer emphasis on safety and trust.

Analytical and organizational competencies such as research, planning, occupational health knowledge, innovation, and accountability are also prominent, suggesting a need for workers who can support problem-solving and continuous improvement. Interpersonal and customer-facing skills appear often, with interpersonal skills, social skills, customer service, and relationship-building all ranking highly. Health-related expertise, including health sciences, nursing, and nursing care, further underscores the region's strong demand for care-oriented occupations. Added requirements such as operations knowledge, leadership, organizational skills, sales, attention to detail, and speaking abilities round out the profile. Finally, practical requirements like owning a vehicle and holding a valid driver's licence highlight the mobility expectations embedded in many local job opportunities.

Skills/Knowledge Demand Chart 9



Top 20 Occupations 2024 vs 2025¹⁵ (Table 11, Table 12)

Job posting activity in the Thunder Bay District labour market shows notable shifts between 2024 and 2025. Registered nurses remained the most in-demand occupation in both years, though postings declined from 1,003 in 2024 to 942 in 2025, suggesting ongoing but slightly easing recruitment pressure in health care. In contrast, several service-sector and entry-level occupations experienced substantial increases. Retail salespersons rose sharply from 603 to 856 postings, while store shelf stockers and order fillers nearly doubled, moving from 471 to 815 postings showing stronger hiring demand in retail and warehousing.

Demand for licensed practical nurses also increased from 364 to 475, reinforcing persistent labour shortages across health-related occupations. Several roles that were previously mid-tier in demand moved upward in 2025, including food counter attendants from 294 to 429, light duty cleaners from 238 to 335, and transport truck drivers from 173 to 306, reflecting broader growth in hospitality, cleaning services, and transportation. Meanwhile, occupations such as social and community service workers, home support workers, and administrative assistants saw modest declines or remained stable. Overall, the 2025 labour market shows a clear expansion in retail, logistics, and service-sector hiring, while health care stays a dominant but slightly less intense source of job postings compared to 2024.

Table 11

Top 20 Occupation 2024	Number of Job Postings
Process control and machine operators, food and beverage	109
Retail and wholesale buyers	121
Cashiers	122
Administrative officers	134
Retail sales supervisors	151
Automotive service technicians, truck and bus mechanics	167
Transport truck drivers	173
Social workers	176
Other customer and information services representatives	220
Light duty cleaners	238
Cooks	255
Food counter attendants, kitchen helpers and related	294
Retail and wholesale trade managers	302
Administrative assistants	307
Licensed practical nurses	364
Home support workers, caregivers and related occupations	434
Store shelf stockers, clerks and order fillers	471
Social and community service workers	508
Retail salespersons and visual merchandisers	603
Registered nurses and registered psychiatric nurses	1003

Table 12

Top 20 Occupation 2025	Number of Job Postings
Customer services representatives - financial institutions	153
Automotive service technicians, truck and bus mechanics and mechanical repairers	163
Retail sales supervisors	175
Administrative officers	175
Social workers	176
Security guards and related security service occupations	193
Other customer and information services representatives	195
General building maintenance workers and building superintendents	228
Cooks	300
Transport truck drivers	306
Administrative assistants	318
Light duty cleaners	335
Retail and wholesale trade managers	368
Home support workers, caregivers and related occupations	392
Food counter attendants, kitchen helpers and related support occupations	429
Social and community service workers	441
Licensed practical nurses	475
Store shelf stockers, clerks and order fillers	815
Retail salespersons and visual merchandisers	856
Registered nurses and registered psychiatric nurses	942

Apprenticeship Registrations 2025¹⁶ (Table 13, Table 14)

Apprenticeship activity from 2022–2023 through 2024–2025 reflects a system that is expanding in scale, stabilizing in its core client profile, and gradually diversifying, though not yet at a pace that meaningfully closes long-standing equity gaps. Overall growth is clear across registrations, active apprentices, and completions, with the most notable increase occurring in 2023–2024 when new registrations rose sharply from 272 to 392 before easing to 357 in 2024–2025. Despite this moderation, the number of active apprentices continued to rise each year, reaching 1,519, suggesting strong retention and progression even as annual intake fluctuated.

Completions strengthened as well, with Certificates of Apprenticeship increasing from 97 to 151 over the three-year period, showing improved outcomes and a growing number of apprentices successfully reaching the end of their training pathway. Modular training activity remained stable, fluctuating between 807 and 877 registrations, which points to consistent employer demand for short-duration upskilling and a steady pipeline of learners preparing for or supplementing apprenticeship pathways.

Demographically, the system remains anchored by youth and early-career adults, with clients aged 15–24 and 25–44 consistently dominating the age distribution. The average age remained fixed at 26 across all three years, reinforcing apprenticeship’s role as an early-career entry point rather than a mid-career retraining choice. Gender patterns show a persistent male majority, with male participation rising from 250 to 344 before dipping to 317. Female participation increased from 21 to 46 and then to 37, reflecting modest gains but from a small base. Educational backgrounds show that most apprentices have completed secondary school, though the number of clients with less than Grade 12 has grown, and the share with unknown education status increased to 30 in 2024–2025, suggesting either reporting gaps or changes in intake processes.

Participation among designated groups presents a more mixed picture. Indigenous registrations rose from 30 to 54 in 2023–2024 before falling to 24 in 2024–2025, a fluctuation that may reflect recruitment cycles, program availability, or broader labour market conditions. Francophone participation remained small but steady. For other designated groups, newcomers, racialized individuals, persons with disabilities, and internationally trained workers—data suppression limits the ability to assess trends or find emerging patterns, underscoring the need for improved data collection to support equity monitoring.

Trade-specific patterns highlight sustained interest in carpentry, electrical, and truck and coach technician programs, which continue to anchor the regional apprenticeship system. At the same time, several trades show emerging growth, including automotive service technician, hairstylist, powerline technician, and network cabling specialist. These shifts suggest evolving labour market demand and a gradual broadening of apprenticeship pathways beyond traditional construction-focused trades.

Despite the overall growth and stability of the system, equity gaps remain pronounced. Women continue to be only a small share of apprentices, and their participation fluctuates year to year, showing that gains are not yet firmly established. Indigenous participation shows inconsistent engagement, and limited data for other designated groups restricts the ability to assess representation or progress. These patterns point to ongoing structural barriers awareness, access, financial constraints, employer readiness, and cultural factors that continue to shape who enters and completes apprenticeship pathways. Strengthening inclusion will require targeted outreach, culturally relevant recruitment, enhanced academic and financial supports, employer incentives for inclusive hiring and retention, and improved data collection to check progress.

Apprenticeship Training and Trade Certification 2022-2025¹⁶ (Table 13, Table 14)

Table 13

Category	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Number of New Registrations	272	324	357
Number of Active Apprentices	1127	1207	1519
Number of C of As Issued	97	107	151
Number of Modular Training Registrations	138	121	177
15-24	126	148	149
25-44	119	169	198
45-64	26	7	10
65 and older	NA	NA	NA
Unknown	1	NA	NA
Average age	26	26	26
Female	21	46	37
Male	246	278	317
Trans	NA	NA	NA
Other	NA	NA	NA
Prefer not to disclose	5	NA	3
Less than Grade 9	NA	NA	NA
Less than Grade 12	NA	NA	67
Completion of Secondary	NA	NA	260
Certificate of Apprenticeship / Journey Person	NA	NA	NA
Certificate/Diploma	NA	NA	NA
Applied Associate/Bachelor Degree	NA	NA	NA
Post Graduate	NA	NA	NA
Other (Some Apprenticeship/College/University)	NA	NA	NA
Unknown Education	NA	NA	30

Category	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Indigenous Group	30	54	24
Deaf	NA	NA	NA
Deaf/Blind	NA	NA	NA
Francophone	NA	NA	NA
Internationally Trained Professionals	NA	NA	14
Newcomer	NA	NA	NA
Person with Disability	NA	NA	NA
308A: Sheet Metal Worker	14	15	18
306A: Plumber	12	14	15
420A: Ironworker - Structural and Ornamental	NA	NA	NA
421A: Heavy Duty Equipment Technician	NA	NA	NA
309A: Electrician - Construction and Maintenance	43	42	43
310T: Truck and Coach Technician	27	55	55
403A: General Carpenter	6	29	45
310S: Automotive Service Technician	22	27	33
313A: Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Systems Me	NA	NA	NA
313D: Residential Air Conditioning Systems Mechani	NA	NA	NA
431A: Hairstylist	12	12	23
433A: Industrial Mechanic Millwright	NA	NA	NA
444A: Agricultural Equipment Technician	NA	NA	NA
450A: Construction Craft Worker	21	22	27
434A: Powerline Technician	NA	NA	NA
634A: Network Cabling Specialist	NA	NA	NA

Table 14

Youth Unemployment

The youth unemployment rate (ages 15 to 24) currently ranges between 13% to 15%. Youth unemployment in Ontario is significantly higher than the overall unemployment rate. Even in tight labour markets, youth unemployment tends to remain 2–3 times higher than the general unemployment rate due to limited experience, fewer credentials, and higher turnover. In 2022, reports showed that the Ontario Government discontinued several youth-specific job search programs, raising concerns about potential long-term impacts on career development, labour-market attachment, and earning potential for young people across the province.

Recent changes within Employment Ontario have included the consolidation of several youth-focused programs, integrating the Youth Job Connection (YJC) program into a broader, streamlined service model. This restructuring also introduced a shift toward regional service system managers, who now oversee all Employment Ontario programs within their designated catchment areas. As part of this modernization, the province has emphasized a more unified and efficient intake process, allowing youth to access YJC support through a single point of entry rather than navigating multiple program streams. While these changes are intended to improve coordination and reduce duplication, stakeholders have expressed concern that the integration may limit access to specialized, youth-specific supports particularly for young people facing significant or complex employment barriers.

Indigenous Youth Unemployment

Reliable data on Indigenous youth unemployment in the region remains limited; however, insights from the Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) and Matawa Tribal Councils indicate that unemployment among Indigenous youth is at least twice that of non-Indigenous youth and can reach three times higher in more remote areas where access to education, training, and

employment opportunities is constrained. Addressing these disparities in the Thunder Bay District requires a coordinated, multi-layered strategy that removes systemic barriers, expands access to meaningful employment pathways, and supports a more inclusive and fair labour market.

Lakehead University - Thunder Bay Labour Market Study (2025-2033)¹⁷

Lakehead University was commissioned to assess the labour market outlook for the City of Thunder Bay for the period 2025 to 2033. The study was requested by the Thunder Bay Community Economic Development Commission (CEDC) and North Superior Workforce Planning Board. The final report will be officially released in March 2026.

The analysis shows that Thunder Bay will experience both labour shortages and surpluses over the forecast period, with the overall labour market expected to reach balance by 2033 despite persistent mismatches across major occupational groups. A shortfall of roughly nine hundred workers is projected for 2026, narrowing steadily to near zero by 2033. Significant shortages are expected to continue in health care, trades, transportation, and key service occupations, while large surpluses are expected in business, finance, administration, natural and applied sciences, and education-related fields. Worker availability, particularly immigration levels and retirement timing, appears to be the most influential factor shaping labour market outcomes.

The occupations facing the most severe shortages include nursing and allied health professionals, physicians and veterinarians, assisting health occupations, construction and facility operation managers, transportation officers and controllers, transport truck and transit drivers, and retail salespersons and account representatives. In contrast, the largest surpluses are expected among human resources and business service professionals, auditors and accountants, investment professionals, computer and information systems specialists, software and web developers, and postsecondary instructors. Scenario testing shows that high immigration and delayed retirements could lead to labour surpluses by 2030, while low immigration and early retirements would create large deficits; however, shortages in health and trades persist across all scenarios. Economically, ongoing shortages are projected to result in at least \$43 million in annual lost wages by 2033, with the greatest impacts concentrated in health care, construction, and transportation.

These findings underscore the need for Thunder Bay to strengthen recruitment and retention in health and trades, expand training pathways aligned with shortage occupations, leverage immigration programs to fill critical gaps, and support retraining for workers in surplus fields. Addressing these concentrated shortages through targeted strategies will be essential to sustaining the region's long-term economic health.

Employer Survey

“Impact of Immigration, Foreign Workers, and Study Permit Changes on Local Businesses” (Charts 10 – 16)

The purpose of the survey was to gather direct input from employers on how recent changes to immigration policy, foreign worker programs, and international student study permits are

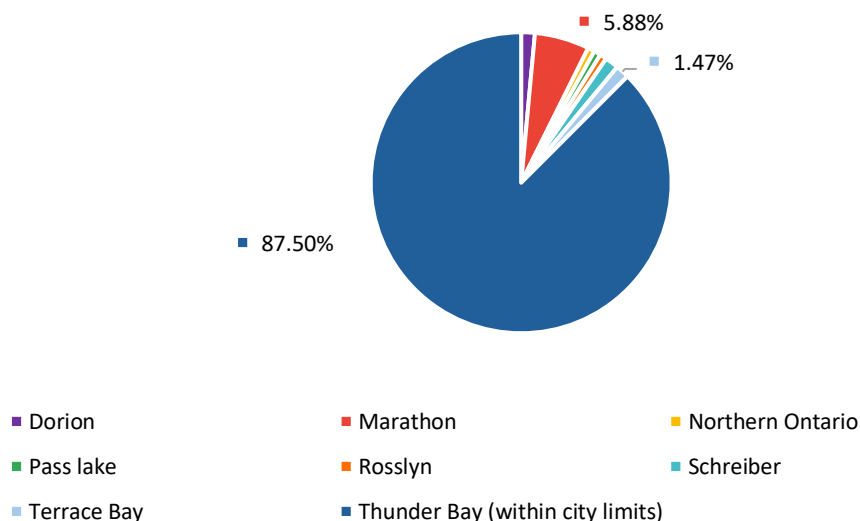
impacting their ability to recruit, retain, and develop talent. The questions were designed to capture the challenges and opportunities businesses face as they adapt to a shifting labour market. By including foreign workers, immigration pathways, and student permits together, the survey will provide a more complete picture of the talent pipeline that supports local business operations.

The survey also seeks to understand how these policy shifts affect broader aspects of business, including operational planning, workforce diversity, long-term growth strategies, and the ability to remain competitive. Finally, it will measure awareness of local initiatives, such as the Rural Community Immigration Pilot (RCIP) program, which offers employers additional tools to address workforce shortages.

In addition to assessing current impacts, the survey aims to identify emerging trends that may influence future workforce planning. Employers’ insights will help clarify whether recent policy adjustments are prompting changes in recruitment strategies, altering training investments, or shifting the balance between domestic and international hiring. This forward-looking perspective will support evidence-based planning and help local organizations anticipate how evolving immigration frameworks may shape the region’s labour market in the years ahead.

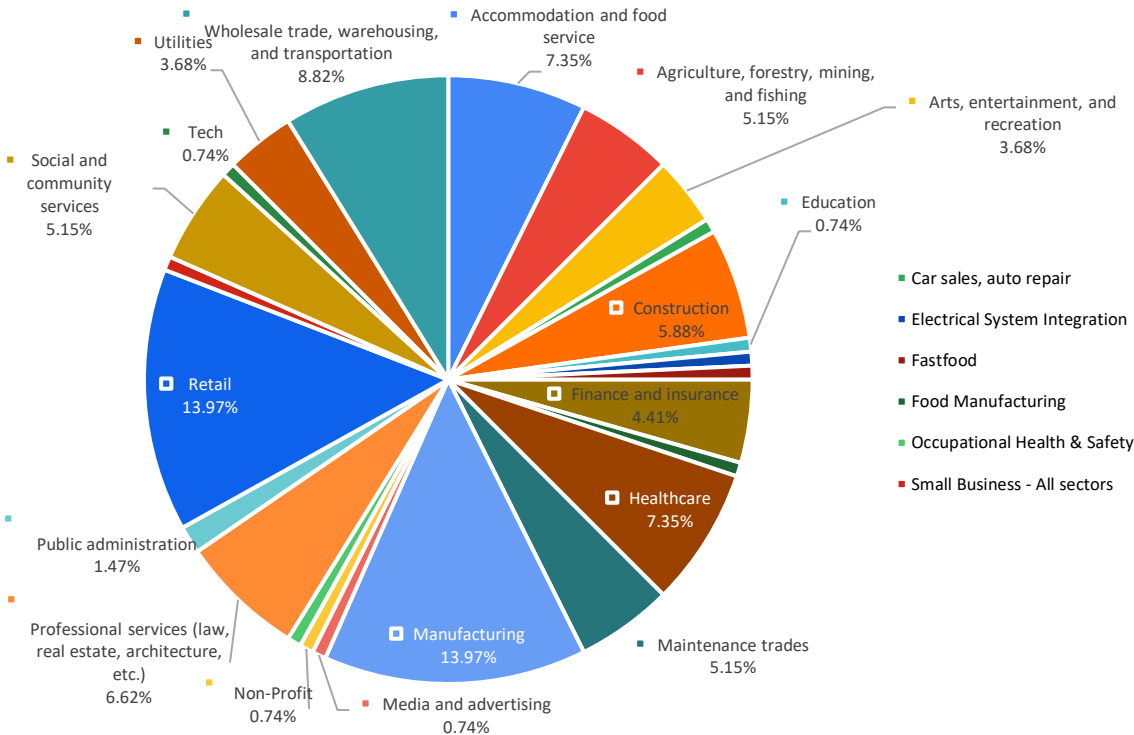
Survey Responses

Where is your business located? Chart 10

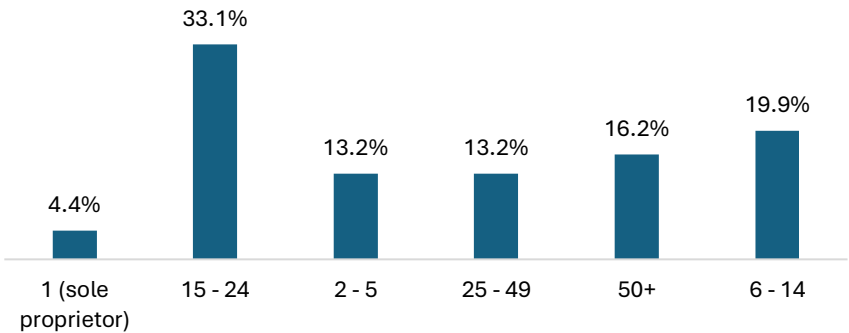


The remaining communities were less than 1%.

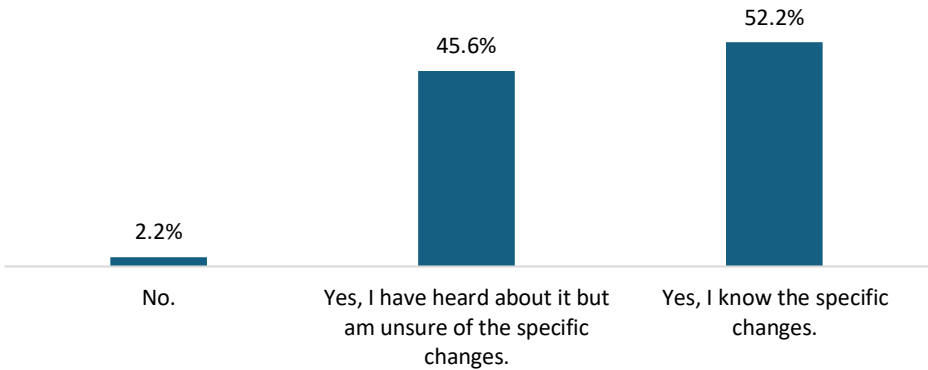
What sector does your business operate in? Chart 11



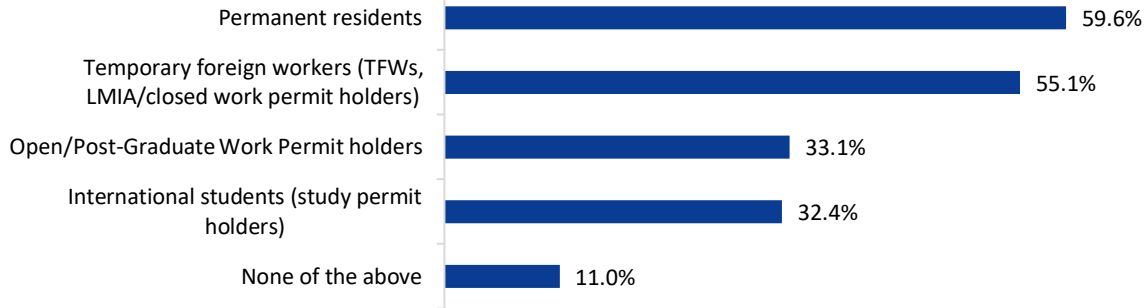
How many employees do you have? Chart 12



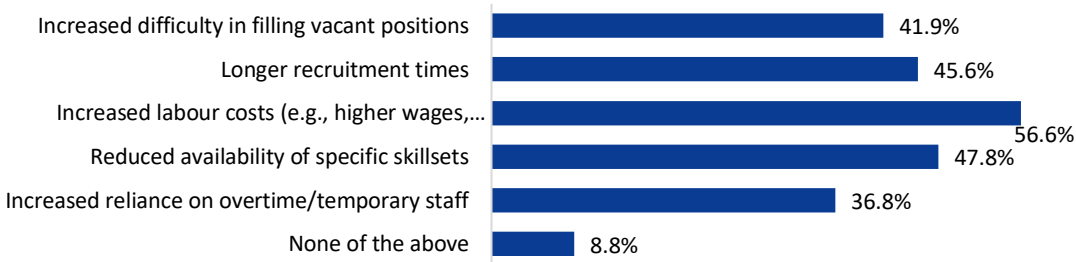
Are you aware of the recent changes to Canada's Temporary Foreign Worker Program and caps on international student permits? Chart 13



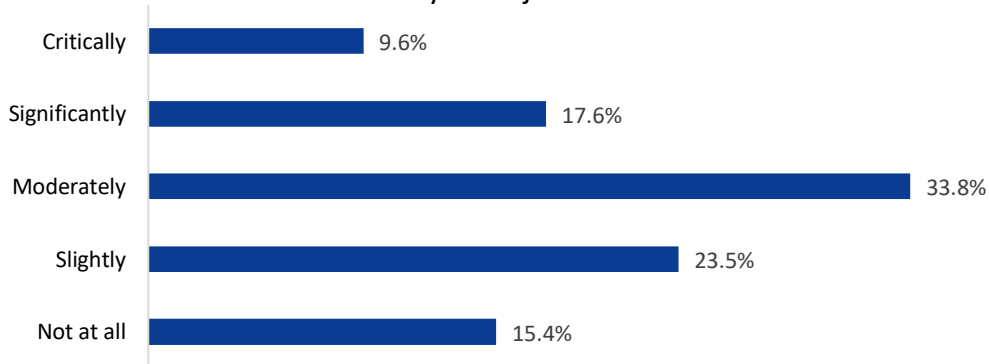
In the past three years, has your business employed any of the following? Chart 14



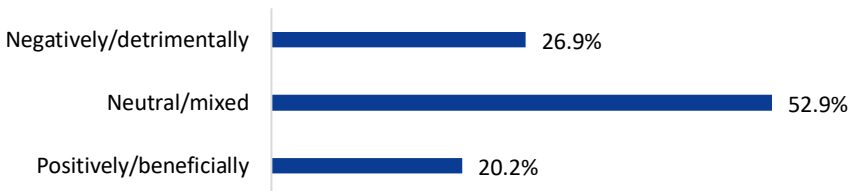
In 2025, compared to previous years, has your business experienced: (select all that apply) Chart 15



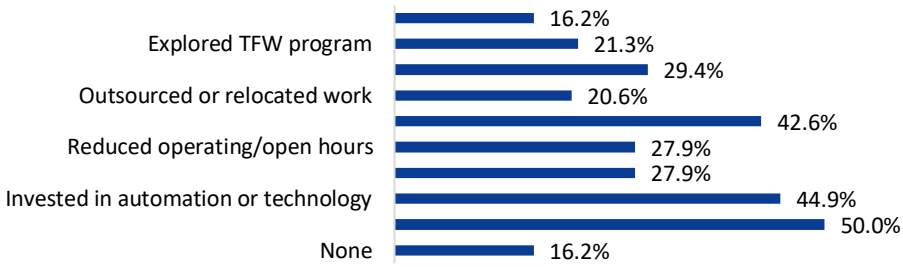
To what extent will reduction in immigration levels affect your ability to fill job vacancies?



How has the reduction in immigrants, TFWs, work permit holders, and international student workers impacted your operations? Chart 16



What action has your business taken in response to the reduction in immigration? (select all that apply) Chart 17

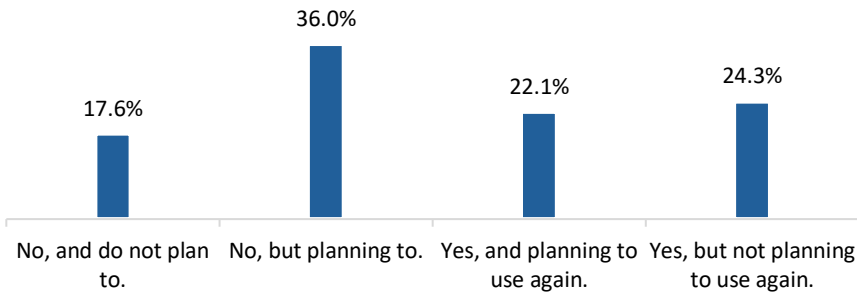


Have the strategies you selected been effective enough in maintaining your business operations?

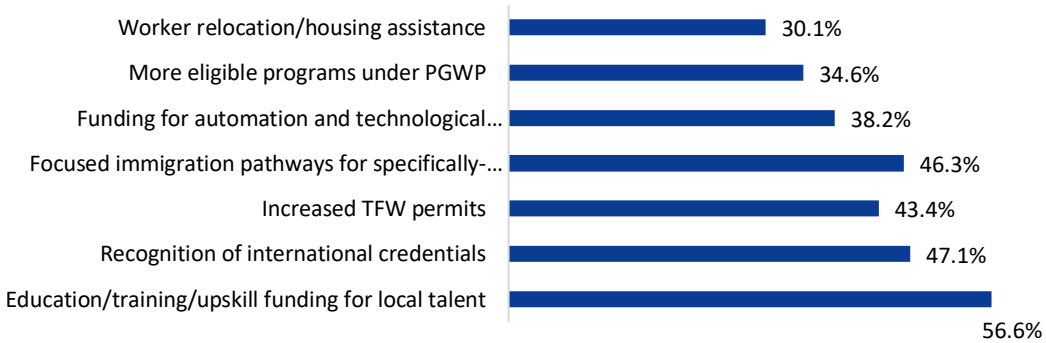
Chart 18



Have you used the RCIP or REDI programs to hire/retain talent? Chart 19



What changes, support, or policies would most help your business adapt? (select all that apply) Chart 20



Employers & Immigration Survey Report

Respondents represented a wide range of industries including healthcare, manufacturing, maintenance trades, retail, wholesale trade, warehousing, and transportation with most businesses operating in small to medium-sized sectors (15-24 employees).

A majority of businesses reported awareness of recent immigration policy changes and expressed growing concern about their impact on workforce availability. Many employers indicated that they have historically relied on a mix of permanent residents, temporary foreign workers, international students, and open work permit holders to meet their staffing needs. However, respondents noted that in 2025, recruitment challenges have intensified compared to previous years due to reduced access to these groups. Several businesses reported difficulty filling positions, particularly in lower-wage, seasonal, or specialized roles. Respondents highlighted increased turnover, declining service capacity, and in some cases, reduced operating hours or output as direct consequences of tighter immigration flows.

When asked about the effectiveness of their strategies, most businesses reported that the measures they implemented such as increasing wages, investing in automation or technology, increasing training/education opportunities, offering relocation benefits to attract talent from other regions, have so far been effective enough to maintain business operations. It is important to note, however, that these findings come only a short period after immigration policy changes took effect. From our perspective, the longer-term impact remains uncertain, and these employer-led adjustments may have limited effect if current restrictions and caps continue to get stricter. Thunder Bay District has historically faced challenges in retaining newcomers and local workers, and if caps on immigration persist while individuals continue to leave the region, the broader regional economy could face renewed strain and a shrinking labour pool. In addition, there is concern that a declining foreign-born and international student population may contribute to funding pressures for local institutions and services.

On a more positive note, many employers indicated awareness of and engagement with the Rural Community Immigration Pilot (RCIP) with some already using or planning to use the program. This highlights a promising opportunity to further promote participation and strengthen regional talent attraction through such initiatives. To increase uptake, local partners (municipalities, chambers, employment services, post-secondary institutions, and ethnocultural groups) can collaborate on targeted outreach such as employer info sessions, “how-to” workshops, newcomer-focused information in multiple languages, and clear online guides that walk both employers and candidates through the steps, helping more businesses see it not as a complex add-on but as a workforce retention strategy.

Key Takeaways

- Labour shortages have worsened in 2025 as reduced immigration inflows and program restrictions have made it harder for businesses to access TFWs, international students, and other newcomers.

- Small, rural, and seasonal employers appear particularly vulnerable to workforce disruptions and have limited local labour pools to draw from.
- While many businesses report that their current strategies have been effective enough to maintain operations in the short term, there is significant uncertainty about sustainability if current immigration caps and restrictions remain in place.
- Our analysis raises concern that longstanding challenges in retaining people in Thunder Bay District, combined with continued caps and out-migration, could have broader negative effects on the regional economy and local funding tied to population or enrollment.
- Awareness and emerging use of RCIP among businesses is a positive development and indicates potential to scale up participation and impact through targeted outreach and support.

Recommendations

Based on the survey findings and our analysis, we offer the following recommendations for consideration by policymakers, program administrators, and regional stakeholders:

- Stabilize and align immigration policy with regional labour needs: Advocate for immigration levels and work permit frameworks that better reflect the demographic realities and labour shortages of Thunder Bay District, including more flexible caps for regions with persistent vacancies.
- Strengthen and expand regional immigration pathways (RCIP, and related programs): Increase promotion and employer education around RCIP, and similar regional programs; simplify application processes where possible; and provide hands-on support for small and medium-sized businesses navigating these pathways.
- Support retention of newcomers and local workers: Invest in initiatives that improve retention, including access to housing, transportation, settlement services, childcare, and community integration, so newcomers and their families can build long-term lives in Thunder Bay District.
- Mitigate funding risks linked to population decline: educational institutions, municipalities, and health and social service organizations should work together to assess and address potential funding gaps that may arise from decreasing foreign student enrollment and slower population growth, including targeted provincial or federal supports.
- Enhance local workforce development and training: Expand partnerships among employers, post-secondary institutions, and employment service providers to upskill

residents, align training with in-demand occupations, and create clearer pathways into work for underrepresented groups in the region.

The survey highlights both the resilience and vulnerability of Thunder Bay District's business community in the face of rapid immigration policy changes. Employers have taken short-term steps that are currently allowing many to maintain operations, but there is a clear need for longer-term, regionally tailored immigration and workforce strategies to ensure the stability and growth of the regional economy.

How Should We Respond to Labour Market Challenges

1. Strengthen Population Growth & Workforce Attraction

The Thunder Bay District should take coordinated action to reverse natural population decline and reduce reliance on temporary residents as the primary source of growth. Municipalities, Indigenous governments, employers, and settlement partners should work together to expand immigration pathways, promote the region nationally and internationally, and address housing shortages that limit newcomer retention. A district-wide attraction campaign highlighting affordability, lifestyle, and career opportunities would help draw new residents, while a centralized newcomer integration hub would ensure that immigrants, students, and temporary workers receive the support needed to establish long-term roots in the region.

2. Address Labour Shortages in Health Care, Trades & Transportation

To respond to persistent shortages in critical sectors, the Thunder Bay District should expand training capacity, strengthen employer partnerships, and improve recruitment and retention strategies. This includes supporting modular and accelerated training programs in health care and the skilled trades, improving clinical placement availability, and creating clear pathways for workers to upskill or transition into high-demand occupations. Earlier promotion of trades and transportation careers in schools, combined with stronger employer engagement, will help build a more sustainable talent pipeline.

3. Improve Youth Labour Market Outcomes

The Thunder Bay District should prioritize rebuilding youth employment supports to address high unemployment and weak school-to-work transitions. Municipalities, school boards, postsecondary institutions, and employers should collaborate to expand paid work-integrated learning, mentorship programs, and youth-focused employment pathways. Establishing a regional youth advisory group would ensure that programs reflect the needs and experiences of young people. A coordinated retention strategy connecting postsecondary students to local employers before graduation would help keep more young talent in the region.

4. Advance Indigenous Workforce Inclusion

Given the significantly higher unemployment rates among Indigenous youth, the Thunder Bay District should work closely with First Nations, Indigenous organizations, and training institutions to co-develop culturally grounded workforce solutions. This includes expanding apprenticeship and pre-trades programs, supporting Indigenous entrepreneurship, and improving access to transportation and childcare—two of the most common barriers to

employment. District employers should also adopt cultural safety training to create more inclusive workplaces and improve retention of Indigenous workers.

5. Respond to the Aging Workforce & Rising Dependency Ratio

With the senior population growing rapidly, the Thunder Bay District must take steps to retain older workers and prepare for increased demand in health and social services. Employers should adopt flexible work arrangements, phased retirement options, and ergonomic improvements to support older adults who wish to remain in the workforce. Municipalities and training institutions should expand opportunities for adults aged 55+ to retrain or transition into new roles, particularly in geriatric care and personal support services, where demand is expected to rise sharply.

6. Strengthen Small Business Capacity & Competitiveness

Small businesses across the District often lack the HR capacity needed to recruit and retain workers effectively. The District should support these employers by expanding access to digital skills training, e-commerce tools, and shared HR services. Municipalities and business associations should promote succession planning to help aging business owners transition their operations, particularly in rural communities where business closures have significant economic impacts.

7. Improve Labour Market Data & Equity Monitoring

To support better decision-making, the Thunder Bay District should strengthen data collection and equity monitoring across municipalities and sectors. This includes improving data-sharing agreements, developing a regional equity dashboard to track outcomes for designated groups, and validating anomalies in job posting data through employer outreach. More frequent employer surveys would provide timely insights into hiring challenges, skill shortages, and emerging workforce needs.

8. Support Workforce Stability in Rural & Remote Communities

Rural and remote communities in the Thunder Bay District face greater labour-market volatility due to single-industry dependence and limited employer diversity. The District should develop community-specific workforce transition plans to anticipate industry cycles and support workers during downturns. Expanding mobile training units would improve access to skills development in remote areas, while transportation solutions such as shuttle services or rideshare networks would help residents access employment opportunities. Supporting diversification in tourism, clean energy, and value-added forestry would strengthen long-term economic resilience.

9. Align Training Pathways with Emerging Labour Market Needs

As job posting trends shift, the Thunder Bay District should ensure that training programs remain aligned with employer demand. This includes expanding short-cycle training for high-demand roles in retail, logistics, cleaning services, and health care, and developing micro-credentials tied to top-requested skills such as communication, management, and occupational health. Creating employer-validated skill profiles for high-turnover occupations will improve job matching, while promoting digital literacy and problem-solving skills will help workers adapt to technological change.

10 Strengthen Regional Collaboration & Workforce Governance

The Thunder Bay District should establish a coordinated regional workforce leadership structure to align strategies across municipalities, Indigenous communities, employers, and educational institutions. Strengthening sector councils in health care, trades, transportation, and retail would deepen employer engagement and ensure training aligns with real-world needs. A unified regional message on labour-market priorities would help attract investment, support policy alignment, and improve long-term workforce planning.

Appendix A Communities in the NSWPB Region

Census District	Common Community Name	Census Subdivision Name & Type
Thunder Bay	Animbiigoo Zaagi'igan Anishinaabek (Lake Nipigon Ojibway First Nation)	Lake Nipigon
Thunder Bay	Aroland First Nation	Aroland 83
Thunder Bay	Biigtigong Nishnaabeg (Ojibways of the Pic River First Nation)	Pic River 50
Thunder Bay	Biinjitiwaabik Zaaging Anishinaabek (Rocky Bay First Nation)	Rocky Bay 1
Thunder Bay	Bingwi Neyaashi Anishinaabek (Sand Point First Nation)	
Thunder Bay	Conmee	Conmee,
Thunder Bay	Dorion	Dorion
Kenora	Eabametoong First Nation (Fort Hope)	Fort Hope 64
Thunder Bay	Fort William First Nation	Fort William 52
Thunder Bay	Gillies	Gillies
Thunder Bay	Ginoogaming First Nation (Long Lake #77 First Nation)	Ginoogaming First Nation
Thunder Bay	Greenstone / Greenstone Métis Community	Greenstone
Thunder Bay	Kiashke Zaaging Anishinaabek (Gull Bay First Nation)	
Thunder Bay	Lac des Mille Lacs First Nation	Lac des Mille Lacs 22A1
Thunder Bay	Long Lake #58 First Nation	Long Lake 58
Thunder Bay	Manitouwadge	Manitouwadge
Thunder Bay	Marathon	Marathon
Kenora	Marten Falls First Nation	Marten Falls 65
Thunder Bay	Neebing	Neebing,
Kenora	Neskantaga First Nation (Lansdowne House)	Lansdowne House
Kenora	Nibinamik First Nation (Summer Beaver)	Summer Beaver
Thunder Bay	Nipigon	Nipigon
Thunder Bay	O'Connor	O'Connor
Thunder Bay	Oliver Paipoonge	Oliver Paipoonge
Thunder Bay	Pawgwasheeng (Pays Plat First Nation)	Pays Plat 51
Thunder Bay	Pic Moberg First Nation	Pic Moberg
Thunder Bay	Red Rock	Red Rock
Thunder Bay	Red Rock Indian Band/Lake Helen First Nation	Lake Helen 53A

Thunder Bay	Schreiber	Schreiber
Thunder Bay	Shuniah	Shuniah
Thunder Bay	Terrace Bay	Terrace Bay
Thunder Bay	Superior North Shore Métis Community	Terrace Bay
Thunder Bay	Thunder Bay	Thunder Bay
Thunder Bay	Thunder Bay, Unorganized	Thunder Bay
Thunder Bay	Thunder Bay Métis Community	Thunder Bay
Kenora	Webequie First Nation	Webequie
Thunder Bay	Whitesand First Nation	Whitesand

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Number	
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2	Statistics Canada Table: 17-10-0149-01 https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1710014901
3	Statistics Canada https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1710014801
4	Statistics Canada Table: 17-10-0148-01 https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1710014801
5	Statistics Canada Table: 14-10-0480-01 https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1410048001
6	WorkSCAPE NW https://www.nswpb.ca/labour-market-insights-report/?e8_page=snapshot&date=2026-02&region-type=regions&noc-version=2021
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16	Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training, Skills Development – Employment Ontario Data
17	Lakehead University - Thunder Bay Labour Market Outlook 2025–2033 Study
18	North Superior Workforce Planning Board – Employer Survey



2026-2029

LOCAL LABOUR MARKET PLAN REPORT

FOR THE
Kenora and
Rainy River Districts

**NORTHWEST TRAINING
AND ADJUSTMENT BOARD**

113-100 CASIMIR AVENUE
DRYDEN, ON P8N 3L4

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HOW DID WE DO?

Please access our short survey by visiting
form.simplesurvey.com/f/s/NTAB2026LLMPReport

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VISION

Engage all regional stakeholders and partners with valuable workforce information.

MISSION

To improve our local workforce.

**“A JOB FOR EVERYONE,
SOMEONE FOR EVERY JOB.”**

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Northwest Training and Adjustment Board's Directors and staff recognize that we gather on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabe and Métis Peoples within the Kenora and Rainy River Districts. It is our hope that the information that is gathered and shared through the work of the Northwest Training and Adjustment Board will assist in the process of truth and reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples and augment the intended sharing of resources that these lands provide to its residents.

Canada 



Ontario 

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The views expressed in this document do not necessarily reflect those of the funders.

"The material contained in this report has been prepared by the Northwest Training and Adjustment Board using the most current data available at the time of analysis from Statistics Canada, Taxfiler, Canadian Business Counts, other publicly available sources, and local consultations and applied labour market intelligence. Findings are influenced by data availability, collection cycles, confidentiality requirements, and geographic limitations. While the information is drawn from sources considered to be reliable, no representation or warranty, express or implied, is made as to its accuracy or completeness. In providing this material, the Northwest Training and Adjustment Board assumes no responsibility or liability for its use or interpretation."

2026-2029 LOCAL LABOUR MARKET PLAN REPORT

KENORA & RAINY RIVER DISTRICTS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Northwest Ontario Training Board has issued an annual Local Labour Market Plan for more than a decade. Last year's report issued early in 2025 was the final installment of a 3-year Action Plan supporting workforce development in the Kenora and Rainy River Districts. The year 2025 has been a year of marked change. We continue to witness change in global and national trends like trade changes, tariff shifts, supply chain issues, increasing use of generative artificial intelligence, federal and provincial policy updates, inflation, cost of living pressures and significant government investments. It seems especially fitting that our new 3-year Action Plan launch in 2026.

Community consultations conducted in 2025 confirmed our five priorities continue to be valid. However, we used the opportunity to further expand on each:

1. External Forces and Workforce Sector Shifts
2. Population Dynamics and Workforce Enablers
3. Skills, Training, and Learning Pathways
4. Entrepreneurship and Local Business Growth
5. Inclusion, Equity and Workforce Participation

The following indicators have been used to assess changes in labour market demand and supply over the past year:

LABOUR MARKET DEMAND

- There were 210 new businesses operating in the Kenora District between June 2023 and June 2025 or 5%. However, a significant number of these were owner-operated enterprises with no employees. The number of businesses with employees grew by a net eight businesses or 0.4%. The Rainy River District experienced similar growth in the business community. There were 81 new businesses operating in the area during the same time period; however, only one new business with employees.
- There were 1,608 online job postings issued by Kenora District employers between Nov 1 2024 and Oct 31 2025. The great number occurred in the Retail Trade; Manufacturing; Educational Services; Accommodation and Food Services and Health Care and Social Assistance sectors. The Rainy River District employers issued 824 job postings during the same period with the greatest number observed in Retail Trade; Manufacturing; Finance and Insurance and Health Care and Social Assistance.
- Employment concentration in the Kenora and Rainy River Districts is greatest in Public Administration, Health Care and Social Assistance and Educational Services. The Kenora District has a high employment concentration in Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting as well as Mining, Quarrying, Oil and Gas Extraction and Transportation and Warehousing. High levels of employment concentration in the Rainy River District is evident in Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting; Mining, Oil and Gas Extraction and Utilities sectors.
- Recognizing the current economic interest in critical minerals and mining and the importance of the construction industry to its development, a closer look was taken into these two sectors. Ontario is the largest mineral producer in Canada with \$15.7 billion in mineral exploration in 2023. At that time there were 4,200 people employed in Northwest Ontario's Mining, Quarrying and Oil and Gas sector with more than 75% of these employed specifically in mining. The Kenora District is abundant in critical minerals like nickel, copper and cobalt while further exploration

for lithium, platinum group metals, gold and graphite. These minerals are key to defense and clean energy technology. The World Bank Group predicts that the production of minerals such as graphite, lithium and cobalt could increase by nearly 500% by 2050, in order to meet the growing demand for clean-energy technologies. The industry is an important component of Canada's strategy for economic security, reduced reliance on other nations, stable supply chains and economic diversification.

- Key barriers to growth of the mining industry are the lack of infrastructure including roads, rail and power as well as workforce challenges driven by an aging workforce and chronic skilled labour shortages as well as workforce attraction and retention.
- Of the 18 occupations making up the mining industry in the Kenora District, ten had 20% or more workers age 50 and older as of the 2021 Statistics Canada Census. In the Rainy River District five of the nine key occupations were comprised of workers age 50 years old or more.
- Both the development, launch and operation of a mine as well as the development of surrounding infrastructure creates jobs in the construction sector. A “representative” mine can generate almost 2,000 construction jobs.
- However, as with mining, the construction sector is impacted by labour and skills shortage as well as an aging workforce. As of 2021, there were 40 occupations in the Kenora District's construction sector and eleven in the Rainy River District that employ ten or more people. Of these, more than 55% or 21 construction occupations in the Kenora District and five in the Rainy River District that were comprised of workers age 50 and older.
- The application and implementation of Generative Artificial Intelligence varies between occupations. Any occupation requiring the processing of significant amount of data is most at risk while those involving human interaction, social perception and instruction are less vulnerable. Rather than eliminating entire occupations, generative artificial intelligence will more likely alter the composition of work activities within occupations. Significant variations also exist across industries and regions. In regions like the north, industries like mining, construction and manufacturing will likely be impacted to a greater degree because of significant investment in equipment combined with ongoing workforce challenges. Any training should incorporate digital literacy as well complementary skills like critical thinking, problem solving and leadership.

LABOUR MARKET SUPPLY

- At 4.6% the annual unemployment rate for 2025 in Northwestern Ontario has remained stable since 2022.
- Participation rate is a calculation of the percentage of people who are either working or looking for work. At 61.1%, participation in the labour force in Northwestern Ontario is higher than other areas of the North.
- Despite economic challenges nationally, for the second year in a row, the number collecting regular Employment Insurance benefits in the Kenora and Rainy River Districts remained stable. There were 40 more individuals in the Kenora District collecting benefits in October 2025 as compared to October 2024 while in the Rainy River District there were 20 fewer.
- An increase in net in-migration continues in both the Kenora and Rainy River Districts. There was a significant net increase of 745 people moving into the Kenora District and 450 into the Rainy River District.

LOCAL LABOUR MARKET INSIGHTS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Through ongoing individual engagement in the community and two broader consultants, NTAB received the following feedback:

- Challenges to Newcomer and Resident Attraction and Retention
- Misalignment of Job Requirements and Worker Skills
- Challenges to Transitioning Workers to New Industries
- Entrepreneurship and Local Business Growth
- Rural Immigration Pathways and Labour Market Impacts

EMPLOYMENT ONTARIO PROGRAM 2024-2025 RESULTS

The year 2024-2025 was one of transition of Employment Ontario employment service providers as they moved to the Service System Manager delivery model.

- Employment Services and Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) client numbers remained largely stable in 2024-2025 as compared to the previous year. The number of Employment Service participants decreased by 32% while the overall number of LBS trainees remained stable. In most cases, approximately 50% of both Employment Services and LBS participants were dependent on Ontario Works or Ontario Disability Support Program benefits or had no income at all.
- Participation in Employment Services in Northern Ontario increased by 8% and but decreased 47% in Ontario. Participation in LBS decreased 2% in both Northern Ontario and Ontario overall.
- The number of new apprentice registrations in both the Kenora and Rainy River Districts increased in 2024-2025 and there are now 360 active apprentices in the Kenora District and 150 in the Rainy River District. Fifty-six Certificates of Apprenticeship during 2024-2025 were issued in the Kenora District and 29 in the Rainy River District.
- Youth Job Connection participation increased by 34% in the Kenora District while Youth Job Connection Summer experienced a decrease of 13%. In the Rainy River District, participation in Youth Job Connection decreased by 12% while Youth Job Connection Summer participation increased by 12%.
- The Canada Ontario Job Grant and Better Jobs Ontario initiatives continue to be underutilized in the region.

INTRODUCTION

Established in 1997, the Northwest Training and Adjustment Board is one of a network of 25 workforce development boards across Ontario. Our mandate is to engage communities and community partners in local labour market development. By conducting and analyzing local labour market research, trends and planning processes, we work to develop community partnerships to find solutions to local issues.

Each year, NTAB releases a Local Labour Market Plan for the Kenora and Rainy River Districts summarizing the most recent labour market data available; independent research; and consultations with employers, economic developers, educators and employment service providers that have taken place over the past year. This qualitative and quantitative foundation results in a compilation of actions supporting local workforce development focused on five key priorities. These priorities continue to be valid, but in order to provide more clarity and better reflect the new action items and themes we've been hearing from employers and community leaders, our team has expanded on each priority.

Key Priorities for workforce development in the Kenora and Rainy River Districts:

1. EXTERNAL FORCES AND WORKFORCE SECTOR SHIFTS

The economies of the Kenora and Rainy River Districts continue to shift, and many of these changes begin with external pressures that sit far beyond local control. Volatile tariffs, supply chain disruptions, global market swings, and shifting federal and provincial priorities all influence how industries expand or contract in the region. Manufacturing and forestry are particularly sensitive to policy changes and international demand, while construction, health care, and mining respond more to long-term investment cycles. These pressures create an environment where sector stability is uneven and employers must adjust quickly to conditions that change year to year. Some industries experience periods of growth driven by new projects or public investment, while others stall because timelines for major developments stretch across many years. Employers and community stakeholders describe the challenge of planning for a future shaped by forces they cannot predict or influence, even as communities work to build local capacity and respond to emerging opportunities. These realities shape the challenges industries face, but also point to the ways communities are adapting through local studies, targeted supports, and efforts to strengthen the regional labour pool.

2. POPULATION DYNAMICS AND WORKFORCE ENABLERS

Communities across both districts are working hard to attract and retain people in the core working-age population, but long-standing challenges continue to influence who stays and who leaves. Youth out-migration remains significant, shaped by limited housing options, fewer postsecondary pathways, and a sense that opportunities are stronger elsewhere. Families point to gaps in childcare, transportation, and health-care access, while newcomers and returning residents describe difficulties settling because basic supports can feel inconsistent or hard to find. Local stakeholders repeatedly raise concerns about the negative narratives circulating about the region, which influence how people view their future here. At the same time, community groups and employers point to ongoing revitalization efforts, infrastructure development, and the creation of new economic opportunities, all of which give communities more tools to support long-term stability.

3. SKILLS, TRAINING, AND LEARNING PATHWAYS

Skills and knowledge are becoming increasingly important as workplaces adopt new technologies and expectations, shaping how youth and workers access the education and training they need. Employers point to gaps in foundational skills such as literacy, numeracy, digital literacy, and communication, and note that emerging jobs require workers who can adapt quickly. Smaller communities often lack exposure to global labour market trends, and many residents are unaware of the training and education options available to them. A shortage of specialized instructors limits the ability to promote new careers, and apprenticeship opportunities remain constrained by the lack of facilities, in-school training capacity, and available journeypersons. In response, many stakeholders are broadening career development activities, improving in-class learning, and expanding flexible education and micro credential options so youth can make more informed career decisions and workers can upskill in ways that reflect changing workplace needs.

4. ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND LOCAL BUSINESS GROWTH

Entrepreneurs and small and medium businesses continue to play a central role in job creation and local innovation. Many owners describe a landscape that holds real potential but is also shaped by practical challenges. Starting a business often requires navigating high start-up costs, limited financing options, and the pressures of competing in broader digital markets. Some communities lack adequate commercial space, and new owners can become overwhelmed by bylaws, permits, and compliance requirements. Workforce shortages and rising wages add extra strain. Local stakeholders also note that entrepreneurs benefit from steady guidance and long-term support to help them move beyond the early stages of business development. Across the region, more seminars, training opportunities, grant programs, pitch events, and incubator supports are beginning to give new and existing business owners additional avenues to build confidence and capacity. These pressures and corresponding efforts ultimately affect how confidently small businesses can build, expand, and contribute to local job creation.

5. INCLUSION, EQUITY, AND WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION

A strong labour market depends on the participation of all community members, yet many people continue to face barriers that limit their access to stable employment. This is felt most by groups who experience persistent inequities, including Indigenous and racialized residents, newcomers, youth, older adults, and people navigating complex social or economic circumstances. Affordable housing, transportation, work-appropriate clothing, and reliable technology remain out of reach for some residents, particularly in rural and isolated areas. Individuals who want to upgrade their skills often have trouble accessing programs because of strict eligibility rules, short recruitment timelines, or limited local delivery. Employers note that job roles are not always designed with flexibility in mind, which affects workers who need accommodations or different entry points into the workforce. Community stakeholders emphasize that many people who would benefit most from training do not hear about opportunities in time or do not see themselves reflected in available pathways. To help alleviate some of these barriers, communities are working to make learning and employment supports easier to reach, offering residents more options as they navigate the labour market.

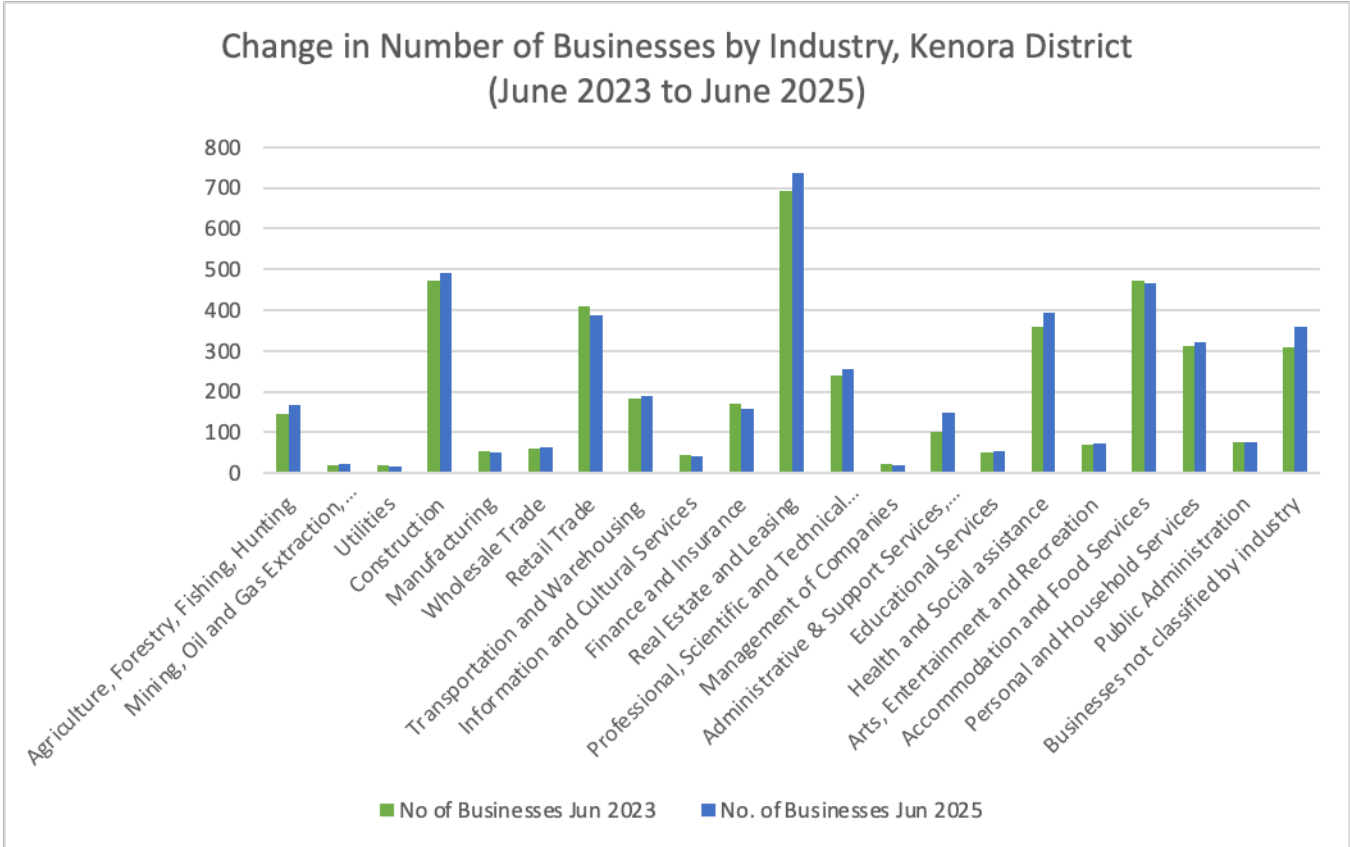
As we move into 2026, we find ourselves at a time of unprecedented geopolitical, social and technological change. Fundamental changes like the shift from free trade to the enactment of tariffs, supply chain disruptions and the implementation of generative Artificial Intelligence have introduced economic instability, increased employee stress and will likely require workers to adapt their skills. New government policies focused on domestic production and trade diversification has put a focus on natural resources like the critical minerals abundant in Northwestern Ontario. The recent shift to lower immigration targets may lead to a tighter labour market and put more pressure of employers.

LABOUR MARKET DEMAND

One of the first measures that provides some insight into activity in the region's economy is Canada Business Counts data, released by Statistics Canada semi-annually. Table 1A compares the number of businesses operating in the Kenora and Rainy River Districts in June 2025 with the number operating in June 2023. It must be noted that some changes in the numbers of businesses operating in each sector may be caused by changes in the assignment of postal codes within Census Divisions by Statistics Canada.

Table 1A: Change in Number of Businesses June 2023 to June 2025 – Kenora District				
Sector	No of Businesses Jun 2023	No. of Businesses Jun 2025	Absolute Change	Percent change
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting	144	168	24	16.7
Mining, Oil and Gas Extraction, Quarrying	21	24	3	14.3
Utilities	19	17	(-2)	(-10.5)
Construction	474	492	18	3.8
Manufacturing	54	51	(-3)	(-5.6)
Wholesale Trade	59	64	5	8.5
Retail Trade	411	389	(-22)	(-5.4)
Transportation and Warehousing	182	188	7	3.3
Information and Cultural Services	44	43	(-1)	(-2.3)
Finance and Insurance	170	157	(-13)	(-7.6)
Real Estate and Leasing	693	738	45	6.5
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	241	254	13	5.4
Management of Companies	24	21	(-3)	(-12.5)
Administrative & Support Services, Waste Mngmt.	100	147	47	47
Educational Services	50	55	5	10
Health and Social assistance	360	394	34	9.4
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	71	74	3	4.2
Accommodation and Food Services	473	465	(-8)	(-1.7)
Personal and Household Services	313	322	9	2.9
Public Administration	77	75	(-2)	(-2.6)
Businesses not classified by industry	308	360	52	16.9
Total	4,288	4,498	210	4.9

Source: Statistics Canada, Canada Business Counts, June 2023 and June 2025



Source: Statistics Canada, Canada Business Counts, June 2023 and June 2025

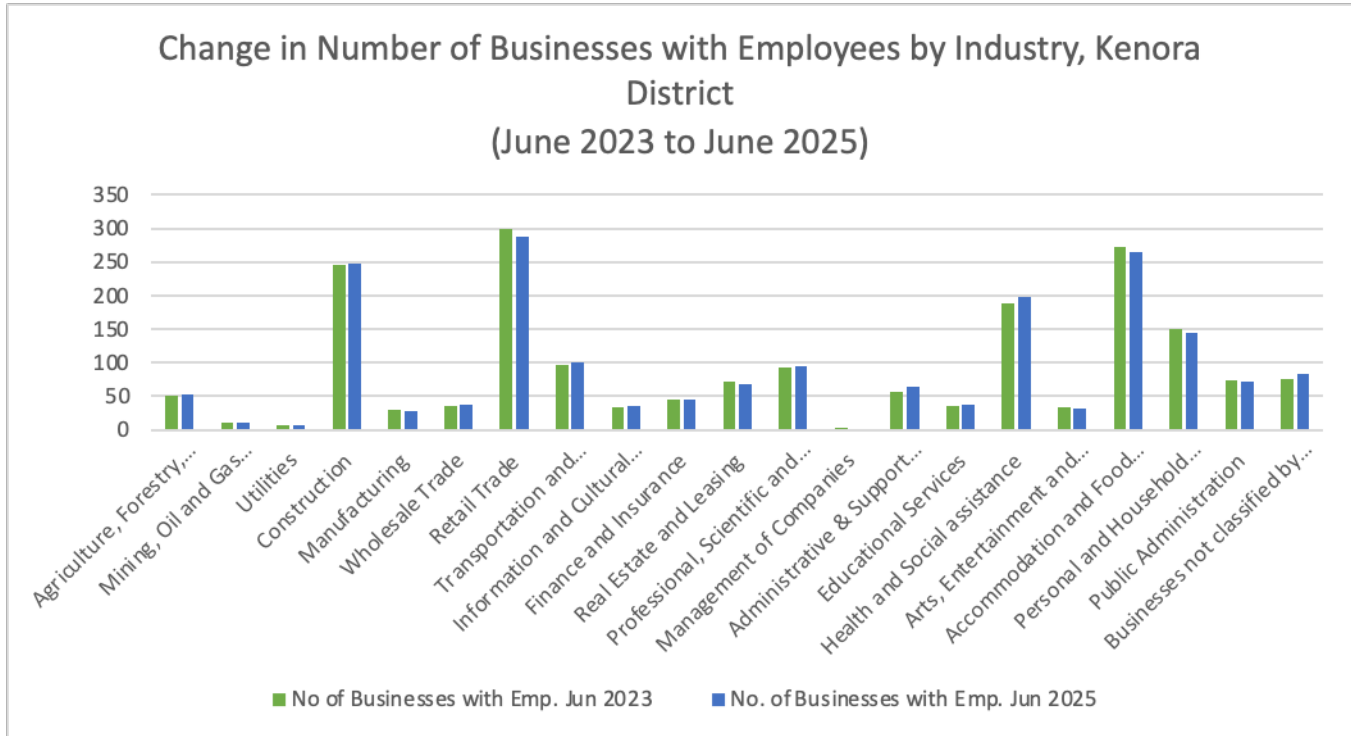
The increase in the number of businesses operating in the Kenora District over the past two years is noteworthy. With 47 additional businesses, the greatest increase by both number and percentage took place in the Administrative and Support Services and Waste Management industry. This sector groups two distinct industries under a single sector. Administrative Support includes services like office support, human resources recruiters, and security. Waste Management involves the collection, treatment, and disposal of waste and includes remediation services. Significant growth also took place in the number of businesses operating in the Kenora District's Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting; Mining; Construction and Health Care and Social Assistance sectors.

In the Kenora District, 57.5% of all businesses are operated by individual entrepreneurs with no employees while 1,910 or 42.5% are businesses with at least one employee. As most workers, jobseekers and graduates work in the local labour market as employees, it's worthwhile to examine changes in the number of businesses with employees and the sectors in which they operate. Table 1B highlights much more stability in the growth of the number of businesses with employees with an increase of 8 businesses (0.4%). The greatest increase took place in the Health Care and Social Assistance and Administrative Support and Waste Management sectors. The greatest decrease took place in Retail Trade.

Table 1B: Change in Number of Businesses with employees June 2023 to June 2025 – Kenora District

Sector	No of Businesses with Emp. Jun 2023	No. of Businesses with Emp. Jun 2025	Absolute Change	Percent change
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting	50	53	3	6
Mining, Oil and Gas Extraction, Quarrying	10	10	0	0
Utilities	6	6	0	0
Construction	245	248	3	1.2
Manufacturing	29	27	(-2)	(-6.9)
Wholesale Trade	35	38	3	8.6
Retail Trade	299	288	(-11)	(-3.7)
Transportation and Warehousing	97	101	4	4.1
Information and Cultural Services	33	36	3	9.1
Finance and Insurance	46	45	(-1)	(-2.2)
Real Estate and Leasing	71	68	(-3)	(-4.2)
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	93	94	1	1.1
Management of Companies	3	2	(-1)	(-33.3)
Administrative & Support Services, Remediation	57	64	7	12.3
Educational Services	36	37	1	2.8
Health and Social assistance	188	198	10	5.3
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	33	31	(-2)	(-6.1)
Accommodation and Food Services	272	265	(-7)	(-2.6)
Personal and Household Services	150	145	(-5)	(-3.3)
Public Administration	74	71	(-3)	(-4.1)
Businesses not classified by industry	75	83	8	10.7
Total	1,902	1,910	8	0.4

Source: Statistics Canada, Canada Business Counts, June 2023 and June 2025



Source: Statistics Canada, Canada Business Counts, June 2023 and June 2025

Finally, Table 1C identifies the sectors with largest companies employing 100 or more as of June 2025.

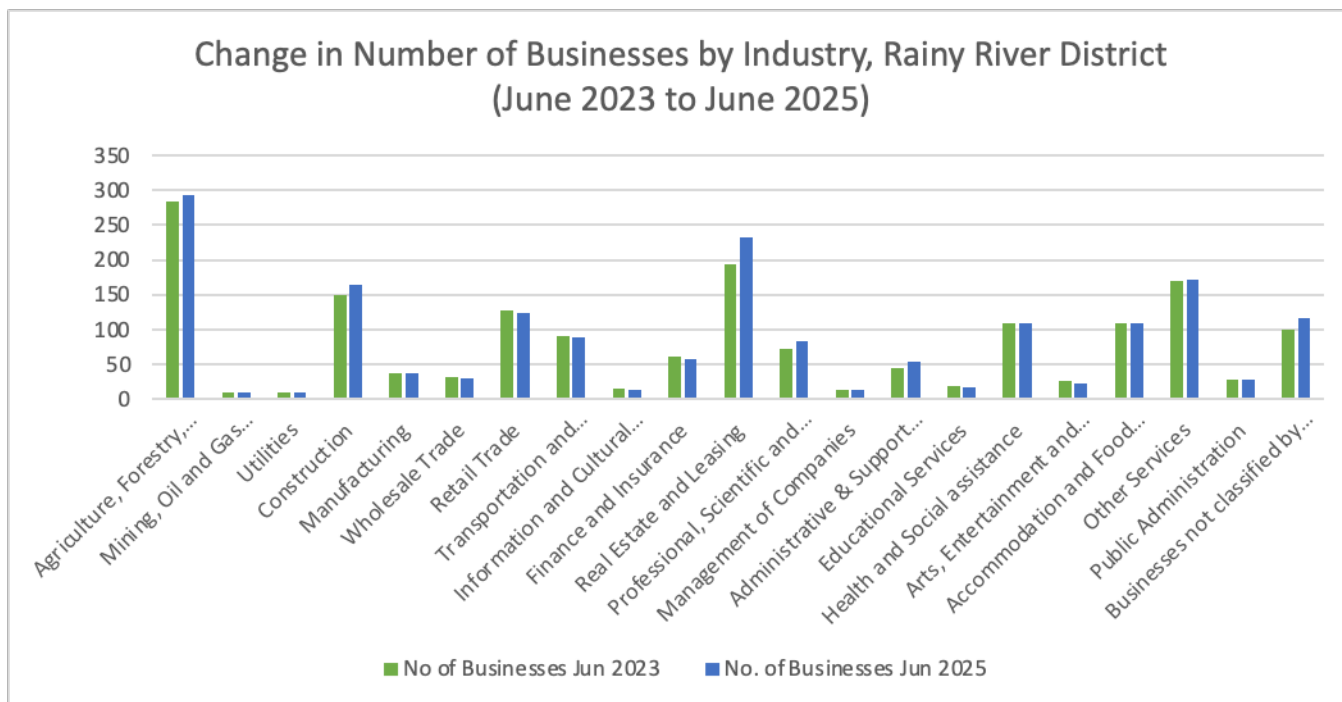
Industries	Employee Size Range	Employee Size Range	Employee Size Range
	100-199	200-499	500+
Agriculture	1		
Mining		1	1
Construction	1	1	0
Manufacturing		2	1
Retail	4		
Transportation and Warehousing	2		
Management of Companies and Enterprises			1
Administration and Waste Management	1		
Educational Services	2	1	2
Health Care and Social Assistance	11	4	4
Other Services	1	0	0
Public Administration	18	8	1

Source: Statistics Canada, Canada Business Counts, June 2025

Table 2A shows that the number of total businesses in the Rainy River District also increased significantly over the past two years. As of June 2025, there were 1,788 total businesses operating in the area, an increase of 81 businesses (4.7%) from 2023. The greatest growth took place in the Construction and Real Estate and Leasing sectors.

Sector	No of Businesses Jun 2023	No. of Businesses Jun 2025	Absolute Change	Percent change
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting	284	292	8	2.8
Mining, Oil and Gas Extraction, Quarrying	11	10	(-1)	(-9.1%)
Utilities	10	10	0	0
Construction	149	164	15	10.1
Manufacturing	37	37	0	0
Wholesale Trade	32	30	(-2)	(-6.3)
Retail Trade	127	124	(-3)	(-2.4)
Transportation and Warehousing	91	89	(-2)	(-2.2)
Information and Cultural Services	15	14	(-1)	(-6.7)
Finance and Insurance	62	57	(-5)	(-8.1)
Real Estate and Leasing	194	233	39	20.1
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	73	83	10	13.7
Management of Companies	14	14	0	0
Administrative & Support Services, Remediation	45	54	9	20
Educational Services	19	17	(-2)	(-10.5)
Health and Social assistance	110	110	0	0
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	27	23	(-4)	(-14.8)
Accommodation and Food Services	109	110	1	0.9
Other Services	169	172	3	1.8
Public Administration	29	29	0	0
Businesses not classified by industry	100	116	16	16
Total	1,707	1,788	81	4.7

Source: Statistics Canada, Canada Business Counts, June 2023 and June 2025



Source: Statistics Canada, Canada Business Counts, June 2023 and June 2025

As in the Kenora District, the increase in the number of businesses with employees in the Rainy River District has been much more stable over the past two years. Table 2B shows there are 680 businesses with employees operating in the area as of June 2025, compared with 679 in 2023 (0.1%). The greatest increase took place in the Construction sector; the most significant decrease took place in the Other Services sector which includes personal and household services such as automotive repairs, hairstyling and laundry services.

Sector	No of Businesses Jun 2023	No. of Businesses Jun 2025	Absolute Change	Percent change
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting	52	49	(-3)	(-5.8)
Mining, Oil and Gas Extraction, Quarrying	3	2	(-1)	(-33.3)
Utilities	7	7	0	0
Construction	76	84	8	10.5
Manufacturing	18	19	1	5.6
Wholesale Trade	17	15	(-2)	(-11.8)
Retail Trade	86	83	(-3)	(-3.5)
Transportation and Warehousing	42	43	1	2.4
Information and Cultural Services	9	9	0	0
Finance and Insurance	19	21	2	10.5
Real Estate and Leasing	23	24	1	4.3
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	36	34	(-2)	(-5.6)

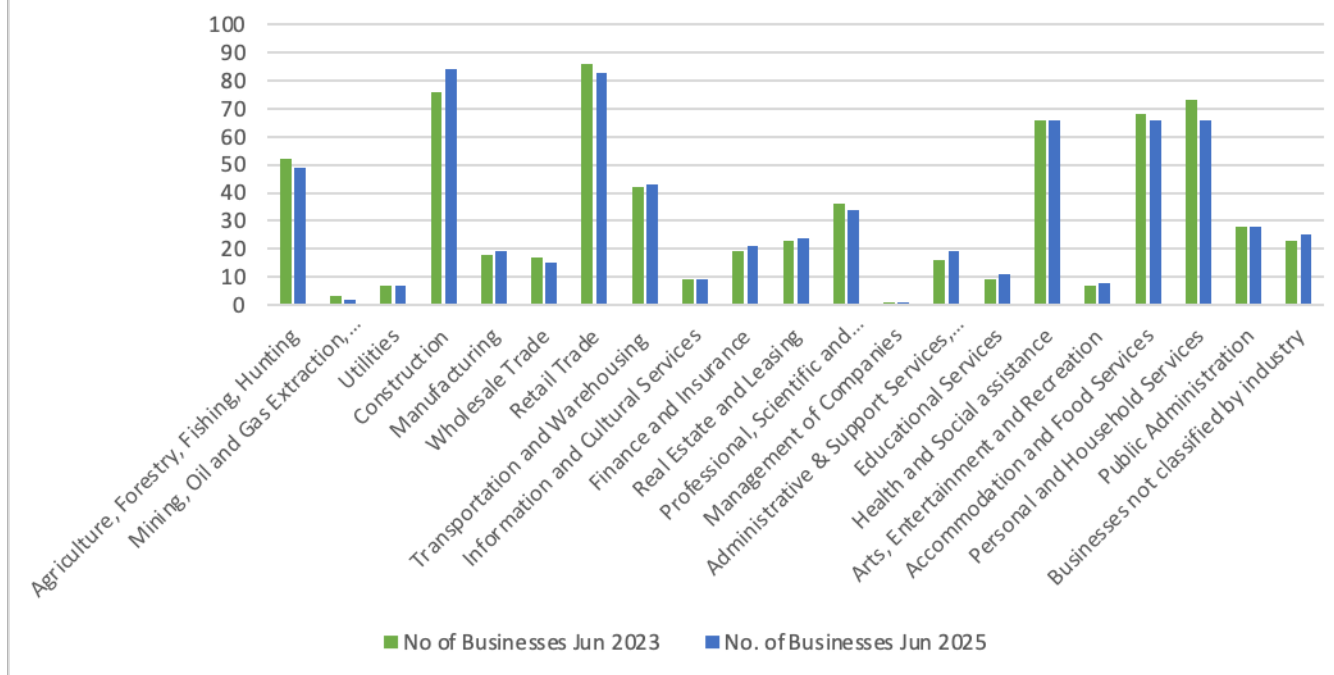
Source: Statistics Canada, Canada Business Counts, June 2023 and June 2025

Table 2B: Change in Number of Businesses with Employees - June 2023 to June 2025 – Rainy River District

Sector	No of Businesses Jun 2023	No. of Businesses Jun 2025	Absolute Change	Percent change
Management of Companies	1	1	0	0
Administrative & Support Services, Remediation	16	19	3	18.8
Educational Services	9	11	2	22.2
Health and Social assistance	66	66	0	0
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	7	8	1	14.3
Accommodation and Food Services	68	66	(-2)	(-2.9)
Personal and Household Services	73	66	(-7)	(-9.6)
Public Administration	28	28	0	0
Businesses not classified by industry	23	25	2	8.7
Total	679	680	1	0.1

Source: Statistics Canada, Canada Business Counts, June 2023 and June 2025

Change in Number of Businesses with Employees by Industry, Rainy River District (June 2023 to June 2025)



Source: Statistics Canada, Canada Business Counts, June 2023 and June 2025

Table 2C identifies the sectors where the largest companies employing 100 or more operate in the Rainy River District as of June 2025.

Table 2C: Number of businesses with 100 or more employees operating in the Rainy River District

Industries	Employee Size Range	Employee Size Range	Employee Size Range
	100-199	200-499	500+
Utilities	1		
Manufacturing	2		
Retail	2		
Administration and Waste Management	1		
Educational Services		1	1
Health Care and Social Assistance	5	1	
Accommodation and Food Services	1		
Public Administration		4	

Source: Statistics Canada, Canada Business Counts, June 2025

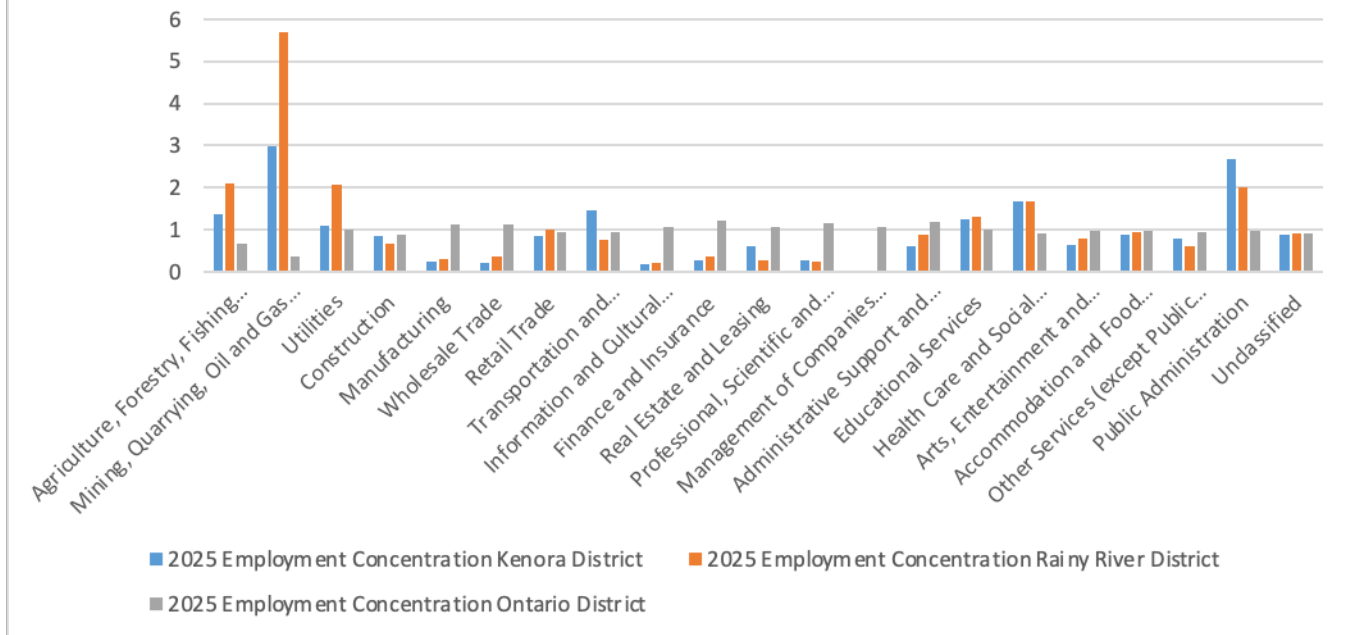
Lightcast Analyst data provides a calculation of the concentration of local workers within each industry relative to the national average. With Canada set at 1.0, Table 3 identifies the employment concentration in the Kenora and Rainy River Districts as compared to Ontario and Canada (at 1.0).

Table 3: Employment Concentration within Sectors

Industry	2025 Employment Concentration		
	Kenora District	Rainy River District	Ontario
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	1.37	2.10	0.66
Mining, Quarrying, Oil and Gas Extraction	2.97	5.70	0.36
Utilities	1.09	2.06	0.99
Construction	0.85	0.67	0.89
Manufacturing	0.23	0.29	1.13
Wholesale Trade	0.22	0.37	1.12
Retail Trade	0.84	1.00	0.95
Transportation and Warehousing	1.46	0.76	0.95
Information and Cultural Industries	0.18	0.21	1.07
Finance and Insurance	0.28	0.37	1.22
Real Estate and Leasing	0.59	0.26	1.07
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	0.28	0.23	1.15
Management of Companies and Enterprises	0.00	0.00	1.05
Administrative Support and Waste Management	0.59	0.89	1.17
Educational Services	1.25	1.32	0.99
Health Care and Social Assistance	1.66	1.67	0.92
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	0.64	0.80	0.97
Accommodation and Food Services	0.87	0.94	0.96
Other Services (except Public Administration)	0.78	0.59	0.94
Public Administration	2.67	2.01	0.98
Unclassified	0.87	0.91	0.91

Source: Lightcast Analyst

Employment Concentration within Industries, 2025 Kenora District, Rainy River District, and Ontario



Source: Lightcast Analyst

With a significantly greater rate than both Ontario and Canada, the Kenora and Rainy River Districts have a high concentration of employment in public administration as well as in Health Care and Social Assistance and Educational Services. The Kenora District has a high employment concentration in Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting; Mining, Quarrying and Oil and Gas Extraction; and Transportation and Warehousing. Employment concentration in the Rainy River District is also observed in Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting and Mining, Quarrying and Oil and Gas Extraction as well as Utilities.

Job postings are always a clear indicator of labour market demand. Table 4 identifies the number of online job postings by industry posted between November 1, 2024 and October 31, 2025.

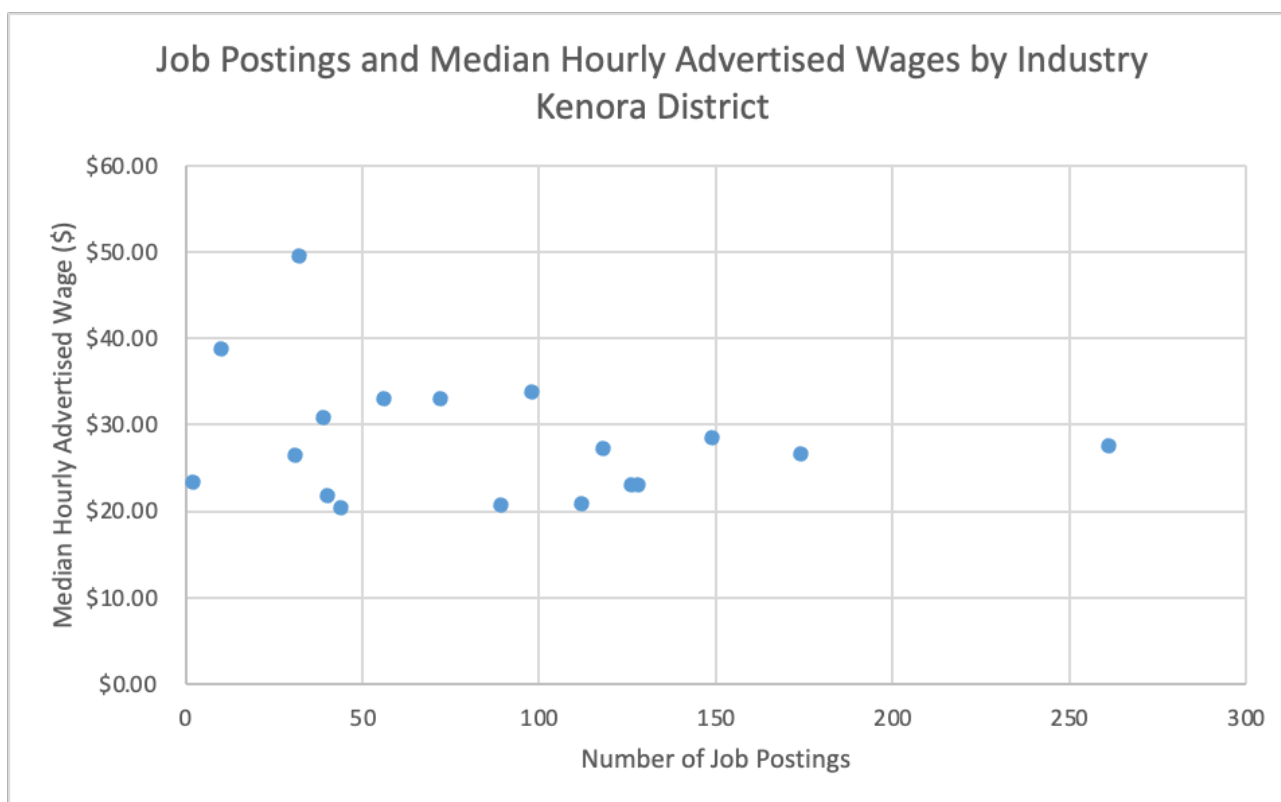
Industries	Kenora District		Rainy River District	
	No of Postings	Median Hourly Advertised Wage	No of Postings	Median Hourly Advertised Wage
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	32	\$49.60	Insuf. Data	Insuf. Data
Mining, Quarrying, Oil and Gas Extraction	27	n/a	n/a	n/a
Utilities	10	\$38.77	6	\$55.02
Construction	56	\$33.11	16	\$40.33
Manufacturing	174	\$26.58	95	\$30.28
Wholesale Trade	44	\$20.37	23	\$20.37
Retail Trade	261	\$27.57	122	\$24.98

Source: Lightcast Analyst

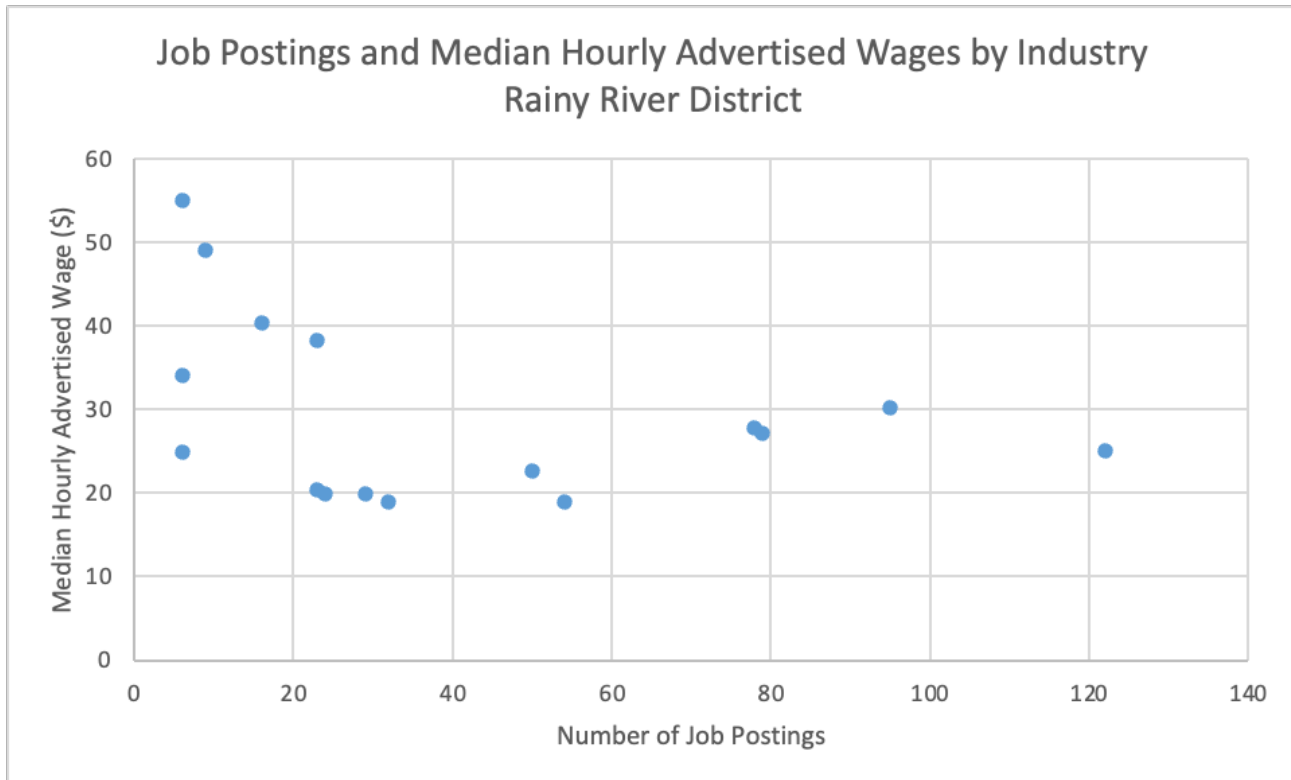
Table 4: Number of job postings and median hourly advertised wage by industry in the Kenora and Rainy River Districts

Industries	Kenora District		Rainy River District	
	No of Postings	Median Hourly Advertised Wage	No of Postings	Median Hourly Advertised Wage
Transportation and Warehousing	112	\$20.92	29	\$19.94
Information and Cultural Industries	39	\$30.89	9	\$49.00
Finance and Insurance	118	\$27.20	79	\$27.20
Real Estate and Leasing	40	\$21.90	24	\$19.94
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	72	\$33.11	32	\$18.95
Management of Companies and Enterprises	2	\$23.45	6	\$34.09
Administrative Support / Waste Management	89	\$20.80	50	\$22.65
Educational Services	149	\$28.55	3	Insuf. Data
Health Care and Social Assistance	126	\$23.08	78	\$27.82
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Accommodation and Food Services	128	\$23.02	54	\$18.95
Other Services (except Public Administration)	31	\$26.46	6	\$24.86
Public Administration	98	\$33.85	23	\$38.28
Total	1,608	\$28.00	824	\$25.05

Source: Lightcast Analyst



Source: Lightcast Analyst



Source: Lightcast Analyst

Clearly, there is demand across all sectors of the economy; however, as previously noted, recent geopolitical events have put an added focus on natural resources particularly mining and critical minerals such as lithium, cobalt, platinum group metals, gold and graphite, necessary for both defense and clean energy technology. They have become an important component of Canada’s strategy for economic security, reduced reliance on other nations, stable supply chains and diversification. Within a challenging global economy, mining offers opportunity to diversify exports and build economic resilience.

Both the Kenora and Rainy River Districts are home to many of these important resources. The Kenora District contains critical minerals like nickel, copper and cobalt, the primary focus of the Kenbridge nickel project located within the Kenora District mining area. Current mining and mineral exploration activity includes two gold mines, one dimensional stone operation, fourteen active advanced stage projects and monitoring of over one hundred mineral exploration projects. The Rainy River District is home to the Drayton-Black Lake gold project and Rainy River mine. Further exploration is underway for lithium, platinum group metals, gold and graphite.

However, there are some key barriers to mining in the Kenora and Rainy River Districts including inadequate infrastructure (roads, rail, power) and workforce challenges including an aging population and chronic skilled labour shortages as well as talent attraction and retention. The Ontario government estimates that a large project like the Ring of Fire will result in 70,000 jobs over 30 years. Heavy construction jobs will be generated to build the necessary infrastructure but then continue as construction miners, heavy equipment operators and drillers are required to build, maintain and repair the physical infrastructure of the mine site. Jobs within the mine itself range from skilled technical roles like mining engineers, metallurgists and blasting technicians to mine labourers.

Considering the short and long-term importance of the mining and construction sectors, the NTAB team decided to examine both sectors further.

THE MINING SECTOR IN THE KENORA AND RAINY RIVER DISTRICTS

Ontario is the largest mineral producer in Canada with \$15.7 billion in mineral exploration alone in 2023. There are currently 36 active mining operations in Ontario including 17 gold mines, 9 base metal mines and various others. As of 2023, there were 4,200 people employed in the Mining, oil and gas and quarrying sector in Northwest Ontario with more than 75% of these employed specifically in mining.

Investment is expected to lead to moderate growth in employment in mining in Ontario in the next decade and beyond.¹

Canada's Job Bank projects that "international efforts to decarbonize the economy and reduce reliance on fossil fuels will lead to greater demand for the metals and minerals needed for a green economy such as copper, nickel and lithium, all of which are mined in Ontario. Additionally, a report from the World Bank Group found that the production of minerals such as graphite, lithium and cobalt could increase by nearly 500% by 2050, in order to meet the growing demand for clean energy technologies".²

The Ontario Mining Association reports that currently the sector directly employs approximately 22,000 people in Ontario and, as of 2023-2024, 12% of the workforce is indigenous.³ The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) found that as of 2020 income for Indigenous Peoples are 16% higher in mining sub-regions in Northern Ontario than in non-mining sub-regions.⁴ However, with 21% of workers age 55 and older, workforce shortages present a challenge to current operations and projected growth.

Lightcast Analyst data allows us to identify the occupations that comprise an industry. Tables 5A and B provide a breakdown of the occupations that employ ten or more people in the mining sector in the Kenora and Rainy River District.

NOC	Occupation	Employed in Industry (2024)	Percent of Total Jobs in the Industry	Median Hourly Wage*
83100	Underground production and development miners	330	28.2%	\$41.54
72400	Construction millwrights and industrial mechanics	80	6.9%	\$39.55
72401	Heavy-duty equipment mechanics	52	4.5%	\$38.09
73400	Heavy equipment operators	51	4.4%	\$33.24
72201	Industrial electricians	50	4.3%	\$43.19
82020	Supervisors, mining and quarrying	40	3.5%	\$62.31
22101	Geological and mineral technologists/technicians	35	3.0%	\$28.34
73300	Transport truck drivers	33	2.8%	\$25.47
84100	Underground mine service and support workers	30	2.6%	\$40.07
83101	Oil and gas well drillers, services, testers & related	21	1.8%	\$48.58
72106	Welders and related machine operators	17	1.5%	\$31.04

*Median wage is provided for the Northwestern Economic Region which includes the Kenora and Rainy River Districts and Thunder Bay

1 Canada Job Bank, Employment Outlook, <https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/trend-analysis/job-market-reports/ontario/sectoral-profile-mining>

2 Ibid

3 Ontario Mining Association, Ontario Mining, Economic Contribution, <https://www.oma.on.ca/ontario-mining/economic-contribution>

4 OECD 2025, Mining Regions and Cities in Northern Ontario, Canada, OECD Rural Studies, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/d3676159-en>

Table 5A: Numbers employed by occupation in the Kenora District's mining sector

NOC	Occupation	Employed in Industry (2024)	Percent of Total Jobs in the Industry	Median Hourly Wage*
72500	Crane operators	16	1.4%	\$37.27
80010	Managers in natural resources production & fishing	13	1.2%	\$73.56
21102	Geoscientists and oceanographers	13	1.1%	\$51.12
93100	Central control/process operat's, mineral & metal	13	1.1%	\$48.65
21300	Mining engineers	12	1.0%	\$49.29
94100	Machine operators, mineral and metal processing	11	0.9%	\$33.20
75100	Construction trades helpers and labourers	11	0.9%	\$29.18
93101	Central control/process operators, petroleum & gas	11	0.9%	\$54.96
72020	Contractors and supervisors, mechanic trades	10	0.9%	\$42.60
22100	Chemical technologists and technicians	10	0.9%	\$29.40

*Median wage is provided for the Northwestern Economic Region which includes the Kenora and Rainy River Districts and Thunder Bay

Table 5B: Numbers employed by occupation in the Rainy River District's mining sector

NOC	Occupation	Employed in Industry (2024)	Percent of Total Jobs in the Industry	Median Hourly Wage
83100	Underground production and development miners	180	31.9%	\$41.54
72400	Construction millwrights and industrial mechanics	41	7.3%	\$39.55
72401	Heavy-duty equipment mechanics	28	4.9%	\$38.09
72201	Industrial electricians	26	4.7%	\$43.19
73400	Heavy equipment operators	24	4.3%	\$33.24
82020	Supervisors, mining and quarrying	21	3.8%	\$62.31
22101	Geological and mineral technologists/technicians	19	3.4%	\$28.34
84100	Underground mine service and support workers	16	2.9%	\$40.07
73300	Transport truck drivers	14	2.4%	\$25.47

Source: Lightcast Analyst

Table 6 further examines these occupations to identify the potential impact of an aging workforce along with the employment outlook for 2024 to 2026 issued by Canada Job Bank.

Table 6: Mining occupations affected by an aging workforce in the Kenora and Rainy River Districts

NOC	Occupations in Mining	Percent Age 50+ in the Kenora District	Percent Age 50+ in the Rainy River District	Employment Outlook in North West Ontario ER*
21102	Geoscientists and oceanographers	25	100	Moderate
21330	Mining engineers	0	n/a	Good
22101	Geological and mineral technologists and technicians	0	n/a	Moderate
72201	Industrial electricians	28.6	0	Moderate

* Median wage is provided for the Northwestern Economic Region which includes the Kenora and Rainy River Districts and Thunder Bay

n/a = Not applicable

Source: Statistics Canada Census 2021; Canada Job Bank Employment Outlook

Table 6: Mining occupations affected by an aging workforce in the Kenora and Rainy River Districts

NOC	Occupations in Mining	Percent Age 50+ in the Kenora District	Percent Age 50+ in the Rainy River District	Employment Outlook in North West Ontario ER*
72400	Construction millwrights and industrial mechanics	41.7	21.1	Moderate
72401	Heavy duty equipment mechanics	46.7	13.3	Moderate
72500	Crane operators	0	n/a	Undetermined
73300	Transport truck drivers	61.4	45.3	Moderate
73400	Heavy equipment operators	43.6	45.7	Moderate
75110	Construction trades helpers and labourers	16.8	n/a	Moderate
80010	Managers in natural resources production and fishing	60	n/a	Undetermined
82020	Supervisors, mining and quarrying	42.9	33.3	Moderate
83100	Underground production and development miners	36.7	0	Moderate
83101	Oil and gas well drillers, servicers, testers & related	0	n/a	Undetermined
84100	Underground mine service and support workers	22.2	0	Moderate
93100	Central control process operators, mineral and metal	0	n/a	Undetermined
93101	Central control process operators, petroleum and gas	0	n/a	Undetermined
94100	Machine operators, mineral and metal processing	0	n/a	Undetermined

* Median wage is provided for the Northwestern Economic Region which includes the Kenora and Rainy River Districts and Thunder Bay

n/a = Not applicable

Source: Statistics Canada Census 2021; Canada Job Bank Employment Outlook

The Canada Job Bank calculates the Employment Outlook for an occupation based on several factors including the number of projected new positions, the age of the current labour force and the current number of unemployed workers in the occupation. This three-year outlook is based on the 2024-2026 timeframe.

In the case of mining occupations in the North West Ontario Economic Region the following factors were identified:

- Employment growth will lead to a moderate number of new positions.
- Several positions will become available due to retirements.
- There are a moderate number of unemployed workers with recent experience.

Of the 18 occupations comprising the Kenora District's mining sector, ten had 20% or more workers that were age 50 and older as of the Statistics Canada Census conducted in 2021 or more than 55% of the sector's occupations. In the Rainy River District, five of the nine occupations comprising the sector or more than 55% also had 20% or more workers age 50 and older as of 2021.

More than 86% of the workforce in the mining sector is male as compared to 52.6% of Ontario's total workforce. Almost 98% of the workers in the sector are employed full-time and almost one-half have a post-secondary certificate or diploma compared to 32% of the labour market as a whole.

THE CONSTRUCTION SECTOR IN THE KENORA AND RAINY RIVER DISTRICTS

Mining generates a number of construction jobs during both the development and operational phases of the mine. These jobs include specialized roles within the mine itself as well as broader infrastructure development in the surrounding area. A typical or “representational” mine in Ontario can generate nearly 2,000 jobs annually during its construction phase.⁵

Canada’s Job Bank projects that “Ontario’s non-residential construction sector will likely continue its trajectory of growth, supported by investments in infrastructure and industrial construction. The non-residential sector is projected to grow and peak by 2027 and sustain a strong growth trend until 2029.”⁶

Tables 7A and B identify the occupations that comprise the Construction industry employing ten people or more in the Kenora and Rainy River Districts.

NOC	Occupation	Employed in Industry (2024)	% of Total Jobs in the Industry	Median Hourly Wage*
75110	Construction trades helper and labourer	212	11.8	\$29.18
72402	Heating, refrigeration & air conditioning mechanics	110	6.1	\$39.95
72310	Carpenters	86	4.8	\$34.62
72200	Electricians (except industrial and power systems)	74	4.1	\$36.35
72021	Contractors/supervisors, heavy equipment operators	68	3.8	\$43.09
73400	Heavy equipment operators	65	3.6	\$33.24
70010	Construction managers	60	3.4	\$53.76
72300	Plumbers	60	3.3	\$35.24
72500	Crane operators	53	2.9	\$37.27
73200	Residential/commercial installers and servicers	51	2.9	\$25.72
73300	Transport truck drivers	50	2.8	\$25.47
72013	Contractors and supervisors, carpentry trades	38	2.1	\$40.91
72320	Bricklayers	30	1.7	\$43.01
72301	Steamfitters, pipefitters, sprinkler system installers	29	1.6	\$51.20
72401	Heavy equipment mechanics	29	1.6	\$38.09
22303	Construction estimators	29	1.6	\$35.48
72011	Contractor/Supervisor, electrical/telecommunication	28	1.6	\$50.46
72406	Elevators constructors and mechanics	28	1.6	\$51.73
72204	Telecommunications line and cable installers	27	1.5	\$38.55
72203	Electrical power line and cable workers	25	1.4	\$47.92
72102	Sheet metal workers	25	1.4	\$47.40
73112	Painters and decorators	24	1.3	\$27.69

Source: Lightcast Analyst

* Median wage is provided for the Northwestern Economic Region which includes the Kenora and Rainy River Districts and Thunder Bay

5 Peter Dungan and Steve Murphy, *Ontario Mining: A Partner in Prosperity Building - The Economic Impacts of a Representative Mine in Ontario*, December 2007

6 Canada Job Bank, <https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/trend-analysis/job-market-reports/ontario/sectoral-profile-construction>

Table 7A: Numbers employed by occupation in the Kenora District's construction sector

NOC	Occupation	Employed in Industry (2024)	% of Total Jobs in the Industry	Median Hourly Wage*
72106	Welders and related machine operators	22	1.2	\$31.04
73102	Plasterers, drywall installers, finishers, lathers	22	1.2	\$31.19
72014	Contractors/supervisors, other construction trades	18	1.0	\$40.98
12200	Accounting technicians and bookkeepers	17	1.0	\$26.70
72400	Construction millwrights and industrial mechanics	17	1.0	\$39.55
73113	Floor covering installers	17	0.9	\$27.11
72205	Telecommunications installation/cable tv service	16	0.9	\$35.32
21300	Civil engineers	14	0.8	\$43.08
72020	Contractors and supervisors, mechanic trades	14	0.8	\$42.60
62100	Technical sales specialists - wholesale trade	14	0.8	\$35.21
72501	Water well drillers	13	0.7	\$35.14
72105	Ironworkers	13	0.7	\$48.62
72321	Insulators	12	0.7	\$35.69
72012	Contractors and supervisors, pipefitting trades	12	0.7	\$54.72
72201	Industrial electricians	11	0.6	\$43.19
13110	Administrative assistants	11	0.6	\$27.75
73101	Tilesetters	10	0.6	\$29.86
14200	Accounting and related clerks	10	0.6	\$25.67

Source: Lightcast Analyst

* Median wage is provided for the Northwestern Economic Region which includes the Kenora and Rainy River Districts and Thunder Bay

Table 7B: Numbers employed by occupation in the Rainy River District's Construction sector

NOC	Occupation	Employed in Industry (2024)	% of Total Jobs in the Industry	Median Hourly Wage*
75110	Construction trades helper and labourer	43	11.5	\$29.18
72402	Heating, refrigeration & air conditioning mechanics	25	6.8	\$39.95
72310	Carpenters	17	4.6	\$34.62
72200	Electricians (except industrial and power systems)	17	4.5	\$36.35
73400	Heavy equipment operators	16	4.2	\$33.24
70010	Construction managers	15	3.9	\$53.76
72500	Crane operators	14	3.8	\$37.27
72021	Contractors/supervisors, heavy equipment crews	14	3.7	\$43.09
72300	Plumbers	14	3.6	\$35.24
73200	Residential/commercial installers and servicers	13	3.5	\$25.72
73300	Transport truck drivers	12	3.3	\$25.47

Source: Lightcast Analyst

* Median wage is provided for the Northwestern Economic Region which includes the Kenora and Rainy River Districts and Thunder Bay

Table 8 further examines these occupations to identify the potential impact of an aging workforce in the Kenora and Rainy River Districts as well as the employment outlook issued by Canada Job Bank.

Table 8: Construction occupations affected by an aging workforce in the Kenora and Rainy River Districts				
NOC	Occupations in Construction	Percent Age 50+ in the Kenora District	Percent Age 50+ in the Rainy River District	Employment Outlook in North West Ontario ER*
12200	Accounting technicians and bookkeepers	70.0	n/a	Very Good
13110	Administrative assistants	41.9	n/a	Good
14200	Accounting and related clerks	45.3	n/a	Moderate
21300	Civil engineers	0.0	n/a	Good
22303	Construction estimators	40.0	n/a	Undetermined
62100	Technical sales specialists - wholesale trades	0.0	n/a	Good
70010	Construction managers	18.8	0.0	Good
72011	Contractors and supervisors - electrical trades	45.5	n/a	Moderate
72012	Contractors and supervisors - pipefitting trades	0.0	0.0	Undetermined
72013	Contractors and supervisors - carpentry trades	40.0	0.0	Moderate
72014	Contractors and supervisors - other trades	40.0	0.0	Moderate
72020	Contractors and supervisors - mechanic trades	30.0	0.0	Moderate
72021	Contractors and supervisors-heavy equipment crews	48.0	40.0	Moderate
72102	Sheet metal workers	0.0	0.0	Moderate
72105	Ironworkers	0.0	0.0	Undetermined
72106	Welders and related machine operators	29.2	0.0	Moderate
72200	Electricians (except industrial and power systems)	30.0	0.0	Moderate
72201	Industrial electricians	28.6	0.0	Moderate
72203	Electrical powerline and cable workers	0.0	0.0	Good
72204	Telecommunications line and cable installers	20.0	0.0	Moderate
72205	Telecommunications equipment installers	0.0	0.0	Moderate
72300	Plumbers	31.6	0.0	Good
72301	Steamfitters, pipefitters & sprinkler systems installer	0.0	0.0	Moderate
72310	Carpenters	24.7	33.3	Moderate
72320	Bricklayers	0.0	0.0	Undetermined
72321	Insulators	0.0	0.0	Undetermined
72400	Construction millwrights and industrial mechanics	41.7	0.0	Moderate
72401	Heavy duty equipment mechanics	46.7	0.0	Moderate
72402	Heating, refrigeration and air conditioning mechanics	0.0	0.0	Moderate
72406	Elevator constructors and mechanics	0.0	0.0	Undetermined
72500	Crane operators	0.0	0.0	Undetermined
72501	Water well drillers	0.0	0.0	Undetermined

* Median wage is provided for the Northwestern Economic Region which includes the Kenora and Rainy River Districts and Thunder Bay

n/a = Not applicable

Source: Statistics Canada Census 2021; Canada Job Bank Employment Outlook

Table 8: Construction occupations affected by an aging workforce in the Kenora and Rainy River Districts

NOC	Occupations in Construction	Percent Age 50+ in the Kenora District	Percent Age 50+ in the Rainy River District	Employment Outlook in North West Ontario ER*
73101	Tilesetters	0.0	0.0	Undetermined
73102	Plasters, drywall installers and finishers	0.0	0.0	Undetermined
73112	Painters and decorators	66.7	0.0	Undetermined
73113	Floor installers	0.0	0.0	Undetermined
73200	Residential and commercial installers and servicers	0.0	0.0	Undetermined
73300	Transport truck drivers	61.4	45.3	Moderate
73400	Heavy equipment operators	43.6	45.7	Moderate
75110	Construction trades helpers and labourers	16.8	40.0	Moderate

* Median wage is provided for the Northwestern Economic Region which includes the Kenora and Rainy River Districts and Thunder Bay

n/a = Not applicable

Source: Statistics Canada Census 2021; Canada Job Bank Employment Outlook

Of the 40 occupations comprising the Kenora District's construction sector, 21 had 20% or more workers that were age 50 and older as of the Statistics Canada Census conducted in 2021 or more than 52% of the sector's occupations. In the Rainy River District, five of the eleven occupations comprising the sector or more than 45% also had 20% or more workers age 50 and older as of 2021.

Canada's job bank reports that the average hourly wage of workers in the mining, quarrying and oil and gas sector in Ontario is \$43.91 as of 2023. This was higher than the provincial average of \$29.18. More than 86% of the workforce is male as compared to 52.6% of Ontario's total workforce. Almost 98% of the workers in the sector are employed full-time and almost one-half have a post-secondary certificate or diploma compared to 32% of the labour market as a whole.

And, mining is not the only area of growth placing demand on the construction sector. In the Kenora District, for example, the geological repository for used nuclear fuel to be located on the Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation and the Town of Ignace, the All Nations Hospital project in the Kenora District and residential housing demand will create 100's of construction job and put further pressure on labour market demand. Similar demand exists in the Rainy River District generated not only by large scale mining projects, but by transportation infrastructure upgrades through the Northern Highways Program and major projects to be undertaken in the education sector combined with needed residential housing.

THE IMPACT OF GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) are artificial intelligence systems that are capable of creating new content, such as text, images, music or computer code. Research conducted by the Institute for Research on Public Policy (Canada), "Harnessing Generative AI: Navigating the Transformative Impact on Canada's Labour Force", one of the most recent studies on the impact of Artificial Intelligence, identified three dimensions of impact on work and the workforce:

1. The impact of AI varies substantially across different types of skills and work activities. Clerical and any occupation requiring the processing of a significant amount of data are most at risk while those involving human interaction, social perception, and instruction demonstrate markedly lower vulnerability.

2. Rather than eliminating entire occupations, generative AI is more likely to transform the composition of work activities within jobs resulting in a moderate automation risk or partial rather than complete automation.
3. Significant variations exist across industries and regions. They project that regions like the north and industries like mining, construction and manufacturing are more at-risk of automation as there is a greater share of high-risk employment.⁷

The top five industries with the highest share of high-risk occupations include transportation and warehousing (56.4%); manufacturing (51.9%); construction (50%); mining, quarrying and oil and gas extraction (47.7%); and agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting (36%). In sectors like transportation, warehousing, manufacturing and construction, generative AI can optimize workflows, analyze data, generate schedules and support customer service. In sectors like mining, key applications include enhancing prospecting and deposit analysis, optimizing mining methods, improving worker safety and environmental monitoring and increasing operational efficiency throughout the supply chain.⁸

Resource-based industries like mining, quarrying, oil and gas are vulnerable to automation to almost 67 percent in remote northern areas. “The manual aspects such as equipment operation and fieldwork will likely require significant investments in specialized equipment and technology. These investments may only be feasible where considerable capital has already been committed.”⁹ It must be remembered, that “real-world adoption also depends on economic factors, business incentives, and investment costs.

And, crucially, while generative AI may be technically feasible, AI talent and an AI ready workforce are key barriers to implementation.¹⁰

To address this skills bottleneck, researchers at the Institute for Research on Public Policy recommends the implementation of digital literacy instruction at the secondary and post-secondary levels as well as complementary skills like critical thinking, problem-solving and leadership. They also recommend that the government facilitate work-based learning programs providing hands-on experience in AI. Apprenticeships and internships are effective at connecting education to real-world industry needs.

Because the rate of implementation varies by industry and region, workforce strategies should be tailored to the specific economic contexts of the specific geographic area.¹¹

7 Oschinski, Matthias and Walia, Ruhani, *Harnessing Generative AI: Navigating the Transformative Impact on Canada's Labour Market*, Institute of Research on Public Policy, May 2025, p. 3

8 Corrigan, Caitlan C. and Ikonnikova, Svetlana, *A review of the use of AI in the mining industry: Insights and ethical considerations for multi-objective optimization*, 2024

9 Oschinski, Matthias and Walia, Ruhani, *Harnessing Generative AI: Navigating the Transformative Impact on Canada's Labour Market*, Institute of Research on Public Policy, May 2025, p. 19

10 *Ibid*, p. 32

11 Oschinski, Matthias and Walia, Ruhani, *Harnessing Generative AI: Navigating the Transformative Impact on Canada's Labour Market*, Institute of Research on Public Policy, May 2025, p. 32-

LABOUR MARKET SUPPLY

Since 2022, we have used the Statistics Canada Census conducted in 2021 to identify changes in the general population as well as the employed labour force. The next national Census will be conducted by Statistics Canada in May 2026. It will introduce several changes to questions related to the labour force including allowing respondents to identify themselves as retired and show a hybrid arrangement as their workforce. There are also changes to the duration of college education. Employment information gathered by the Census is used to assess the economic conditions of communities and specific populations such as Indigenous people and immigrants. Industry and occupation information is used to forecast job opportunities. Results of the May 2026 census will begin to become available late in 2026 or early in 2027.¹²

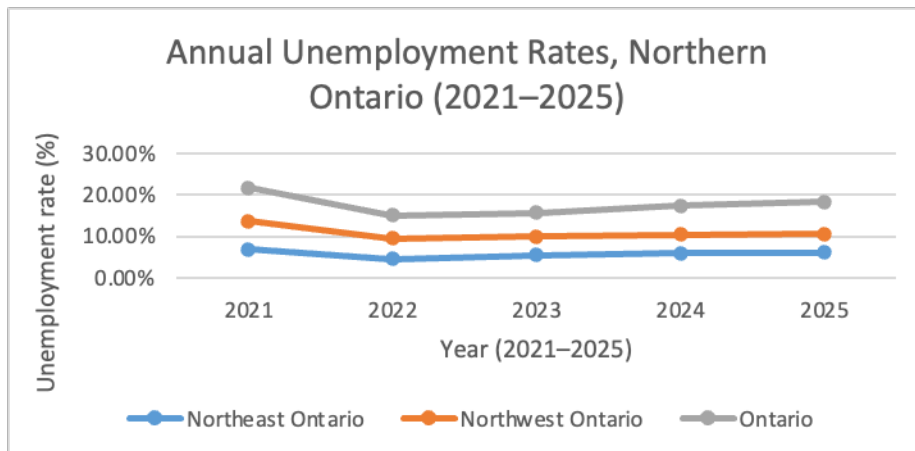
While the census is conducted every five years, the Labour Force Survey is conducted monthly by Statistics Canada monthly. This survey, administered randomly to approximately 65,000 Canadian households, provides key economic data on labour force demographics, employment, unemployment, hours worked, industries and occupations. While the Census provides data for small geographic areas such as census amalgamations and divisions, the Labour Force Survey data is produced for larger geographic areas such as economic regions.

LABOUR FORCE STATUS

Table 9 provides the annual unemployment rate for the past five years by economic regions. While the rate of unemployment began to climb in the past two years in both North Eastern Ontario and Ontario overall, unemployment in Northwestern Ontario has remained stable at 4.5% to 4.6%. This is a clear indicator of significant and ongoing labour market demand in the region.

Geography	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Northeast Ontario	6.8%	4.5%	5.4%	5.9%	6.0%
Northwest Ontario	6.8%	5.0%	4.6%	4.5%	4.6%
Ontario	8.1%	5.6%	5.6%	7.0%	7.7%

Source: Statistics Canada. Table 14-10-0464-01, Labour force characteristics by province, territory and economic region, annual



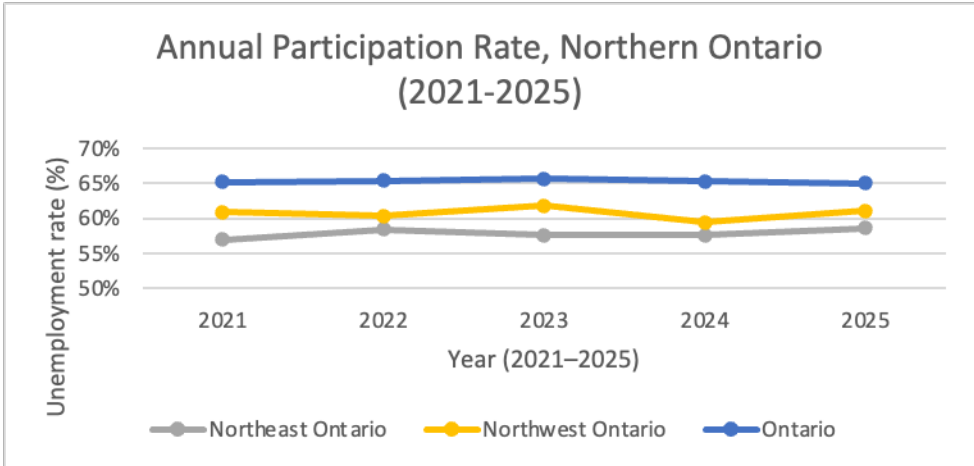
Source: Statistics Canada. Table 14-10-0464-01, Labour force characteristics by province, territory and economic region, annual

12 <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2026/road-enroute/index-eng.cfm>

Table 10 looks at the participation rate in the North as compared to Ontario. Participation rate is a calculation of the percentage of people who are either working or looking for work. While the participation rate in northwest Ontario is higher than other areas of the region, boosting participation would alleviate demand.

Geography	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Northeast Ontario	57.0%	58.4%	57.6%	57.6%	58.6%
Northwest Ontario	60.9%	60.3%	61.8%	59.4%	61.1%
Ontario	65.2%	65.4%	65.6%	65.3%	65.0%

Source: Statistics Canada. Table 14-10-0464-01, Labour force characteristics by province, territory and economic region, annual



Source: Statistics Canada. Table 14-10-0464-01, Labour force characteristics by province, territory and economic region, annual

Table 11 compares the number of people collecting Regular Employment Insurance benefits in October 2024 with October 2025 by age and gender. Despite economic challenges nationally, for the second year in a row, the number collecting these benefits remained stable. Data for Ontario and Canada offers context for our local results. In many cases, the number receiving benefits locally decreased. In the Kenora District, 410 males and 290 females received Employment Insurance as of October 2025 as compared to 420 males and 240 females in October 2024. In total, there were 40 more individuals collecting regular employment insurance benefits in the Kenora District in 2025 as compared to the previous year, an increase of 6%.

In the Rainy River District, there were 90 males collecting regular employment insurance benefits in 2025 as compared to 100 in 2024 and 70 females collecting benefits compared to 80 in October 2024. In total, there were 160 people in the Rainy River District receiving benefits in October 2025 or 20 fewer than the previous year. This is a decrease of 11%. For context, there were 15% more people in Ontario collecting regular employment insurance benefits in October 2025 as compared to October 2024. It must be noted that in April 2025, the government of Canada made changes to the eligibility to collect Employment Insurance benefits.¹³

13 Additional information about changes to Employment Insurance benefits eligibility, please visit <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/news/2025/03/the-government-of-canada-introduces-new-employment-insurance-measures-to-support-canadian-workers-impacted-by-foreign-tariffs.html>

Table 11: Employment Insurance Recipients (Regular Benefits) in the Kenora and Rainy River Districts

EI Recipients - Regular Benefits	Kenora District			Rainy River District			Ontario	Canada
	Oct 2024	Oct 2025	Percent Change	Oct 2024	Oct 2025	Percent Change	Percent Change	Percent Change
Males								
Age 15 to 24	60	50	(-16.7%)	20	10	(-50.0%)	7.7%	9.5%
Age 25 to 54	260	230	(-11.5%)	50	60	20.0%	12.5%	13.8%
Age 55 and older	100	130	30.0%	30	20	(-33.3%)	16.7%	14.2%
Females								
Age 15 to 24	20	40	100.0%	10	10	0.0%	7.5%	9.7%
Age 25 to 54	150	170	13.3%	40	30	(-25.0%)	26.5%	23.1%
Age 55 and older	70	80	14.3%	30	30	0.0%	33.1%	23.4%

Source: Statistics Canada Table 14-10-0323-01, Employment Insurance beneficiaries by Census Division, monthly, unadjusted for seasonality

Statistics Canada Taxfiler data measures the number of people moving in and out of our region. From 2013 to 2019, there were more people leaving the Kenora and Rainy River Districts than moving to the area. However, since 2020, the situation has changed with in-migration exceeding out-migration. Between 2019 and 2024, there was significant net in-migration into the Kenora District of 745 people – more than double the in-migration of 209 between 2018 and 2023. The net in-migration of 450 people into the Rainy River District 2019 and 2024 was very close to double the 249 experienced between 2018 and 2023.

Table 12: Migration in and out of the Kenora and Rainy River Districts

Kenora District – 2019 to 2024			
Age Range	Total In-Migration	Total Out-Migration	Net Migration
0 to 17	1,938	2,061	(-123)
18 to 24	1,348	1,132	216
25 to 44	4,174	3,181	993
45 to 64	1,510	1,429	81
65 +	452	874	(-422)
Total	9,422	8,677	745
Rainy River District – 2019 to 2024			
Age Range	Total In-Migration	Total Out-Migration	Net Migration
0 to 17	606	471	135
18 to 24	335	389	(-54)
25 to 44	1,150	849	301
45 to 64	485	378	107
65 +	219	258	(-39)
Total	2,795	2,345	450

Source: Statistics Canada Taxfiler data, 2024

LOCAL LABOUR MARKET INSIGHTS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Labour market information comes in two forms. Statistical data, also known as quantitative data, provides valuable insight into population demographics, historical patterns, and evolving trends. Data gathered through engagement with employers, employer associations, educators, service providers, and members of the general public provides qualitative, or real-time, information related to opportunities, challenges, and future potential.

In addition to regular engagement with community partners throughout the year, the Northwest Training and Adjustment Board conducts two sessions dedicated to gathering planning feedback. The first session provides employment service providers with an opportunity to discuss service outcomes from the past year and identify opportunities for collaboration. The second session seeks feedback from businesses and the broader community.

Several themes emerged through these consultations:

CHALLENGES TO NEWCOMER AND RESIDENT ATTRACTION AND RETENTION

Whether a newcomer to Canada or a long-time Canadian resident, people are often unaware of what life in the North is like. Many are unprepared for the vastness of the region and the need to travel longer distances to get to work or access essential services such as child care. Youth who leave the region and later return are valuable assets, and continued attention should be paid to both attraction and retention. This is further complicated by the limited availability and high cost of rental housing.

Northern communities, like many communities across Canada, continue to work through challenges related to diversity and cultural awareness. Experiences of discrimination and exclusion were raised by participants across age groups and backgrounds, often linked to limited exposure to different cultures rather than ill intent. There is a need for more welcoming community environments, along with increased opportunities for cultural understanding and awareness. A multi-cultural facility and broader awareness initiatives were identified as potential supports. Newcomers to Canada, in particular, require stronger social supports, and there is a noted lack of cultural and religious amenities in many communities.

MISALIGNMENT OF JOB REQUIREMENTS AND WORKER SKILLS

Difficulties between employers and workers, including those with post-secondary education, were commonly raised during consultations. Industries that require a high degree of customer service, such as retail and hospitality, continue to face challenges. Youth, many of whom have grown up in highly digital environments, were described as less interested in frequent in-person interaction and more likely to seek flexibility in areas such as scheduling or hybrid work arrangements. Employers noted concerns related to reliability and wage expectations, while workers expressed frustration with working conditions. In many cases, neither side feels well positioned to compromise.

A range of factors, including parenting approaches, the influence of social media, and the impacts of pandemic-related disruptions, were identified as contributing to gaps in problem-solving, resilience, and confidence among some youth. Participants noted that setbacks can discourage repeated attempts, limiting opportunities to build these skills. Employers also

identified gaps in practical, day-to-day workplace skills, such as keyboarding or using voicemail. While teaching these skills is viewed as important, it is also time-consuming, and employers reported being less engaged in training than in the past. Greater awareness of the value of transferable skills, including those traditionally emphasized within Indigenous knowledge systems, was identified as a potential area for improvement.

CHALLENGES TO TRANSITIONING WORKERS TO NEW INDUSTRIES

Consultation participants identified a lack of training programs tailored to the specific needs of workers transitioning into new industries. Universities were described as underutilized and in need of being more accessible and flexible in order to respond to evolving labour market needs and offer faster pathways to advancement. Participants emphasized that skilled trades pathways should receive the same level of attention as university-based options, along with improved interprovincial recognition of skills certifications and licenses. Workers facing career transitions may fear change and are often unaware of available supports. Barriers such as limited transportation, child care availability, and a high cost of living can further restrict participation in training and employment opportunities.

Experiential learning was consistently identified as a valuable approach, particularly when paired with subsidies to support employers in covering on-the-job training costs and temporary reductions in productivity during training periods. This type of learning was viewed as beneficial for both youth and transitioning workers. On-the-job learning allows individuals to demonstrate not only technical skills, but also attributes such as reliability, personal responsibility, cultural competencies, and work ethic.

While online training presents additional opportunities, participants noted that completion rates can be low. Challenges related to digital literacy remain, and access to computers and reliable internet, including through libraries, is not consistent for all individuals.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND LOCAL BUSINESS GROWTH

Entrepreneurs in the region face a range of challenges, including labour market shortages, limited access to start-up capital, and an aging cohort of business owners who are seeking pathways to transition ownership to younger entrepreneurs. Employers reported ongoing difficulty attracting entry-level workers, along with the high cost of employing and retaining staff. While programs exist to support small business development, consultation participants noted that these supports are not always being accessed. There is a recognized need for retail and hospitality businesses to sustain vibrant communities; however, fewer programs and resources are available to support growth and stability within these sectors.

Economic developers in the Kenora and Rainy River Districts provided additional insight into business opportunities and labour force challenges. Economic Development Kenora identifies key sectors of the local economy, including health care, tourism, and manufacturing, and provides supporting data that informed these priorities. The Rainy River District Community Futures Development Corporation offers detailed community profiles that further contextualize regional conditions. Both organizations confirmed continued growth in the mining and construction sectors. They also highlighted shortages of early childhood educators, which can act as a barrier to workforce participation, as well as current and anticipated shortages in the health care sector driven by an aging population and the development of new facilities.

RURAL IMMIGRATION PATHWAYS AND LABOUR MARKET IMPACTS

Small businesses in the Kenora and Rainy River Districts that were eligible to participate in the Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot (RNIP) expressed concern regarding its discontinuation. In these communities, the program helped address ongoing shortages of entry-level workers while providing immigrants who wished to live and work in the North with a pathway to permanent residency.

With the program now replaced by the Rural Community Immigration Pilot, newcomer attraction has become more centralized within fourteen larger, more urban communities across Northern Ontario, including Thunder Bay. As a result, more rural areas may once again face challenges related to labour shortages and reduced access to immigration pathways. Economic developers continue to advocate for local businesses to regain access to these supports, as well as for increased northern-specific placements through the Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program (ONIP). The Francophone pathway was identified as a particularly promising opportunity.

EMPLOYMENT ONTARIO DATA 2024-2025

Over the past several years, Employment Ontario data has been shared annually with the Northwestern Ontario Training and Adjustment Board to provide further insight into service use and encourage collaboration to address local labour market demand and supply. The following analysis examines service usage in 2024-2025 compared to the previous year, 2023-2024. However, it must be recognized that employment services in Northwestern Ontario were transitioning to the Service System Manager model of service in 2024-2025 which may affect the year-to-year comparison.

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

In the Kenora District:

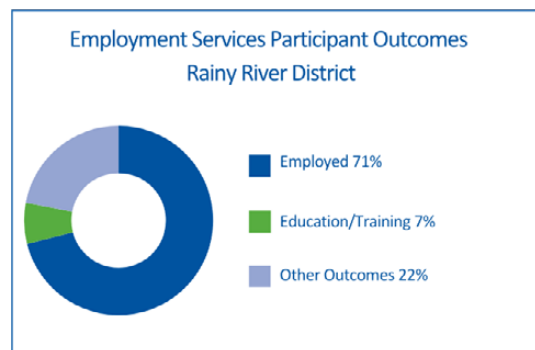
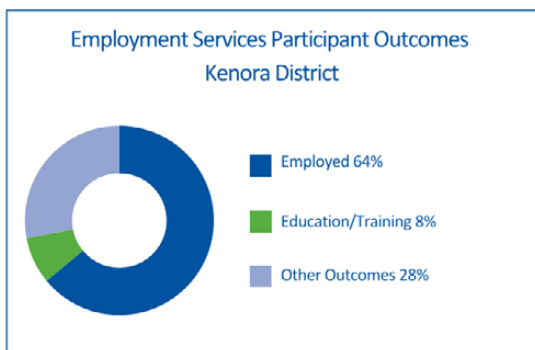
- 357 people received Assisted Employment Services in 2024-2025, slightly more than the 362 people who accessed the service in 2023-2024. An additional 69 participants were recorded as participating in Integrated Employment Services.
- The number participating in Unassisted Services fell by more than 50% but can largely be attributed to the transition.
- 48% of Employment Services clients were indigenous in 2024-2025 while 19% were living with a disability
- 265 participants (73%) relied on Ontario Works or Ontario Disability Services Program or had no source of income.
- 64% of participants secured employment. 8% continued on to education or training.

In the Rainy River District:

- 387 people participated in Employment Services in the Rainy River District in 2024-2025. This is a drop of 178 participants (-32%) since 2023-2024. An additional 61 individuals participated in Integrated Employment Services.
- 3,064 were identified receiving unassisted services. This is a decrease of 20% from the previous year.
- 51% of clients in 2024-2025 were indigenous; 24% were people living with a disability
- 71% of participants secured employment. 7% continued on to education or training.

In Northern Ontario and Ontario:

- Participation in Employment Services in Northern Ontario increased by 8%. Participation across Ontario overall decreased by 37%.
- The number of Northern Ontario Employment Services clients securing employment decreased by 10%. In Ontario overall, the number employed decreased by 47%.



LITERACY AND BASIC SKILLS (NOW GET SET (SKILLS, EDUCATION AND TRAINING))

In the Kenora District:

- 306 new learners participated in LBS in 2024-2025 as compared to 358 in the previous year—a decrease of 52 new learners (-15%). The number of carry-over learners increased by 53.
- The number of new plus carry-over learners increased by one learner (0.2%)
- Three of every four participants are indigenous.
- Three of every four participants relied on Ontario Works or Ontario Disability Support Program or had no source of income.
- 4% of learners continued with education or training. Nine percent secured employment.

In the Rainy River District

- 171 new learners participated in LBS in 2024-2025 as compared to 218 in 2023-2024 – a decrease of 22%. The number of carry-over learners decreased slightly from 91 in 2023-2024 to 88 in 2024-2025 (-3%).
- The number of new plus carry-over learners decreased by 50 or 16%.
- 35% of learners are reliant on Ontario Works or Ontario Disability Support program benefits or have no income at all.
- 57% of learners secured employment at the conclusion of the program.

In Northern Ontario and Ontario:

- The number of new and carry-over LBS learners in Northern Ontario in 2024-2025 decreased by 2%.
- The number of new and carry-over LBS learners in Ontario overall decreased by 3%. The number of new and carry-over e-learners decreased 2%.

APPRENTICESHIP

In the Kenora District:

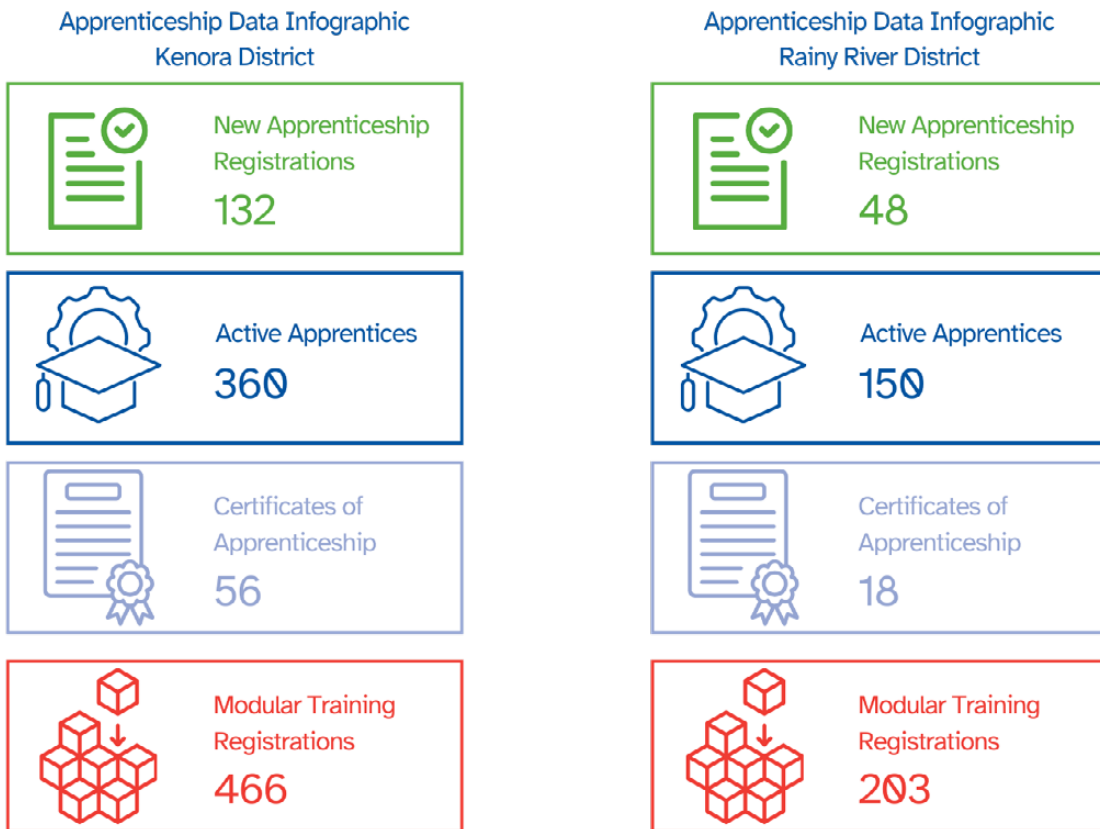
- There were 132 new apprenticeship registrations in the Kenora District during 2024-2025 as compared to 92 the previous year, an increase of 44%.
- The number of active apprentices also increased from 313 in 2023-2024 to 360 in 2024-2025 (15%).
- There were 56 Certificates of Apprenticeship issued in 2024-2025, 24% more than the previous year.
- 466 Modular training registrations took place in 2024-2025 as compared to 461 in 2023-2024.

In the Rainy River District:

- There were 48 new apprenticeship registrations in the Rainy River District or 17 more than in 2023-2024. This is an increase of 55%.
- In 2024-2025, there were 150 active apprentices in the Rainy River District compared to 136 in 2023-2024 – an increase of 10%.
- Twenty-nine Certificates of Apprenticeship were issued in 2024-2025 compared to 18 the previous year (a 61% increase).
- 203 modular training registrations took place in 2024-2025 as compared to 265 in 2023-2024. This is a decrease of 62 registrations (-23%)

In Northern Ontario and Ontario:

- The number of new apprentice registrations increased in Northern Ontario by 7% but decreased by 3% in Ontario overall.
- The number of active apprentices increased by 11% in Northern Ontario and by 7% in Ontario in 2024-2025.
- The number of Certificates of Apprenticeship issued in 2024-2025 increased by 13% in Northern Ontario and by 3% in Ontario.
- Modular training registrations decreased 4% in Northern Ontario but increased in the province overall by 13%.



CANADA ONTARIO JOB GRANT

In the Kenora and Rainy River Districts:

- As in the previous year, fewer than ten companies participated in COJG in both the Kenora and Rainy River Districts.
- The number of workers benefitting from training decreased from 16 in 2023-2024 to 13 in 2024-2025. In the Rainy River District participation was stable year-to-year. Sixteen participate in training in 2024-2025 as compared to 15 in 2023-2024.
- Employer feedback on the value of the training was not provided.

In Northern Ontario and Ontario:

- The number of employers in Northern Ontario participating in COJG decreased 12% in 2024-2025 from 194 in 2023-2024 to 170 in the past year. 100% of employers indicated the training contributed to worker productivity and that the training met their needs.
- The number of Northern Ontario workers benefitting from training decreased from 444 in 2023-2024 to 439 in 2024-2025 (-1%).
- In Ontario, 2039 employers took advantage of the COJG program in 2024-2025 or 308 fewer (-13%) than the previous year. 94% of employers indicated the training contributed to worker productivity and 97% believed the training met their needs.
- The number of workers across Ontario receiving training through COJG decreased by 826 sliding from 8,706 in 2023-2024 to 7,880 in 2024-2025 (-10%).

BETTER JOBS ONTARIO

In the Kenora and Rainy River Districts:

- Since 2019, fewer than ten individuals participated in Better Jobs Ontario in both the Kenora and Rainy River Districts.

In Northern Ontario and Ontario:

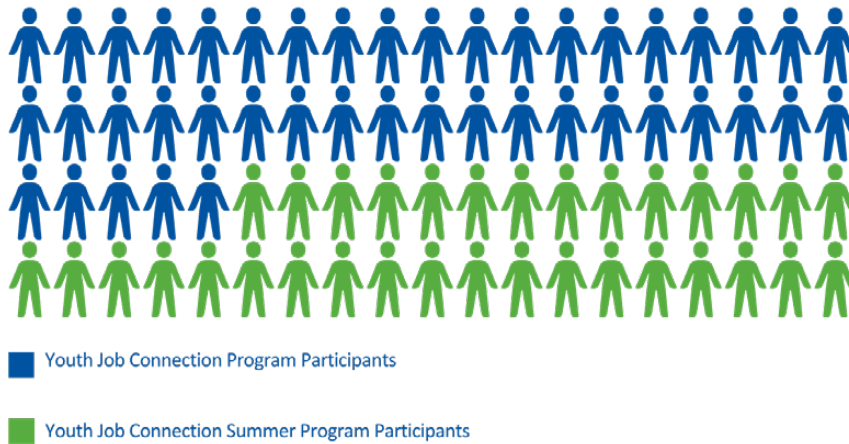
- Participation in the program increased slightly by 3% in 2024-2025 from 244 in 2023-2024 to 277 participants in 2024-2025.
- Across Ontario, participation in Better Jobs Ontario increased by more than 700 to 4,111 (21%).

YOUTH JOB CONNECTION (YJC)

In the Kenora District:

- 43 youth participated in the Youth Job Connection program in 2024-2025 compared to 32 in 2023-2024, an increase of 34%.
- Participation in Youth Job Connection Summer decreased from 38 to 33 (-13%) in the past year.

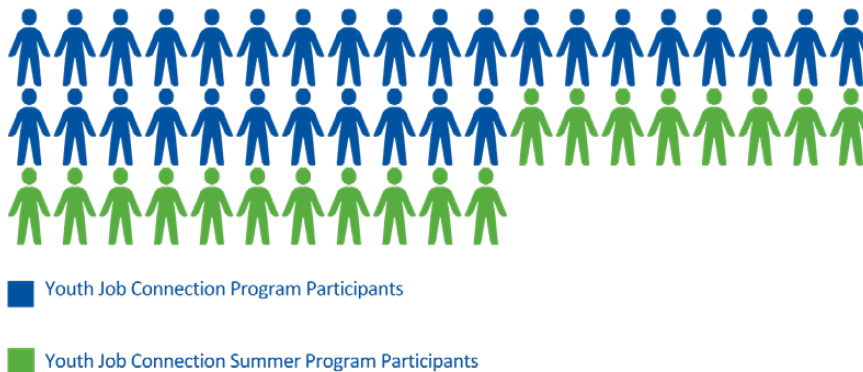
Youth Job Connection Participants
Kenora District



In the Rainy River District:

- Participation in YJC in the Rainy River District decreased from 34 in 2023-2024 to 30 in 2024-2025 or a decrease of 12%.
- An additional 19 youth participated in YJC Summer compared to 17 in 2023-2024—an increase of 12%

Youth Job Connection Participants
Rainy River District



ACTION PLAN 2026

The Northwest Training and Adjustment Board uses the Action Plan to highlight workforce development activities taking place across the Kenora and Rainy River Districts. The actions presented reflect initiatives led by community partners and stakeholders throughout the region and are organized in relation to the workforce development priorities identified through labour market analysis and community engagement. Together, they illustrate how community partners are responding to ongoing challenges, addressing gaps, and working to strengthen conditions that support workforce participation and economic stability.

Actions are organized by Key Priority and presented alongside information related to timeframe and progress, as well as intended outcomes and key partners involved. Brief summaries preceding each set of actions provide context based on community input and highlight how the initiatives connect to identified workforce development themes.

KEY PRIORITY #1 – EXTERNAL FORCES AND WORKFORCE SECTOR SHIFTS

The economies of the Kenora and Rainy River Districts continue to shift, and many of these changes begin with external pressures that sit far beyond local control. Volatile tariffs, supply chain disruptions, global market swings, and shifting federal and provincial priorities all influence how industries expand or contract in the region. Manufacturing and forestry are particularly sensitive to policy changes and international demand, while construction, health care, and mining respond more to long-term investment cycles. These pressures create an environment where sector stability is uneven and employers must adjust quickly to conditions that change year to year. Some industries experience periods of growth driven by new projects or public investment, while others stall because timelines for major developments stretch across many years. Employers and community stakeholders describe the challenge of planning for a future shaped by forces they cannot predict or influence, even as communities work to build local capacity and respond to emerging opportunities. These realities shape the challenges industries face, but also point to the ways communities are adapting through local studies, targeted supports, and efforts to strengthen the regional labour pool.

KEY PRIORITY #1 – EXTERNAL FORCES AND WORKFORCE SECTOR SHIFTS	
Kenora Weyerhaeuser Job Fair in Ear Falls	
Action	On October 17, 2025 the Ear Falls Interfor Sawmill announced the indefinite closure of its facility. U.S. tariffs, combined with a flat market, have been cited as the reasons behind the indefinite shutdown, which will result in approximately 160 lost jobs. With an additional 10 per cent tariff put in place the week prior to the announcement, total duties and tariffs for softwood lumber are now at nearly 45 per cent, according to the Ontario Forest Industries Association (OFIA).
Outcomes	Targeted, direct, and rapid reemployment assistance offered to eligible and qualified Ear Falls affected workers.
Partners*	Weyerhaeuser's Trus Joist® TimberStrand® mill in Kenora
Timeframe	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Completed <input type="radio"/> Short Term <input type="radio"/> Mid-Term <input type="radio"/> Long Term
Updates	This item is new to the 2026 Action Plan: Kenora's Weyerhaeuser's Trus Joist® TimberStrand® laminated strand lumber (LSL) mill held a Job Fair in Ear Falls at the Ear Falls Legion on Wednesday, November 5, 2025 to directly assist with those job losses noted above.

KEY PRIORITY #1 – EXTERNAL FORCES AND WORKFORCE SECTOR SHIFTS

Feasibility Study for East-West Pipeline (Ring of Fire Development)

Action	The Ford government has begun work on a proposed pipeline and energy corridor through Northwestern Ontario to move oil and gas from Western Canada. The corridor could also support all-season roads into the Ring of Fire and other mineral-related infrastructure. Fuels would be transported to refineries in southern Ontario and to new ports planned for James Bay, Hudson Bay, and the Great Lakes. Alberta and Saskatchewan’s premiers expressed support for the initiative, building on a July memorandum of understanding among the three provinces to collaborate on advancing critical minerals and western Canadian energy in response to U.S. tariffs and trade tensions.
Outcomes	A contract has been awarded for a feasibility study to be completed next year, which will examine route options, potential sites, and project costs. The government says it will fulfill its duty to consult Indigenous communities as planning progresses and emphasizes the importance of First Nations participation and economic opportunities in major development projects.
Partners*	The feasibility study will be carried out by a consortium of firms—GHD Limited, EY Canada, Mokwateh, AtkinsRéalis Group, Wood PLC, and Turner & Townsend Limited—with Infrastructure Ontario serving as commercial advisor.
Timeframe	<input type="radio"/> Completed <input type="radio"/> Short Term <input checked="" type="radio"/> Mid-Term <input type="radio"/> Long Term
Updates	This item is new to the 2026 Action Plan.

Regional Tariff Response Initiative

Action	The Regional Tariff Response Initiative (RTRI) is a federal program delivered in Northern Ontario by FedNor, to help small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) impacted by tariffs. The initiative provides non-repayable funding for projects that boost productivity, strengthen domestic supply chains, and support market diversification to mitigate the impacts of trade volatility.
Outcomes	Eligibility and Objectives The program is open to SMEs, Indigenous-owned businesses, and non-profits that support affected sectors and can demonstrate negative impacts from tariffs, such as increased costs, supply chain disruptions, or loss of market access. The objectives are to help businesses achieve the following by investing in projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Boost productivity and competitiveness » Reduce costs » Strengthen domestic supply chains » Support market diversification
Partners*	FedNor
Timeframe	<input type="radio"/> Completed <input type="radio"/> Short Term <input checked="" type="radio"/> Mid-Term <input type="radio"/> Long Term
Updates	This item is new to the 2026 Action Plan: Project Timeframe: Projects must be completed no later than March 31, 2028, and cannot start before March 21, 2025.

Summary of Ontario’s Proposed Overhaul of Provincial Pathways to Permanent Residence (Dec 3, 2025)

Action	Overview: Ontario is proposing a two-phase redesign of the Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program (OINP) to streamline and modernize its nominee selection process for permanent residency. The changes aim to address labor shortages, prioritize skilled and entrepreneurial immigrants, and align with provincial economic and healthcare needs. These proposed changes follow the suspension of the Express Entry Skilled Trades Stream and are supported by new authorities granted through Bill 30.
Outcomes	The redesign would recognize excellence in areas such as research, culinary arts, and entrepreneurship, consolidating the three Employer: Job Offer streams into one program with separate TEER 0-3 and TEER 4-5 pathways, and it proposes to replace all remaining OINP streams with three new ones: a Priority Healthcare Stream, a redesigned Entrepreneur Stream, and an Exceptional Talent Stream.

KEY PRIORITY #1 – EXTERNAL FORCES AND WORKFORCE SECTOR SHIFTS

Summary of Ontario's Proposed Overhaul of Provincial Pathways to Permanent Residence (Dec 3, 2025)

Partners*	Ontario Ministry responsible for immigration and the OINP; Government of Canada (Immigration Levels Plan and PNP allocations); Ontario employers; Unions; Professional regulatory bodies; Post-secondary institutions
Timeframe	<input type="radio"/> Completed <input type="radio"/> Short Term <input type="radio"/> Mid-Term <input checked="" type="radio"/> Long Term
Updates	<p>Update or Points of Interest:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Nov 14, 2025: OINP Express Entry Skilled Trades Stream intake suspended; all pending applications to be returned due to systemic compliance, misrepresentation, and fraud concerns. » Nov 27, 2025: Bill 30 receives royal assent, giving the minister more direct authority to create, change, or close streams and return applications earlier. » As of December 10, 2025; Stakeholder consultations are in progress; detailed regulations, timelines, and treatment of in-progress applications are still to be finalized. » Charles Cirtwill, President and CEO of the Northern Policy Institute, November 28, 2025: » "In a bold move, Ontario paused the skilled trades stream of its Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program (OINP)... Ontario should be bold again and immediately expand the Regional Economic Development through Immigration (REDI) pilot." <p>Overview of REDI Pilot:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » The Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program (OINP) launched the Regional Economic Development through Immigration (REDI) pilot, a one-year initiative that ran from January 2, 2025 to December 31, 2025. » The new initiative used the OINP to target skilled labour that was not available locally to help fill labour market needs of employers in four pilot communities: Lanark County, Leeds and Grenville, Sarnia-Lambton, and Thunder Bay » The REDI pilot offers a pathway to permanent residence for skilled foreign workers with a job offer who want to live and work in a pilot community. » https://www.ontario.ca/page/regional-economic-development-through-immigration-redi-pilot

Better Jobs Ontario

Action	Better Jobs Ontario provides unemployed individuals with financial support for skills training to help them find employment in high-demand occupations with demonstrated labour market prospects in Ontario. The program provides participants with up to \$28,000 for skills training and living costs including tuition, books, other instructional costs, transportation, and basic living allowance. Additional funding may be available for dependent care, disability-related supports, living away from home, and Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) and/or language upgrading training.
Outcomes	The intention of the Better Jobs Ontario program is to help eligible individuals rapidly attach to employment by the most cost-effective path.
Partners*	Employment Ontario Service Providers
Timeframes	<input type="radio"/> Completed <input type="radio"/> Short Term <input type="radio"/> Mid-Term <input checked="" type="radio"/> Long Term
Updates	<p>Update or Points of Interest:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Better Jobs Ontario aims to help people rejoin the workforce quickly. The program focuses on training programs that take 52 weeks or less to complete, including micro-credential programs. » If participants want to attend training longer than one year, they can apply to the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) for a mix of grants and loans to help pay for postsecondary education. » Since 2019, fewer than 10 individuals participated per year in Better Jobs Ontario in both the Kenora and Rainy River Districts. Participation in Better Jobs Ontario in Northern Ontario increased slightly by 3% in 2024-2025 from 244 to 247 participants. » Across the province, participation in Better Jobs Ontario increased by more than 700 to 4,111 (21%). » While growing in Ontario, participation in Better Jobs Ontario in Northern Ontario continues to decline.

* Acronym Glossary follows. Short-term, Mid-Term (2 Years), Long-Term (3 Years)

KEY PRIORITY #2 – POPULATION DYNAMICS AND WORKFORCE ENABLERS

Communities across both districts are working hard to attract and retain people in the core working-age population, but long-standing challenges continue to influence who stays and who leaves. Youth out-migration remains significant, shaped by limited housing options, fewer postsecondary pathways, and a sense that opportunities are stronger elsewhere. Families point to gaps in childcare, transportation, and health-care access, while newcomers and returning residents describe difficulties settling because basic supports can feel inconsistent or hard to find. Local stakeholders repeatedly raise concerns about the negative narratives circulating about the region, which influence how people view their future here. At the same time, community groups and employers point to ongoing revitalization efforts, infrastructure development, and the creation of new economic opportunities, all of which give communities more tools to support long-term stability.

KEY PRIORITY #2 – POPULATION DYNAMICS AND WORKFORCE ENABLERS	
Atikokan Revitalization Initiative	
Action	Resolute Forest Products in Atikokan, Ontario, is crediting Atikokan Economic Development Corporation (AEDC) with helping the company grow its sawmill operations. Having exhausted the limited supply of local labour, the forestry company sought to bring in Ukrainian nationals who were fleeing their war-torn country. The challenge was finding local accommodations, and that's when it turned to the Atikokan Economic Development Corporation (AEDC) for help.
Outcomes	Working in partnership with Resolute Forest Products, AEDC quickly assembled a team to prepare the empty Atikokan Hotel for occupancy. The renovations included electrical and plumbing upgrades, a thorough cleaning, safety inspections, and the addition of laundry and gym facilities. Six weeks later, it welcomed its new residents. Through the program, chefs were hired in the hotel kitchen to provide Resolute's newest employees and their families with three meals a day. Recognizing that the Ukrainian nationals needed additional support, the move was endorsed by the sawmill's union.
Timeframe	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Completed <input type="radio"/> Short Term <input type="radio"/> Mid-Term <input type="radio"/> Long Term
Updates	This Item is new to the 2026 Action Plan: The revitalization initiative helped Atikokan's largest employer meet its labour needs and support the company's expansion plans. More importantly, it assisted with a humanitarian crisis. As of February 27, 2025, more than 73 people settled in Atikokan; 52 Ukrainians and 21 other ethnicities. The Atikokan Economic Development Corporation (AEDC) received the Community Futures Ontario Award of Excellence for Community Economic Development for its Ukrainian Support project. This item also has some overlap with External Forces & Workforce Sector Shifts , since global conflict indirectly shaped local labour supply.
Ontario Supporting Community Infrastructure and Business Development Projects in the Rainy River District	
Action	Province investing in community improvements, business expansions and internship opportunities in Fort Frances and beyond.
Outcomes	Through the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC), the Ontario government is providing more than \$1.8 million to 10 economic development projects and more than \$607,000 to 19 internships in the Fort Frances region. These investments will build cultural spaces for First Nations communities, expand company operations, and bring innovative business solutions to Northwestern Ontario.
Partners*	NOHFC; Rainy River District Communities
Timeframe	<input type="radio"/> Completed <input type="radio"/> Short Term <input type="radio"/> Mid-Term <input checked="" type="radio"/> Long Term
Updates	This item is new to the 2026 Action Plan: The NOHFC fosters economic growth, job creation and workforce development throughout the North, benefiting communities of all sizes, both rural and urban, including Indigenous communities. The Ontario government's improved NOHFC programming supports more projects in rural northern communities and makes it easier for more people and businesses to apply. The programming targets existing and emerging markets, provides more work opportunities for Indigenous people and addresses the skilled labour shortage in the North.

KEY PRIORITY #2 – POPULATION DYNAMICS AND WORKFORCE ENABLERS

Ontario Investing in Community Development and Skills Training Opportunities in the Dryden Region

Action	Province investing in community improvements, business expansions and internship opportunities in Dryden and area. The NOHFC, Northern Development Offices and Small Business Enterprise Centres are available to support northern communities, businesses and other stakeholders in identifying economic development opportunities and assist in accessing government funding programs.
Outcomes	Through the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC), the Ontario government is providing \$56,530 for a community development project in Machin and \$260,038 for eight internship opportunities in Dryden. These investments will improve municipal infrastructure, create jobs and develop career skills in Northwestern Ontario.
Partners*	NOHFC; Dryden Area Communities
Timeframe	<input type="radio"/> Completed <input type="radio"/> Short Term <input type="radio"/> Mid-Term <input checked="" type="radio"/> Long Term
Updates	This item is new to the 2026 Action Plan: The NOHFC fosters economic growth, job creation and workforce development throughout the North, benefiting communities of all sizes, both rural and urban, including Indigenous communities. The Ontario government’s improved NOHFC programming supports more projects in rural northern communities and makes it easier for more people and businesses to apply. The programming targets existing and emerging markets, provides more work opportunities for Indigenous people and addresses the skilled labour shortage in the North.

Ontario Supporting Economic Development Opportunities in Fort Frances Region

Action	The Ontario government is providing more than \$1.4 million through the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC) to five economic development projects in the Fort Frances region.
Outcomes	This investment will improve municipal infrastructure, promote tourism and recreation, expand company operations and create jobs in the Northwest.
Partners*	NOHFC; Fort Frances Area Communities
Timeframe	<input type="radio"/> Completed <input type="radio"/> Short Term <input type="radio"/> Mid-Term <input checked="" type="radio"/> Long Term
Updates	This item is new to the 2026 Action Plan: The NOHFC promotes economic prosperity across Northern Ontario by providing financial assistance to projects—big and small, rural and urban—that stimulate growth, job creation and skills development. Since June 2018, the NOHFC has invested more than \$759 million in 6,233 projects in Northern Ontario, leveraging more than \$2.3 billion in investment and creating or sustaining over 9,590 jobs.

Ontario Investing \$894,305 to Build Training Centre in Mishkeegogamang Ojibway Nation

Action	The Ontario government is investing \$894,305 through the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC) to help Mishkeegogamang Ojibway Nation build a modular training centre in their community. This funding aligns with the government’s priority to protect and strengthen Ontario’s workforce by connecting Indigenous peoples to training opportunities that will prepare them for in-demand good-paying jobs.
Outcomes	A workforce development centre in Mishkeegogamang Ojibway Nation will make it easier for Indigenous job seekers to gain relevant skills and for Indigenous workers to enhance their knowledge and adapt to industry trends. The new building will have seven multi-purpose rooms to enable training, workshops, events and meetings, and includes a kitchen, washrooms and storage spaces. This modern centre will help reduce labour shortages by offering programs, such as youth and elder traditional outdoor learning, adult work training programs and advanced project management classes.
Partners*	NOHFC; Mishkeegoga-mang Ojibway Nation
Timeframes	<input type="radio"/> Completed <input type="radio"/> Short Term <input type="radio"/> Mid-Term <input checked="" type="radio"/> Long Term
Updates	This item is new to the 2026 Action Plan: Announced in June 2025, the Ontario government is refocusing the NOHFC to prioritize investments that protect northern industries and jobs, mitigate the impacts of U.S. tariffs and trade disruptions and secure new opportunities for the long-term prosperity of Northern Ontario.

KEY PRIORITY #2 – POPULATION DYNAMICS AND WORKFORCE ENABLERS

FSET’s Four Day Work Week Pilot

Action	<p>Since January 2024, FSET has been piloting a 4-day work week through 4 Day Week Global. Incorporating the shortened work week model, they are pleased to report that their results have been overwhelmingly positive.</p> <p>Their pilot program involves a 32-hour work week, with no reduction in pay or benefits for their employees. In their experience, not only has this led to happier, less stressed employees, but it has also resulted in consistent productivity.</p> <p>Their pilot has demonstrated that workers can be more productive in a shorter work week, reinforcing the fact that longer hours do not necessarily equate to higher output. This shift has allowed their employees to enjoy a better quality of life, with more time for personal pursuits and family commitments.</p>
Outcomes	<p>In recent years, the traditional five-day work week has been challenged by the rising trend of the 4-day work week. There has been a clear transition towards emphasizing employees’ well-being, productivity levels, and work-life balance.</p> <p>FSET has always been dedicated to creating an environment that encourages innovation, collaboration, and the well-being of its employees. The belief is that the change could significantly enhance employees’ work-life balance and satisfaction. Their goal is to leverage the benefits of the 4-day work week to improve their services and continue to deliver top-quality solutions.</p>
Partners*	FSET Kenora
Timeframe	<input type="radio"/> Completed <input type="radio"/> Short Term <input checked="" type="radio"/> Mid-Term <input type="radio"/> Long Term
Updates	<p>Update or Points of Interest:</p> <p>As they continue with their 4-day work week pilot, they remain committed to monitoring its impacts and adjusting their approach as necessary to ensure their workforce’s ongoing well-being and productivity. Their experience has shown that a shorter work week is beneficial on multiple fronts, highlighting the potential for such a model to become the new standard.</p> <p>FSET has provided Implementation Tips for Leaders: https://fset.inc/switching-to-a-4-day-work-week/ FSET is proud to be certified as an Ontario Living Wage employer since 2022.</p>

Air service feasibility study; Dryden, Fort Frances, and Kenora

Action	Three municipalities in northwestern Ontario are working together in hopes of attracting a new commercial air carrier to the region following the departure of Bearskin Airlines from the communities in May of 2024.
Outcomes	Dryden, Fort Frances, and Kenora are now collaborating on an air service feasibility study, as well as a stakeholder survey, to make the business case for why a new air passenger carrier is needed.
Timeframes	<input type="radio"/> Completed <input checked="" type="radio"/> Short Term <input type="radio"/> Mid-Term <input type="radio"/> Long Term
Updates	<p>This item is new to the 2026 Action Plan:</p> <p>The study, which is being funded by FedNor, is being conducted by InterVISTAS Consulting Inc. and is expected to be completed by the end of the year.</p> <p>Announcement December 4, 2025: North Star Air to provide daily flights from Kenora to Thunder Bay in 2026. Starting January 15, 2026 there will be one flight a day from Kenora to Thunder and one flight from Thunder Bay to Kenora.</p>

Quetico Lodge and Conference Centre

Action	The owners have expanded relationships with First Nations and various Indigenous Training Organizations that have contracted their services. Norcat continues their work offering forestry and surface mining programs concurrently at QLCC.
Outcomes	The intent of these programs and collaborations is to provide training to participants with all the necessary certifications and skills needed to competently operate a variety of forestry used during the harvesting of trees as well as heavy equipment associated with surface mining. Training also provided that is directed toward trainees gaining related certifications and include hands on experience actually operating various types of heavy equipment.
Partners*	AEC; AEDC; QLCC; NORCAT

KEY PRIORITY #2 – POPULATION DYNAMICS AND WORKFORCE ENABLERS

Quetico Lodge and Conference Centre

Timeframe Completed Short Term Mid-Term Long Term

Updates
Update or Points of Interest:
 Quetico Lodge and Conference Centre continues to expand its operations capitalizing on both their tourism customers and promoting their services to trainers who are searching for a suitable location to complete training. Specifically, campground operations and cottage/house rentals continue to increase and the onsite restaurant and dining hall was regularly opened to users and the general public. Norcat continues with holding Training Courses at Quetico Lodge and Conference Centre, however their onus has shifted from logging to Surface Mining Certification. Participants get hands on experience with heavy equipment and have the opportunity to acquire a driver's license. Quetico Lodge and Conference Centre is ideally positioned to provide services in the coming year related to a power line Construction Project – Waasigan Power Line being built in partnership with area First Nations, Valard Construction LP and Hydro One. It is hoped that ongoing program development takes place over long term to further create programs designed meet regional skills needs. NORCAT has received a Skills Development Fund (SDF) grant to provide training services and enters into privately funded contracts to provide training services.

* Acronym Glossary follows. Short-term, Mid-Term (2 Years), Long-Term (3 Years)

KEY PRIORITY #3 – SKILLS, TRAINING, AND LEARNING PATHWAYS

Skills and knowledge are becoming increasingly important as workplaces adopt new technologies and expectations, shaping how youth and workers access the education and training they need. Employers point to gaps in foundational skills such as literacy, numeracy, digital literacy, and communication, and note that emerging jobs require workers who can adapt quickly. Smaller communities often lack exposure to global labour market trends, and many residents are unaware of the training and education options available to them. A shortage of specialized instructors limits the ability to promote new careers, and apprenticeship opportunities remain constrained by the lack of facilities, in-school training capacity, and available journeypersons. In response, many stakeholders are broadening career development activities, improving in-class learning, and expanding flexible education and micro credential options so youth can make more informed career decisions and workers can upskill in ways that reflect changing workplace needs.

KEY PRIORITY #3 – SKILLS, TRAINING, AND LEARNING PATHWAYS

Career Development Practice

Action
 Shooniyaa Wa-Biitong partnered with Career Development Professional Centre (CDPC) to hold a four-day training session for Treaty #3 members who work with clients in Employment, Ontario Works, or as an Employment Advisor.

Outcomes
 The training offered participants a time to connect, reflect, and develop their skills with other workers in employment and training, career development, and/or income assistance. The training will help service providers guide their clients in making informed career choices and finding the right path forward.

Partners*
 Shooniya Wa-Biitong; Career Development Professional Centre

Timeframe Completed Short Term Mid-Term Long Term

Updates
This item is new to the 2026 Action Plan:
 The training was held from October 27 to 30, 2025 in Fort Frances.

KEY PRIORITY #3 – SKILLS, TRAINING, AND LEARNING PATHWAYS

Highway Twinning Project & Training

Action	<p>The Niiwin Wendaanimok (Four Winds) Partnership is an Indigenous-owned and operated corporation dedicated to providing construction, contracting, and environmental monitoring services in Treaty 3 territory. With a mandate to employ Anishinaabe workers and assets in construction and development projects, the Partnership is committed to rebuilding their economy, being a major part of the regional economy and ensuring Anishinaabe laws and voices are respected throughout development processes within Anishinaabe territory.</p> <p>The Niiwin Wendaanimok Partnership is comprised of representatives and experts from four Nations—Wauzhushk Onigum Nation, Washagamis Bay First Nation, Shoal Lake 40 First Nation and Niisaachewan Anishinaabe Nation.</p>
Outcomes	<p>The work to twin the first 6.5 km stretch of the local highway starting at the Manitoba border began back in June 2022, thanks to a partnership between the provincial government and the Niiwin Wendaanimok (Four Winds) group, which is an organization formed by four local First Nations – Niisaachewan, Shoal Lake 40, Washagamis Bay and Wauzhushk Onigum – to help their community members find gainful employment.</p>
Partners*	Niiwin Wendaanimok
Timeframe	<input type="radio"/> Completed <input type="radio"/> Short Term <input checked="" type="radio"/> Mid-Term <input type="radio"/> Long Term
Updates	<p>Updates or Points of Interest:</p> <p>The Niiwin Wendaanimok Partnership and Moncrief Construction have completed Phase 1 of the highway twinning project. Phase 2 is scheduled to start in late 2025.</p> <p>Phase 2 will be double the size and scope. It will require a significant amount of labour to complete the project.</p> <p>The Niiwin Wendaanimok Partnership supplied 30% of labour and equipment to the first phase and is looking to increase its share in phase 2.</p> <p>The Niiwin Wendaanimok Partnership aims to build a training facility in Kenora to help fill the labour gaps and boost the local economy. Over 120 people are trained annually, which will increase to 420 with the construction of a training facility. *Kenora-Rainy River MPP Greg Rickford says he is feeling confident that preliminary work to continue twinning Highway 17 west of Kenora will resume in the fall, followed by more serious road construction work in Spring 2026. (*Kenora Miner and News – July 2025).</p>

In-Class Enhancement Fund

Action	<p>Ontario Investing More Than \$60 Million in Skilled Trades Apprentices</p> <p>The In-Class Enhancement Fund will protect Ontario workers by training up to 12,000 apprentices for in-demand jobs.</p> <p>As part of a broader strategy to address the need for skilled trades, the Ontario government is also examining ways to increase apprenticeship hiring on publicly funded infrastructure projects and construction sites. In addition, the government is working with Skilled Trades Ontario to expand testing, allowing apprentices to book Certificate of Qualification exams at certified testing centres closer to home, choosing the date, time and location that works best for them. This means less travel, less time away from work and more opportunities for apprentices to get certified and advance their careers.</p>
Outcomes	<p>This investment, through the In-Class Enhancement Fund (IEF), will create up to 4,000 new training seats each year, helping apprentices access in-class training faster while covering their \$10-per-day Level 1 classroom fees.</p> <p>The IEF is part of the \$159.3 million commitment announced in the 2025 Budget: A Plan to Protect Ontario to strengthen skilled trades programs. It builds on the government’s broader strategy to train and attract workers for in-demand jobs.</p> <p>Since 2020, Ontario has invested over \$2.1 billion in the skilled trades. This includes investments in skilled trades related projects under the Skills Development Fund Training Stream.</p>
Partners*	MLITSD
Timeframe	<input type="radio"/> Completed <input type="radio"/> Short Term <input checked="" type="radio"/> Mid-Term <input type="radio"/> Long Term

KEY PRIORITY #3 – SKILLS, TRAINING, AND LEARNING PATHWAYS

In-Class Enhancement Fund

Updates	<p>This item is new to the 2026 Action Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » New apprenticeship registrations in Ontario increased by over 7.3 per cent to 28,875 in 2024-2025 – the highest in a decade. This includes an increase of over 13.5 per cent to 16,412 among youth aged 15 to 24 in 2024-2025. » About one in eight job openings in Ontario are forecast to be in skilled trades-related occupations by 2029. » One in three workers in Ontario with an apprenticeship certificate as their highest credential are nearing retirement. » In August, 2025, the government announced an investment of \$75 million to create up to 7,800 additional construction and urban planning seats at colleges, universities and Indigenous Institutes in Ontario, further strengthening the province’s pipeline of homegrown and highly skilled construction workers.
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eCampusOntario Micro-credentials

Action	<p>eCampusOntario is a leading platform in Canada launched in 2021 to enable users to discover microcredential programs tailored to workforce needs. eCampusOntario is funded by the Government of Ontario and leads a consortium of the province’s 53 publicly-funded colleges, universities, and Indigenous Institutes to develop and test online learning tools to advance the use of education technology and digital learning environments. This initiative reflects a shift toward microcredentials in education. It is aimed at workforce development by aligning educational offerings with market demand.</p> <p>The portal lists more than 2500 microcredentials offered by Ontario’s colleges, universities, and Indigenous institutes.</p>
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Outcomes	<p>Programs offer information about access to short, flexible, and industry-relevant training programs that target key sectors such as healthcare, manufacturing, social assistance, information technology, and manufacturing with the goal to help individuals reskill or upskill efficiently.</p> <p>Programs listed at the portal are accessible online, on-campus, or in hybrid formats, to enable a variety of delivery modes to meet the needs of diverse users including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Students seeking to enhance employability. » Professionals looking to upskill or reskill in emerging fields. » Employers seeking tailored training solutions for workforce development.
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Partners*	<p>eCampusOntario; Participating employers; Participating post-secondary institutions; Ministry of Colleges and Universities</p>
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Timeframe	<p> <input type="radio"/> Completed <input type="radio"/> Short Term <input type="radio"/> Mid-Term <input checked="" type="radio"/> Long Term </p>
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Updates	<p>Update or Points of Interest:</p> <p>Key Features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Short Duration: Programs typically last under 12 weeks. » Affordability: Costs are significantly lower than traditional degrees or diplomas. » Industry Collaboration: Microcredentials are co-developed with employers to ensure relevance and alignment with current job market needs. » Flexibility and Accessibility: Many programs are eligible for financial support through Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) <p>The portal uses tools like labor market data integration and the Conference Board of Canada’s OpportuNext matching algorithm to personalize program recommendations. Recently, eCampusOntario introduced SkillsFinder.ai, a generative AI-powered tool that leverages user input to identify skills gaps and match learners with relevant microcredentials.</p> <p>This June, eCampusOntario announced the publication of its Micro-credential Toolkit, a how-to guide to help institutions develop micro-credential programs that meet the needs of learners and fill the skill gaps in the current and future labour market.</p> <p>The toolkit is a frame of reference that covers topics such as the seven phases of the micro-credential lifecycle, tools to support employer-educator partnerships, how to involve learners as co-creators, and pathways for integrating micro-credentials into academic programming.</p>
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KEY PRIORITY #3 – SKILLS, TRAINING, AND LEARNING PATHWAYS

Healthcare Lab Spaces

Action	New healthcare lab spaces have been installed in all Seven Generations Education Institute Campuses; including Fort Frances, Sioux Lookout, and Kenora.
Outcomes	High tech equipment will improve learning outcomes and experiences for healthcare students.
Partners*	SGEI
Timeframes	<input type="radio"/> Completed <input type="radio"/> Short Term <input type="radio"/> Mid-Term <input checked="" type="radio"/> Long Term
Updates	Update or Points of Interest: Seven Generations Education Institute delivers accredited college and university level programming at their campuses throughout Treaty Three and in First Nations communities, upon request.

Seven Generations Education Institute (SGEI)

Action	To assist organizations with a better understanding of Anishinaabe culture, identity, history, inherent and treaty rights. Offered; custom training, engagement and information sessions for schools and organizations.
Outcomes	Indigenous cultural engagement, awareness, and sensitivity.
Partners*	Seven Generations; Local Businesses & Organizations
Timeframe	<input type="radio"/> Completed <input type="radio"/> Short Term <input type="radio"/> Mid-Term <input checked="" type="radio"/> Long Term
Updates	Updates or Points of Interest: This includes topics such as (but not limited to): Culture, Identity, History, Treaty and Inherent Rights, Education, Residential Schools, Cultural and Language Revitalization, and leadership.

Skilled Trade & Tech Days: Skills Ontario

Action	Skills Ontario is proud to present a series of Skilled Trade & Tech Days (formally Career Exploration Events) once again for young women in senior elementary and secondary school.
Outcomes	These events provide young women the opportunity to explore a variety of skilled trade and technology careers through hands-on workshops while networking with women in the skilled trades. Hosted across the province, young women will have the opportunity to gain practical experience and valuable information to make informed decisions about their future.
Partners*	Skills Ontario Young Women’s Initiative
Timeframe	<input type="radio"/> Completed <input checked="" type="radio"/> Short Term <input type="radio"/> Mid-Term <input type="radio"/> Long Term
Updates	Updates or Points of Interest: Completed September 9, 2025 in Dryden. Attended by Dryden High School Students. During the event, young women: » Gained an understanding of what skilled trade and technology careers are out there and why they are important; » Learned about different careers in the skilled trades and technologies; » Learned about and try different day-to-day activities preformed in a skilled trade and technology career while participating in a variety of hands-on workshops.

KEY PRIORITY #3 – SKILLS, TRAINING, AND LEARNING PATHWAYS

Confederation College Remote Campuses

Action	The remote campuses offer a wide variety of programs to meet the education and training needs of Northwestern Ontario. On November 27, 2025, NTAB along with many community stakeholders attended a regional consultation session to help shape their next Strategic Plan. They were seeking insights and experiences as these are vital in guiding how they continue to serve our learners, employers, and communities across northwestern Ontario.
Outcomes	Programs range from full-time postsecondary diploma programs, full-time and part-time certificate programs, continuing education courses, and other education training opportunities.
Partners*	Confederation College
Timeframe	<input type="radio"/> Completed <input type="radio"/> Short Term <input type="radio"/> Mid-Term <input checked="" type="radio"/> Long Term
Updates	Updates or Points of Interest: Students can study and stay in their home communities.

Seven Generations Education Institute (SGEI) and college partnerships

Action	SGEI will continue to have a strong Trades presence as they continue to offer Carpentry, Welding, Hairstyling, and Esthetics. They started Business programs in 2021 and is continuing.
Outcomes	Training offered locally keeps students and graduates in the Kenora and Rainy River Districts.
Partners*	SGEI; Participating Colleges
Timeframe	<input type="radio"/> Completed <input type="radio"/> Short Term <input type="radio"/> Mid-Term <input checked="" type="radio"/> Long Term
Updates	Updates or Points of Interest: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » All programs, with the exception of hands-on trades, healthcare labs, and experiential learning, transitioned to an online delivery through both synchronous and asynchronous learning activities. » SGEI has supported its students and staff with a variety of resources including training, technical help, mental health supports, accessibility and ongoing social engagement through digital technology. As they strive to maintain the health and safety of their staff and students, we continue to look for new and innovative ways to enhance and diversify the learning experience both within and outside of the classroom. » SGEI has continued to build on online learning support specialists, telepresence rooms, new software including Office 365 access, student wellness initiative, and several cultural learning opportunities for faculty and staff. » 2025 Report Numbers – Training for Employment provided a variety of workplace and employment readiness programs and registered 616 participants; there were a total of 85 Post-Secondary Graduates in 2025. 169 students were enrolled in Post-Secondary Education in Fall 2025.

Canada-Ontario Job Grant Program (COJG)

Action	Provides opportunities for employers, individually or in groups, to invest in their workforce, with help from the government. The COJG provides direct financial support to individual employers or employer consortia who wish to purchase training for their employees. It is available to small, medium and large businesses with a plan to deliver short-term training to existing and new employees.
Outcomes	Employers with 100 or more employees need to contribute 1/2 of the training costs. Small employers with less than 100 employees need to contribute 1/6 of training costs. For employer groups who want to apply for training supports the government offers a COJG Consortium Stream.
Partners*	MLITSD; Employment Ontario Service Providers; Local Businesses
Timeframe	<input type="radio"/> Completed <input type="radio"/> Short Term <input checked="" type="radio"/> Mid-Term <input type="radio"/> Long Term

KEY PRIORITY #3 – SKILLS, TRAINING, AND LEARNING PATHWAYS

Updates

Updates or Points of Interest:

The training has to be delivered by an eligible, third-party trainer. This program best suits employers with a particular skills demand. Applications are accepted on an ongoing basis.

Northern Community Development Services of Fort Frances received a new contract in 2025 to provide the program to the Rainy River District and the Kenora District.

As in the previous year, fewer than 10 companies participated in COJG in each of the Kenora and Rainy River Districts. The number of workers participating in the Kenora District fell from 16 to 13. In the Rainy River District, 16 people participated in COJG sponsored training in 2024-2025, stable with 15 in 2023-2024.

Employer feedback on the value of the training was not provided. The number of the Kenora and Rainy River District companies participating in COJG continues to be stable but very limited. The same is true of the number of trainees getting the benefit of training. Where training does take place, it is largely provided by a private trainer and employers report that the training met their employees’ needs and contributed to the productivity of their workforce.

* Acronym Glossary follows. Short-term, Mid-Term (2 Years), Long-Term (3 Years)

KEY PRIORITY #4 – ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND LOCAL BUSINESS GROWTH

Entrepreneurs and small and medium businesses continue to play a central role in job creation and local innovation. Many owners describe a landscape that holds real potential but is also shaped by practical challenges. Starting a business often requires navigating high start-up costs, limited financing options, and the pressures of competing in broader digital markets. Some communities lack adequate commercial space, and new owners can become overwhelmed by bylaws, permits, and compliance requirements. Workforce shortages and rising wages add extra strain. Local stakeholders also note that entrepreneurs benefit from steady guidance and long-term support to help them move beyond the early stages of business development. Across the region, more seminars, training opportunities, grant programs, pitch events, and incubator supports are beginning to give new and existing business owners additional avenues to build confidence and capacity. These pressures and corresponding efforts ultimately affect how confidently small businesses can build, expand, and contribute to local job creation.

KEY PRIORITY #4 – ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND LOCAL BUSINESS GROWTH

How to Start a Business

Action The Rainy River Future Development Corporation offered a seminar at the end of October and early in November 2025 on how to start a business.

Outcomes Topics discussed included:

- » Assess yourself for business
- » Research your potential market
- » Make a business plan
- » Plan your finances
- » Choose your business structure
- » Register your business name
- » Business banking
- » Business location
- » Hiring staff
- » Promotion
- » Soft openings

Partners*

Timeframe Completed Short Term Mid-Term Long Term

Updates **This item is new to the 2026 Action Plan:**
This seminar was offered in Chapple, Fort Frances, and Rainy River.

KEY PRIORITY #4 – ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND LOCAL BUSINESS GROWTH

Starter Company Plus

Action	Starter Company Plus is a Government of Ontario funded program and delivered by the Northwest Business Centre designed to create sustainable jobs for its residents through entrepreneurship. Participants will get one-on-one guidance, training to complete a business plan and the opportunity to apply for a \$5,000 grant.
Outcomes	The program has delivered positive outcomes and positions businesses for success when applying for loans, the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund or other opportunities.
Partners*	Government of Ontario; NWBC; City of Kenora
Timeframe	<input type="radio"/> Completed <input type="radio"/> Short Term <input checked="" type="radio"/> Mid-Term <input type="radio"/> Long Term
Updates	Update or Points of Interest: The NWBC’s Starter Company Plus program is recognized across the two districts as the starting point for business success, expansion, and purchase. 19 grants of \$5,000 were awarded in 2025 and 37 people applied for the business training.

Northwest Ontario Pitch It 2025

Action	The fourth annual NWO Pitch IT event saw Entrepreneurs from the Northwestern Ontario Region Pitch their business ideas to a panel of Judges and Investors for the chance to win prizes starting at: 1st Prize - \$5000, 2ND Prize - \$3000, People’s Choice - \$2000. Held April 27, the event featured entrepreneurs from the Kenora and Rainy River Districts pitching their business ideas to a panel of judges, which chose first and second place winners to take home a cash prize and in-kind support.
Outcomes	Entrepreneurs are the future of our districts’ business industry. Supporting new Entrepreneurs is of high importance to allow our small communities to grow and prosper. Entrepreneurs gained valuable skills, knowledge and support to move forward with their business start-up.
Partners*	BDC; The Standard Insurance; NTAB; Northern Ontario Angels; City of Kenora; NWBC; NOIC; PACE; Northern Credit Union; tbaytel; LOWBIC; Futurpreneur; City of Kenora; RRFDC; City of Dryden; Fort Frances C of C; Dryden C of C
Timeframe	<input type="radio"/> Completed <input checked="" type="radio"/> Short Term <input type="radio"/> Mid-Term <input type="radio"/> Long Term
Updates	Updates or Points of Interest: The event was held on April 27, 2025 in Kenora. The event saw entrepreneurs from the Kenora and Rainy River Districts pitch their business ideas and proposed business expansions for a chance to win \$10,000 in cash prizes and \$1,000 in vouchers for IP support. Over 178 people watched the event and over 790 people voted for people’s choice. The Finalists: » 1st Place: Stephanie Verplaetse, Northern Airworks (\$5,000 prize) » 2nd Place: Sara Brunner, Sara Brunner Nutrition & Consulting (\$3,000 prize) » People’s Choice Award: Ali Crandall, Stella Apothecary (\$2,000 prize)

PACE Sioux Lookout Incubator Program

Action	On August 13, 2025, PACE started to accept applications to the 18-months Incubator Program.
Outcomes	The Incubator Program is designed to help entrepreneurs grow strong, sustainable businesses with hands-on support, affordable space, and expert mentorship.
Partners*	PACE; FedNor
Timeframe	<input type="radio"/> Completed <input type="radio"/> Short Term <input checked="" type="radio"/> Mid-Term <input type="radio"/> Long Term
Updates	This item is new to the 2026 Action Plan: The PACE Sioux Lookout Incubator offers: Reduced Downtown Rent in a visible, central location, Business Mentorship from experienced professionals, One-On-One Support in marketing, finance, and operations, and A Collaborative Environment to build confidence and capacity.

KEY PRIORITY #4 – ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND LOCAL BUSINESS GROWTH

PARO Centre for Women’s Enterprise-Canada welcomes Federal Budget 2025 as a Plan for Renewal, Resilience, and Shared Prosperity

Action	<p>*PARO Joins Women’s Enterprise Organizations of Canada (WEOC) in advancing women entrepreneurs as partners in Canada’s renewal.</p> <p>PARO welcomes the 2025 Federal Budget as a plan focused on fiscal stability, competitiveness, and generational prosperity. The organization joins the Women’s Enterprise Organizations of Canada (WEOC) in affirming the importance of responsible stewardship and investment in women-led businesses as a cornerstone of Canada’s economic renewal and long-term strength.</p>
Outcomes	<p>Through WEOC’s national loan fund and the network of women’s enterprise centres and organizations, including PARO, more than \$25 million in loans have supported over 560 women-owned businesses over the past three years. In Ontario, 303 women-owned businesses have been aided by the WEOC National Loans Fund, providing 143 Business Expansions and 160 Start-Ups with \$12,862,855.00 in funding to date. This illustrates how targeted financing and wraparound support help women start, grow, and scale businesses that anchor communities.</p>
Partners*	PARO; Women’s Enterprise Organizations of Canada (WEOC)
Timeframes	<input type="radio"/> Completed <input type="radio"/> Short Term <input type="radio"/> Mid-Term <input checked="" type="radio"/> Long Term
Updates	<p>This item is new to the 2026 Action Plan:</p> <p>PARO welcomes measures that support innovation, small-business productivity, and trade diversification, and encourages attention to equitable access for rural, Indigenous, newcomer, and under-represented women.</p> <p>*Announced November 4, 2025.</p>

* Acronym Glossary follows. Short-term, Mid-Term (2 Years), Long-Term (3 Years)

KEY PRIORITY #5 – INCLUSION, EQUITY, AND WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION

A strong labour market depends on the participation of all community members, yet many people continue to face barriers that limit their access to stable employment. This is felt most by groups who experience persistent inequities, including Indigenous and racialized residents, newcomers, youth, older adults, and people navigating complex social or economic circumstances. Affordable housing, transportation, work-appropriate clothing, and reliable technology remain out of reach for some residents, particularly in rural and isolated areas. Individuals who want to upgrade their skills often have trouble accessing programs because of strict eligibility rules, short recruitment timelines, or limited local delivery. Employers note that job roles are not always designed with flexibility in mind, which affects workers who need accommodations or different entry points into the workforce. Community stakeholders emphasize that many people who would benefit most from training do not hear about opportunities in time or do not see themselves reflected in available pathways. To help alleviate some of these barriers, communities are working to make learning and employment supports easier to reach, offering residents more options as they navigate the labour market.

KEY PRIORITY #5 – INCLUSION, EQUITY, AND WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION

Demystifying Immigration Pathways Seminar

Action	City of Kenora hosted a Demystifying Immigration Seminar on March 24, 2025 with the Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). Followed by individual meetings with employers.
Outcomes	The sessions provided an opportunity to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Discover federal and provincial immigration programs to help you attract, hire and retain skilled foreign workers » Learn how to tap into pools of global talent in Canada and abroad » Find out more about the work permit process » Connect with resources to help find foreign skilled workers faster » Learn how your organization can leverage the OINP to retain or hire foreign skilled individuals to contribute to your workplace » Ask questions and get answers from experts on the programs (in English and French) » Network with other employers and partners
Partners*	City of Kenora; IRCC; Ministry of Northern Development
Timeframe	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Completed <input type="radio"/> Short Term <input type="radio"/> Mid-Term <input type="radio"/> Long Term
Updates	This item is new to the 2026 Action Plan:

Rainy River First Nations Training

Action	Rainy River First Nations along with New Gold, SGEI, and Shooniyaa Wa-Biitong have started a partnership to implement training programs for local Indigenous people with a focus on Mill and Drill Operations.
Outcomes	The goal is to re-engage with the communities and increase the number of Indigenous employees at New Gold which has identified the Mill and Drill Operations as areas where new, trained personnel will have an opportunity for a career with progression.
Timeframe	<input type="radio"/> Completed <input type="radio"/> Short Term <input checked="" type="radio"/> Mid-Term <input type="radio"/> Long Term
Updates	This item is new to the 2026 Action Plan.

FSET Digital Empowerment

Action	FSET believes in innovation empowering people. They are dedicated to transforming connectivity for remote communities through Starlink technology, ensuring that even the most isolated regions have access to dependable internet. Through their collaborative partnership with SpaceX, using Starlink technology, they bring cutting-edge connectivity solutions to life through advanced high-speed internet service provided by satellites in Low-Earth orbit (LEO). These artificial constellations are capable of transmitting broadband signals to ground-level receivers, offering wire-free technology that not only addresses the limitations of fiber optics for remote Northern communities but also meets their longstanding connectivity needs.
Outcomes	FSET believes that reliable internet is not a luxury; it is a necessity. FSET ensures that even the most remote communities can access dedicated, rapid, reliable and cost-effective internet connections. At their core, they prioritize community-driven projects, specializing in installations tailored for community needs. While their focus primarily revolves around community deployments, they extend resources for self-installation and offer specialized residential solutions in Northwestern Ontario. » As of January 2025: 4,661+ Starlink Kits installed and 110+ Communities Served.
Partners*	FSET Kenora; SpaceX
Timeframe	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Completed <input type="radio"/> Short Term <input type="radio"/> Mid-Term <input type="radio"/> Long Term
Updates	Updates or Points of Interest: On March 4, 2025, Ontario Premier Doug Ford announced the cancellation of the \$100-million Starlink contract in tariff response. Premier Doug Ford also stated that the cancellation of the Starlink contract is permanent, even if all tariffs are removed. The Starlink contract cancellation is part of a larger procurement freeze by the province, which will no longer sign deals with US companies.

KEY PRIORITY #5 – INCLUSION, EQUITY, AND WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION

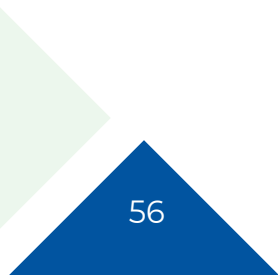
Dryden Urban Indigenous Homeward Bound

Action	The Homeward Bound Program is a comprehensive, wrap-around support initiative designed to help urban indigenous single mothers & their kids to build stable, independent futures. The program provides safe housing, academic upgrading, employment training, and individualized case management to support long-term success.
Outcomes	Participants receive on-site support, including access to life-skills programming, mental health resources, childcare assistance, Day Care, and community partnerships that strengthen their personal and professional development. The program’s goal is to remove barriers, empower women to pursue education or employment, and create a pathway toward sustainable independence.
Partners*	KDSB; DNFC; OAHS; Confederation College; Dryden Literacy; DDC; Woodgreen; OFIFC; OTF
Timeframe	<input type="radio"/> Completed <input type="radio"/> Short Term <input type="radio"/> Mid-Term <input checked="" type="radio"/> Long Term
Updates	<p>Update or Points of Interest:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Applicants to honour a four to five-year commitment. » The program aims to foster a safe, inclusive, and culturally supportive environment where women can focus on healing, growth, and achieving their long-term goals.

Youth Job Connect Program

Action	<p>The Youth Job Connection program serves youth aged 15 to 29 who experience multiple and/or complex barriers to employment by providing more intensive supports beyond traditional job search and placement opportunities.</p> <p>Supports include: Paid pre-employment training to promote job-readiness; Job matching and paid job placements, with placement supports for participants and hiring incentives for employers; Mentorship services; and Education and work transitions supports.</p>
Outcomes	Upon participating in an initial intake, participants will complete pre-employment training. Course work focuses on increasing work-related knowledge, improving life skills and certifications marketable to local employers. Once completed a designated number of hours or pre-employment training, participants begin work in a training placement with an actual local employer. This allows them develop on-the-job skills in a real work environment with the support of the employer and employment specialists.
Partners*	Employment Ontario Service Providers; Local employers
Timeframes	<input type="radio"/> Completed <input type="radio"/> Short Term <input type="radio"/> Mid-Term <input checked="" type="radio"/> Long Term
Updates	<p>Update or Points of Interest:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » 43 people participated in YJC in the Kenora District in 2024-2025 compared to 32 in 2023-2024. An increase of 34%. » Participation in the Kenora District Summer YJC decreased from to 38 to 33 (-13%) in the past year. » Participation in YJC in the Rainy River District decreased from 34 youth in 2023-2024 to 30 in 2024-2025. A decrease of 12%. » An additional 19 youth participated in YJC Summer in the Rainy River District compared to 17 in 2023-2024. A decrease of 12%.

* Acronym Glossary follows. Short-term, Mid-Term (2 Years), Long-Term (3 Years)



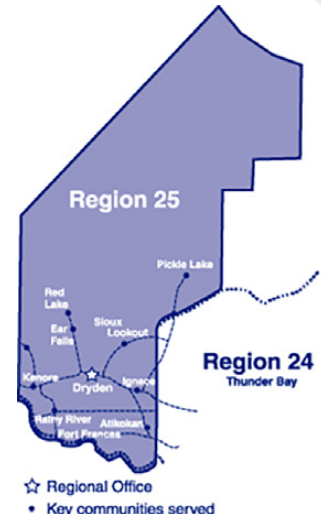
ACRONYM GLOSSARY

AEC	Atikokan Employment Centre
AEDC	Atikokan Economic Development Corporation
AFNOO	L'Association des Francophones du Nord Ouest de l'Ontario
C of C	Chamber of Commerce
CCDC	Chukuni Communities Development Corporation
CEDC	Community Economic Development Commission
CFDC	Community Futures Development Corporation
CIRNAC	Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada
Con College	Confederation College
DDC	Dryden Development Corporation
DNFC	Dryden Native Friendship Centre
EOSP	Employment Ontario Service Providers
FC	Friendship Centre
KDSB	Kenora District Services Board
KHA	Kenora Hospitality Alliance
LEAP	Lake of the Woods Employment Action Project
LOW	Lake of the Woods
LOW BrewCo.	Lake of the Woods Brewing Company
LOW Dev Com	Lake of the Woods Development Commission
LOWBIC	Lake of the Woods Business Incentive Corporation
MLITSD	Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development
MNDMF	Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, and Forestry
MNO	Metis Nation of Ontario
NADF	Nishnawbe Aski Development Fund
Ne-Chee FC	Ne-Chee Friendship Centre
NNC	Nutrition North Canada
NOIC	Northwestern Ontario Innovation Centre
NODN	Northwestern Ontario Development Network
NOHFC	Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation
NTAB	Northwest Training and Adjustment Board
NWBC	Northwest Business Centre
OAHS	Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services
OFIFC	Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres
OSSD	Ontario Secondary School Diploma
OTEC	Ontario Tourism Education Corporation
OTF	Ontario Trillium Foundation
PACE	Patricia Area Community Endeavours
QLCC	Quetico Lodge and Conference Centre
RAIN	Rural Agri-Innovation Network
RR	Rainy River
RRDSAB	RR District Social Services Administration Board
RRDSB	Rainy River District School Board
RRFDC	Rainy River Futures Development Corporation
SGEI	Seven Generations Education Institute
SLAAMB	Sioux Lookout Area Aboriginal Management Board
SWB	Shooniyaa Wa-Biitong

GEOGRAPHIC AREAS

The data presented in the Labour Market Conditions, Data and Analysis section is based on different sources of information from Statistics Canada relating to the Census Divisions for the Kenora and Rainy River Districts.

Statistics Canada defines Census Divisions as: “groups of neighbouring municipalities joined together for the purposes of regional planning and managing common services (such as police or ambulance services). These groupings are established under laws in effect in certain provinces of Canada. For example, a census division might correspond to a county, les municipalités régionales de comté or a regional district. In other provinces and the territories where laws do not provide for such areas, Statistics Canada defines equivalent areas for statistical reporting purposes in cooperation with these provinces and territories.”



The following lists detail the communities in the Kenora and Rainy River Districts:

RAINY RIVER DISTRICT

- | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|---|
| Agency 1 (Indian reserve) | Fort Frances (Town) | Rainy Lake 18C (Indian reserve) |
| Alberton (Township) | La Vallee (Township) | Rainy Lake 26A (Indian reserve) |
| Atikokan (Township) | Lake of the Woods (Township) | Rainy River (Town) |
| Big Grassy River 35G (Indian reserve) | Long Sault 12 (Indian reserve) | Rainy River, Unorganized (Unorganized) |
| Big Island Mainland 93 (Indian reserve) | Manitou Rapids 11 (Indian reserve) | Sabaskong Bay (Part) 35C (Indian reserve) |
| Chapple (Township) | Morley (Township) | Saug-a-Gaw-Sing 1 (Indian reserve) |
| Couchiching 16A (Indian reserve) | Neguaguon Lake 25D (Indian reserve) | Seine River 23A (Indian reserve) |
| Dawson (Township) | Rainy Lake 17A (Indian reserve) | Seine River 23B (Indian reserve) |
| Emo (Township) | Rainy Lake 17B (Indian reserve) | |

KENORA DISTRICT

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| Attawapiskat 91A (Indian reserve) | Lake Of The Woods 37 (Indian reserve) | Shoal Lake (Part) 39A (Indian reserve) |
| Bearskin Lake (Indian reserve) | Lansdowne House (Indian settlement) | Shoal Lake (Part) 40 (Indian reserve) |
| Cat Lake 63C (Indian reserve) | MacDowell Lake (Indian settlement) | Shoal Lake 34B2 (Indian reserve) |
| Deer Lake (Indian reserve) | Machin (Township) | Sioux Lookout (Municipality) |
| Dryden (City) | Marten Falls 65 (Indian reserve) | Sioux Narrows - Nestor Falls (Township) |
| Eagle Lake 27 (Indian reserve) | Muskrat Dam Lake (Indian reserve) | Slate Falls (Indian settlement) |
| Ear Falls (Township) | Neskantaga (Indian reserve) | Summer Beaver (Indian settlement) |
| English River 21 (Indian reserve) | North Spirit Lake (Indian reserve) | The Dalles 38C (Indian reserve) |
| Fort Albany (Part) 67 (Indian reserve) | Northwest Angle 33B (Indian reserve) | Wabaseemoong (Indian reserve) |
| Fort Hope 64 (Indian reserve) | Osnaburgh 63B (Indian reserve) | Wabauskang 21 (Indian reserve) |
| Fort Severn 89 (Indian reserve) | Peawanuck (Indian settlement) | Wabigoon Lake 27 (Indian reserve) |
| Ignace (Township) | Pickle Lake (Township) | Wapekeka 1 (Indian reserve) |
| Kasabonika Lake (Indian reserve) | Pikangikum 14 (Indian reserve) | Wapekeka 2 (Indian reserve) |
| Kee-Way-Win (Indian reserve) | Poplar Hill (Indian reserve) | Wawakapewin (Long Dog Lake) (Indian reserve) |
| Kenora (City) | Rat Portage 38A (Indian reserve) | Weagamow Lake 87 (Indian reserve) |
| Kenora 38B (Indian reserve) | Red Lake (Municipality) | Webequie (Indian reserve) |
| Kenora, Unorganized (Unorganized) | Sabaskong Bay (Part) 35C (Indian reserve) | Whitefish Bay 32A (Indian reserve) |
| Kingfisher Lake 1 (Indian reserve) | Sabaskong Bay 35D (Indian reserve) | Whitefish Bay 33A (Indian reserve) |
| Kitchenuhmaykoosib Aaki 84 (Big Trout Lake) (Indian reserve) | Sachigo Lake 1 (Indian reserve) | Whitefish Bay 34A (Indian reserve) |
| Lac Seul 28 (Indian reserve) | Sachigo Lake 2 (Indian reserve) | Wunnumin 1 (Indian reserve) |
| Lake Of The Woods 31G (Indian reserve) | Sandy Lake 88 (Indian reserve) | |



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