



# Kenora and Rainy River Districts

2022-2025 Local Labour Market Plan Report

**2025 FINAL UPDATE**



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## How Did We Do?

Please access our short survey by visiting <https://form.simplesurvey.com/f/s/NTAB2025LLMPReport> or by hardcopy request.

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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.”*

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

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# 2022-2025 Local Labour Market Plan Report **Kenora and Rainy River Districts**

February 2025

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## Executive Summary

The Northwest Training and Adjustment Board (NTAB) covers two catchment areas; the Kenora District and the Rainy River District. Each one comes with its own unique challenges. NTAB works with local partners and stakeholders to identify these local labour force issues. Local planning provides communities with the ability to identify, understand, and develop sustainable strategies to address labour market issues within our districts.

We have an aging workforce that needs immediate attention. As well, more skilled tradespeople/ apprentices are needed to grow our local economies. The relationship between economic development, higher educational attainments, supporting our Indigenous population and promoting Immigration are things needed to positively impact where we live. NTAB works to support Small and Medium Entrepreneurs in fields like Tourism, Agriculture and other various Service Sectors.

Forestry, Mining and Health Care create a lot of good job opportunities in the two districts and on-going work is needed with welcoming newcomers to help fill some of the vacancies that exist in these and other sectors.

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.

In 2021-2022, the Northwest Training and Adjustment Board released a plan for workforce development in the Kenora and Rainy River Districts covering the period of 2022 to 2025. The three-year evidence-based plan focused on:

- Re-building the local economy through the availability of a resilient and skilled labour force;
- Re-engaging with workers as they return to the workforce and students as they prepare for the future;
- Re-igniting the local economy via actions and strategies outlined in our Workforce Development Action Plan 2022-2025.

This report provides the final annual update of the 3-year plan addressing the five priorities that have formed the basis of NTAB's local labour market plan for many years:

1. Transitioning our workforce in a changing economy.
2. Attraction/Retention of Key Demographics of our Population.
3. Evolving Education Requirements.
4. Supporting entrepreneurs.
5. Integrating the Marginalized Workforce.

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

## Labour Market Supply

- The Annual Unemployment rate has fallen consistently since 2020 and at 4.5% in 2024 is the lowest it has been in five years.
- While the participation rate in Northwest Ontario increased in 2022 and 2023, it fell significantly in 2024 and at 59.2% it is lower than in Ontario overall. With the very low unemployment rate, it is important to attract people back to the labour market.
- The number of people in the Kenora and Rainy River Districts collecting Employment Insurance has remained relatively stable over the past year. While the number is low, the group that experienced the most significant increase in employment insurance recipients was women age 55 to 64 in the Kenora District.
- Both the Kenora and Rainy River Districts experienced a net increase in migration into the region in the most current timeframe between 2017 and 2022. Fifty-five more people moved into the Kenora District than left. In the Rainy River District, 214 more individuals moved into the area than who left. The only age cohort that experienced net out-migration were youth age 18 to 24 from the Rainy River District.
- An analysis of the ten occupations that employ the most people by the level of educational typically required to obtain entry-level employment demonstrates that there are employment opportunities in both the Kenora and Rainy River Districts for people of all levels of educational attainment.

## Labour Market Demand

- There were 218 or 5% more businesses operating in the Kenora District in June 2024 as compared to June 2022. The most notable increases were observed in Administrative Supports, Waste Management and Remediation with an increase from 86 to 141 businesses in operation (64%) and Professional, Scientific and Technical Services where the number of businesses increased from 225 to 243.
- The Rainy River District also experienced an increase in the number of businesses operating between 2022 and 2024. There were 62 more businesses operating as of June 2024, an increase of 3.7%. The greatest increase was observed in the Administrative Supports, Waste Management and Remediation sector growing from 37 to 48 businesses (30%). Businesses in this sector include supports to business such as personnel and recruiting companies as well as janitorial services, security provision, etc. Waste management establishments are engaged in the collection, treatment and disposal of waste material.
- Comparing the total number of businesses in each sector as a percentage of total businesses locally with the province overall highlights the importance of the Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting; Retail Trade and Other Services sectors in the Kenora District as compared to Ontario. Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting; Retail Trade, Other Services, Accommodation and Food Services and Public Administration are the most predominant sectors in the Rainy River District, exceeding the province.
- Elevated employment concentration in Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting; Mining, Oil and Gas Extraction and Quarrying; Utilities; Health and Social Assistance and Public Administration highlights their importance to the region's workforce.
- The NTAB Northwest Career Compass provided a source for data examining online job postings issued in the Kenora and Rainy River Districts in 2024. The Top 20 occupations generating the most postings in both areas are summarized in Table 8A and B.

- The Northwest Training and Adjustment Board released an online survey of employers on December 17, 2024. The survey, distributed to Chambers of Commerce in the Kenora and Rainy River Districts to forward to their members, Employment Ontario Service Providers to forward to their employer network and to the NTAB Board of Directors' employer network. The survey closed on January 9, 2025, generating thirty completed responses from a cross-section of sectors, business types and business sizes. Feedback was provided on current occupational shortages, projected change in the number of employees and skill requirements.
- Program data provided by Employment Ontario demonstrates that client participation in Employment Ontario Assisted Employment Services programming in the Kenora District between April 1, 2023 and March 31, 2024 decreased by 84 clients (19%) compared to 2022-2023. However, the number taking advantage of Unassisted Employment Services in the same time period grew by 40% from 2,117 to 2,973.
- In the Rainy River District, participation in Assisted Employment Services grew significantly between 2022-2023 and 2023-2024. 565 people received Assisted Employment Services or 133 more than 432 people who received Assisted Employment Services in 2022-2023. This is an increase of 30%. However, the number who took advantage of Unassisted Services decreased by 181 falling to 3,824.
- Across Northern Ontario, usage of Assisted Employment Services remained relatively stable over the past year while use of Unassisted Services increased by 30%.
- The number of learners participating in Literacy and Basic Skills increased in both the Kenora and Rainy River Districts. There were 33 more learners in the Kenora District, an increase of 7% while there were 73 more learners in the Rainy River District, an increase of 30% compared to 2022-2023.
- The number of Apprenticeship registrations decreased in the Kenora District from 101 in 2022-2023 to 92 in 2023-2024. However, the number of active apprentices grew from 301 to 313 in the past year. The number of Certificates of Apprenticeship issued also grew from 24 in 2022-2023 to 45 in 2023-2024. The number of modular registrations decreased from 545 issues in 2022-2023 to 461 in 2023-2024.
- In the Rainy River District, the number of apprenticeship registrations also decreased from 49 in 2022-2023 to 31 in the past year. The number of active apprentices increased slightly from 134 in 2022-2023 to 136 in 2023-2024. There was a decrease in the number of Certificates of Apprenticeship issued falling to 18 issued last year compared to 24 in 2022-2023. This is a decrease of 6 certificates or 25%. There was an increase in the number of Modular Training registrations increasing from 203 in 2022-2023 to 265 in 2023-2024. This is an increase of 32 or 30.5%.
- Participation in the Canada Ontario Job Grant and Better Jobs Ontario programming continues to be minimal although increased activity in COJG was reported during the community consultation conducted in November 2024. Eligibility requirements and the lack of availability of local training continues to be a barrier to participation in Better Jobs Ontario.
- The final annual update to the three-year Action Plan 2022-2025, itemizes short, medium and long-term actions now underway.

## Background

Early in 2022, the Northwest Training and Adjustment Board (NTAB) released a three-year evidence-based plan for workforce development in the Kenora and Rainy River Districts. This 2025 report is the Final Update of three annual updates.

In 2024, as the local economy, workforce and services returned to pre-pandemic conditions, community partners in the Kenora and Rainy River Districts continued their focus on five strategic priorities for workforce development in the region:

1. Transitioning our workforce in a changing economy.
2. Attraction/Retention of Key Demographics of our Population.
3. Evolving Education Requirements.
4. Supporting entrepreneurs.
5. Integrating the Marginalized Workforce.

Recognizing the significance of the pandemic on the region's economy and workforce, NTAB and their partners added a new priority to their Action Plan: 6. Post-COVID-19 Work Trends.

This update uses statistical data from a variety of sources including Statistics Canada Census 2021, Canada Business Counts, Taxfiler and NTAB's Career Compass Northwest Job Board analysis of online job postings. To gain insights into labour market supply, we have used Employment Ontario's own service data to serve as a sample set of the larger population of unemployed workers in the Kenora and Rainy River Districts. To gain further insight into local labour market demand, the plan includes feedback from local businesses gathered by a survey conducted at the end of 2024. Input from multiple stakeholders including employers, economic developers, educators and employment service providers has been combined with these statistical insights to create strategic actions outlined in the Local Labour Market Action Plan for Workforce Development in the Kenora and Rainy River Districts.

# Labour Market Supply

Last year’s labour market plan provided several insights into the population of the Kenora and Rainy River Districts gleaned through the Statistics Canada Census 2021 including population change, age, educational attainment and Indigenous and racialized populations. We learned that the region, like many in Ontario, is now being impacted by an aging workforce. While the population of individuals age 15 and older in the Kenora District has increased slightly between 2016 and 2021, the population of people age 25 to 54 has decreased. This is concerning as this age demographic comprises the greatest percentage of the labour force. Population increases are driven by individuals age 55 and older. In the Rainy River District, the population of individuals age 15 and older decreased slightly between 2016 and 2021. However, the loss of over 400 people in the key labour force demographic of age 25 to 54 is of particular concern.

The Statistics Canada Census 2021 revealed improved educational attainment as compared to the 2016 Census. The number of people without a secondary school diploma decreased in both the Kenora and Rainy River Districts. In the Rainy River District, the number with a secondary school diploma increased. At 25.5% and 24% respectively, a greater percentage of the total labour force has a college certificate or diploma in both the Kenora and Rainy River Districts a compared to Ontario where one in five people have earned this credential. The number with an Apprenticeship credential decreased between 2016 and 2021 in both districts, however, at 8% of the total labour force in the Kenora District and 9% in the Rainy River District in 2021, the percentage of the total labour force with an Apprenticeship designation is significantly more than in Ontario where 5% has an apprenticeship certificate or diploma. Finally, the number who have a university degree also increased in the Kenora and Rainy River Districts. As of 2021, almost 15,000 people or one in five of the Kenora District residents have earned a university credential while in the Rainy River District, 2,290 (14.5%) have attained a university credential.

## Labour Force Status

While local unemployment rates are suppressed by Statistics Canada to meet confidentiality requirements, Table 1 highlights the annual unemployment rates in northern Ontario. The unemployment rate in Northwest Ontario continues to fall in 2024 as the rate begins to rise across the province.

Table 1: Annual unemployment rates in Northern Ontario

Geography	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Northeast Ontario	8.0%	6.9%	4.5%	5.5%	5.9%
Northwest Ontario	7.9%	6.8%	5.0%	4.7%	4.5%
Thunder Bay Census Metropolitan Area	8.0%	7.5%	4.3%	4.2%	4.3%
Ontario	9.8%	8.1%	5.6%	5.7%	7.0%

Sources: Statistics Canada Table 14-10-0393-01 and Table 14-10-0385-01, Labour force characteristics, annual

Table 2 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 increased in 2022 and 2023, it fell significantly in 2024 and is lower than in Ontario overall. With the very low unemployment rate, it is important to attract people back to the labour market. Our upcoming analysis of labour market demand will demonstrate that there are employment opportunities at all educational levels. Removing barriers that may keep people from seeing their place in the workforce would help to alleviate labour market demand.

Geography	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Northeast Ontario	58.1%	57.1%	58.5%	57.7%	57.5%
Northwest Ontario	59.0%	61.0%	60.3%	61.6%	59.2%
Thunder Bay Census Metropolitan Area	60.3%	62.9%	61.1%	62.1%	60.7%
Ontario	63.7%	65.2%	65.4%	65.5%	65.0%

Sources: Statistics Canada Table 14-10-0393-01 and Table 14-10-0385-01, Labour force characteristics, annual

Table 3 compares the number of people collecting Regular Employment Insurance benefits in October 2024 with October 2023. The number collecting these benefits remained stable. In the Kenora District, 650 individuals received Employment Insurance as of October 2024 as compared to 670 in 2023. In the Rainy River District, 160 individuals were collecting Employment Insurance benefits as of October 2024 as compared to 170 in 2023. Table 3 provides a further breakdown of recipients by age and gender. The group that experienced the most significant increase was women age 55 to 64 in the Kenora District.

Age Range	Oct 2023		Oct 2024		Difference Recipients - Males		Difference Recipients - Females	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent
<b>Kenora District</b>								
Age 15 to 29	60	30	50	20	(-10)	(-16.7%)	(-10)	(-33.3%)
Age 30 to 54	220	130	230	130	10	9.0%	0	0.0%
Age 55 to 64	90	50	100	70	10	11.1%	20	40.0%
<b>Rainy River District</b>								
Age 15 to 24	10	10	20	10	10	100%	0	0.0%
Age 30 to 54	50	50	50	40	0	0.0%	(-10)	(-20.0%)
Age 55 to 64	20	20	20	20	0	0.0%	0	0.0%

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

## Migration Characteristics

Table 4A and B indicate out-migration has continued to slow since peaking in 2018. Statistics Canada Taxfiler data measures the number of people moving in and out of our region. Between 2013 and 2018, a net 1,151 people had left the Kenora District and 379 had moved from the Rainy River District. In 2014 to 2019, net out-migration slowed to 807 from the Kenora District and 231 from the Rainy River District.

In the most current timeframe between 2017 and 2022 both the Kenora and Rainy River Districts experienced a net increase in migration into the region. Fifty-five more people moved in to the Kenora District than left. In the Rainy River District, 214 more individuals moved into the area than who left. The only age cohort that experienced net out-migration were youth age 18 to 24. Often this is a positive occurrence as youth leave for post-secondary education. The key is to attract them back.

Table 4A: Migration in and out of the Kenora and Rainy River Districts			
Kenora District – 2017 to 2022			
Age Range	Total In-Migration	Total Out-Migration	Net Migration
0 to 17	1,911	2,000	(-149)
18 to 24	1,266	1,209	57
25 to 44	3,605	3,017	588
45 to 64	1,410	1,482	(-72)
65 +	415	764	(-369)
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,607</b>	<b>8,552</b>	<b>55</b>

Table 4B: Migration in and out of the Kenora and Rainy River Districts			
Rainy River District – 2017 to 2022			
Age Range	Total In-Migration	Total Out-Migration	Net Migration
0 to 17	660	439	171
18 to 24	291	459	(-168)
25 to 44	1,082	897	185
45 to 64	502	410	92
65 +	169	235	(-66)
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,704</b>	<b>2,490</b>	<b>214</b>

Source: Statistics Canada Taxfiler data, 2024

## Composition of the Local labour force in the Kenora and Rainy River Districts

We have already identified that the census 2021 has pointed to an aging workforce locally as compared to the previous census conducted in 2016 as well as an increase in educational attainment. To highlight that there are employment and career opportunities in the Kenora and Rainy River Districts at all levels of education, we can use the Census 2021 to explore the occupational composition of the labour force by level of education.

Tables 5A and B look at the ten occupations that employ the greatest number of people in the Kenora and Rainy River Districts for each level of education. The analysis demonstrates that there is a good cross-section of jobs at every level of education as well as significant indicators of current and future demand.

The Employment Outlook information included in Tables 5A and 5B is an indicator provided by the Service Canada Job Bank. Any occupation can be looked up at [www.jobbank.gc.ca/trend-analysis/search-job-outlooks](http://www.jobbank.gc.ca/trend-analysis/search-job-outlooks).

Table 5A: Occupations that employ the most people in the Kenora District by educational attainment

Occupation	Total Employed	No. of Job Postings Jan 1 to Nov 30 2024	Age 55+		Employment Outlook
			No.	%	
<b>Secondary School or Less</b>					
64410 Security guards and related occupations	545	26	110	16.9	Moderate
65310 Light duty cleaners	545	97	185	27.4	Good
64100 Retail salespersons/visual merchandisers	580	41	205	28.9	Moderate
73300 Transport truck drivers	570	66	335	46.9	Good
65312 Janitors, caretakers, heavy-duty cleaners	480	37	160	25.8	Moderate
60020 Retail and wholesale trade managers	705	171	220	29.3	Good
75110 Construction trades helpers & labourers	475	34	85	12.7	Moderate
65100 Cashiers	430	103	70	11.2	Moderate
65201 Food counter attendants/kitchen helpers	435	99	90	13.8	Good
14100 General office support workers	440	60	125	21.2	Limited
<b>Apprenticeship or Trades Certificate or Diploma</b>					
72310 Carpenters	405	9	110	20.0	Good
72410 Automotive service tech's, truck/repair	240	77	50	17.9	Moderate
72200 Electricians (except industrial)	150	12	30	18.2	Moderate
72400 Construction millwright/industrial mech.	180	42	60	30.8	Good
73400 Heavy equipment operators	390	22	145	29.9	Moderate
72300 Plumbers	95	8	20	20.0	Moderate
63210 Hairstylists and barbers	60	0	15	11.5	Moderate
72106 Welders and related machine operators	120	2	20	16.7	Moderate
63200 Cooks	275	112	80	22.2	Moderate
72020 Supervisors, mechanic trades	50	27	0	0.0	Very Good
72401 Heavy-duty equipment mechanics	75	18	0	0.0	Good
<b>College (A = 2 or more years education / B = less than 2 years or more than 6 months on-the-job training)</b>					
42201 Social & community service workers (A)	1,565	157	395	22.3	Good
42202 Early childhood educators/assistants (A)	390	29	80	18.0	Good
33102 Nurses aides, orderlies, service assoc. (B)	520	15	120	20.3	Good
42100 Police officers (except commissioned) (B)	360	0	40	10.5	Good
43100 Elem. & Sec. school teacher asst's. (B)	580	71	90	14.1	Good
13110 Administrative assistants (B)	430	119	160	33.7	Moderate
13100 Administrative officers (B)	330	65	145	39.7	Good
32102 Paramedic occupations (A)	135	3	0	0.0	Good
32101 Licensed practical nurses (A)	110	101	20	16.7	Very Good
12200 Accounting tech's and bookkeepers (A)	200	11	140	56.0	Good
<b>University Certificate, Diploma or Degree</b>					
41221 Elementary and kindergarten teachers	665	172	165	22.3	Good
31301 Registered nurses/psychiatric nurses	535	354	115	19.8	Good
41220 Secondary school teachers	360	211	70	18.2	Good
41300 Social workers	205	58	35	15.6	Good
00018 Senior managers-public & private sector	225	0	100	41.7	Unavailable
40021 School principals, administrators	105	23	35	33.3	Very Good
11100 Financial auditors and accountants	100	26	35	31.8	Very Good
31102 General practitioners, family physicians	85	42	0	0.0	Very Good
41301 Therapists in counselling	85	15	10	11.8	Very Good
30010 Managers in health care	105	79	20	18.2	Good
41101 Lawyers and Quebec notaries	60	24	0	0.0	Moderate

Table 5B: Occupations that employ the most people in the Rainy River District by educational attainment

Occupation	Total Employed	No. of Job Postings Jan 1 to Nov 30 2024	Age 55+		Employment Outlook
			No.	%	
<b>Secondary School or Less</b>					
73300 Transport truck drivers	265	8	115	36.5	Good
64100 Retail salespersons/visual merchandisers	195	32	50	20.8	Moderate
65201 Food counter attendants/kitchen helpers	160	43	15	6.7	Moderate
60020 Retail and wholesale trade managers	230	11	75	31.3	Moderate
65310 Light duty cleaners	140	24	35	17.1	Good
65100 Cashiers	140	14	0	0.0	Limited
65312 Janitors, caretakers, heavy-duty cleaners	115	4	85	53.1	Moderate
80020 Managers in agriculture	140	18	85	51.5	Good
65102 Store shelf stockers, clerks, order fillers	80	32	0	0.0	Moderate
75110 Construction trades helpers & labourers	100	10	45	25.0	Good
<b>Apprenticeship or Trades Certificate or Diploma</b>					
72410 Automotive service tech's, truck/repair	95	16	0	0.0	Moderate
73400 Heavy equipment operators	175	7	65	29.5	Good
72310 Carpenters	75	4	25	23.8	Good
72400 Construction millwright/industrial mech.	95	11	10	10.0	Moderate
72200 Electricians (except industrial)	30	8	0	0.0	Good
72401 Heavy-duty equipment mechanics	75	2	10	12.5	Moderate
73201 General building maintenance workers	60	11	25	35.7	Moderate
92101 Water and waste treatment operators	45	1	0	0.0	Moderate
63200 Cooks	120	12	35	23.3	Good
63210 Hairstylists and barbers	20	0	0	0.0	Moderate
<b>College (A = 2 or more years education / B = less than 2 years or more than 6 months on-the-job training)</b>					
42201 Social & community service workers (A)	360	28	75	18.8	Good
33102 Nurses aides, orderlies, service assoc. (B)	165	13	35	17.5	Good
42202 Early childhood educators/assistants (A)	125	8	0	0.0	Good
43100 Elem., Sec. school teacher asst's. (B)	165	5	40	20.5	Good
13110 Administrative assistants (B)	130	23	60	40.0	Moderate
32102 Paramedic occupations (A)	55	8	0	0.0	Good
13100 Administrative officers (B)	75	17	30	40.0	Good
72106 Welders & related machine operators (A)	55	12	0	0.0	Moderate
92100 Power engineers & power system op's (A)	65	0	0	0.0	Moderate
<b>University Certificate, Diploma or Degree</b>					
41221 Elementary and kindergarten teachers	220	6	35	14.6	Good
31301 Registered nurses/psychiatric nurses	180	71	40	20.0	Good
41220 Secondary school teachers	110	26	20	16.7	Good
00018 Senior managers-public & private sector	75	0	15	18.8	Unavailable
40021 School principals, administrators	30	7	0	0.0	Very Good
41300 Social workers	40	4	0	0.0	Good
41301 Therapists in counselling	25	3	0	0.0	Very Good
41302 Religious leaders	25	0	0	0.0	Undetermined
30010 Managers in health care	30	16	10	33.3	Good
41101 Lawyers and Quebec notaries	20	7	0	0.0	Moderate

Source: Statistics Canada Census 2021, NTAB Career Compass Northwest and Service Canada Job Bank

## 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. Tables 6A and B compares the number of businesses operating in the Kenora and Rainy River Districts as of June 2024 with the number operating in June 2022. 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 6A - Change in Number of Businesses June 2022 to June 2024 - Kenora District				
Sector	No of Businesses Jun 2022	No. of Businesses Jun 2024	Absolute Change	Per Cent change
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting	146	167	21	14.4
Mining, Oil and Gas Extraction, Quarrying	19	21	2	10.5
Utilities	20	16	(-4)	(-20.0)
Construction	469	485	16	3.4
Manufacturing	53	49	(-4)	(-7.5)
Wholesale Trade	65	56	(-9)	(-13.8)
Retail Trade	399	408	9	2.3
Transportation and Warehousing	188	188	0	0.0
Information and Cultural Services	45	48	3	6.7
Finance and Insurance	164	159	(-5)	(-3.0)
Real Estate and Leasing	662	697	35	5.3
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	225	243	18	8.0
Management pf Companies	25	21	(-4)	(-16.0)
Administrative & Support Services, Remediation	86	141	55	64.0
Educational Services	54	54	0	0.0
Health and Social assistance	347	375	28	8.1
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	65	71	6	6.2
Accommodation and Food Services	443	472	29	6.5
Personal and Household Services	312	318	6	1.9
Public Administration	66	75	9	13.6
Businesses not classified by industry	304	311	7	2.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,157</b>	<b>4,375</b>	<b>218</b>	<b>5.2</b>

Source: Statistics Canada, Canada Business Counts, June 2022 and June 2024

With the number of businesses operating in the Kenora District as of June 2024 slightly greater than June 2022, the economy in the Kenora District appears to continue recovery from the pandemic. There was a net increase of 218 businesses when comparing the total business count in June 2022 with June 2024. There was a notable increase in the number of businesses operating in the Kenora District, they are Administrative and Support Services, Waste Management and Remediation businesses. Businesses in this sector include supports to business such as personnel and recruiting companies as well as janitorial services, security provision, etc. Waste management establishments are engaged in the collection, treatment and disposal of waste material. The number of businesses operating in this sector increased from 86 to 141 (64.0%). Professional, Scientific and Technical Services includes legal services, accounting services, computer systems design, etc. There are an additional 18 businesses operating in this sector, an increase of 8%. This sector is often viewed as an indicator of a growing knowledge economy.

The Rainy River District continues to recover from the pandemic. There are 62 more businesses operating in June 2024 as compared to June 2022. The Administrative and Support Services, Waste Management and Remediation Businesses also grew in the Rainy River District. There are 11 more businesses in operation, an increase of 30%. While the Mining, Oil and Gas Extraction and Quarrying grew by only 3 businesses, it represents a significant increase of 37.5% more businesses operating in the sector.

Table 6B - Change in Number of Businesses June 2022 to June 2024 - Rainy River District				
Sector	No of Businesses Jun 2022	No. of Businesses Jun 2024	Absolute Change	Per Cent change
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting	278	276	(-2)	(-0.7)
Mining, Oil and Gas Extraction, Quarrying	8	11	3	37.5
Utilities	10	11	1	10.0
Construction	163	153	(-10)	(-6.1)
Manufacturing	36	34	(-2)	(-5.6)
Wholesale Trade	31	31	0	0.0
Retail Trade	124	133	9	7.3
Transportation and Warehousing	97	92	(-5)	(-5.2)
Information and Cultural Services	13	15	2	15.4
Finance and Insurance	58	58	0	0.0
Real Estate and Leasing	209	217	8	3.8
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	73	81	8	11.0
Management of Companies	15	15	0	0.0
Administrative & Support Services, Remediation	37	48	11	29.7
Educational Services	20	18	(-2)	(-10.0)
Health and Social assistance	104	110	6	5.8
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	21	22	1	4.8
Accommodation and Food Services	105	111	6	5.7
Personal and Household Services	157	168	11	7.0
Public Administration	25	29	4	16.0
Businesses not classified by industry	91	104	13	14.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,675</b>	<b>1,737</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>3.7</b>

Source: Statistics Canada, Canada Business Counts, June 2020 and June 2022

Canada Business Counts data is also useful in understanding the composition of the local economy as compared to other areas including the province of Ontario. Table 7A and B examine the total number of businesses by sector in the Kenora and Rainy River Districts and the percentage within each sector of the total businesses overall. This can be compared with the distribution in Ontario to gauge the importance of the sector locally as compared to the province. Table 7A demonstrates the importance of the Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting, Retail Trade and Other Service sectors to the economy in the Kenora District. Other services include repair services and general maintenance and include businesses operating in Automotive Services, personal care services, funeral services, etc. There may be room for growth for businesses operating in the Professional, Scientific and Technical Services as well as Health Care and Social Assistance.

Industries	Total number in the sector and Percent of Total Businesses		Percent of Total Businesses in Ontario
	Total	%	No.
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	1,374	13.3	3.8
Oil and gas extraction, Quarrying, Mining	7	0.1	0.1
Utilities	29	0.3	0.1
Construction	1,026	10.0	11.5
Manufacturing	245	2.4	2.8
Wholesale Trade	240	2.3	2.8
Retail Trade	769	7.5	2.4
Transportation and Warehousing	470	4.6	10.0
Information and Cultural Industries	60	0.6	1.8
Finance and Insurance	384	3.7	6.5
Real Estate and Leasing	1,999	19.4	29.6
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	731	7.1	16.8
Management of Companies and Enterprises	55	0.5	1.0
Admin. support, Waste Mngt., Remediation	327	3.2	4.9
Educational Services	62	0.6	1.4
Health Care and Social Assistance	583	5.7	9.1
Arts, Sports, Entertainment and Recreation	123	1.2	1.9
Accommodation and Food Services	309	3.0	3.6
Other Services	708	6.9	2.5
Public Administration	27	0.3	0.1
Unclassified	774	7.5	14.2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10,302</b>		

Source: Canada Business Counts, June 2024

Table 7B highlights the importance of Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting as well as Accommodation and Food Services, Other Services, Retail Trade, and Public Administration as compared to Ontario. As in the Kenora District, there may be opportunities for business growth in the Professional, Scientific and Technical Services sector as well as Health Care and Social Assistance. There may also be business development opportunities in the Construction sector.

Table 7B: Distribution of Total Businesses by Sector – Rainy River District			
Industries	Total number in the sector and Percent of Total Businesses		Percent of Total Businesses in Ontario
	Total	%	No.
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	276	15.9	3.8
Oil and gas extraction, Quarrying, Mining	11	0.6	0.1
Utilities	11	0.6	0.1
Construction	153	8.8	11.5
Manufacturing	34	2.9	2.8
Wholesale Trade	31	1.8	2.8
Retail Trade	133	7.7	2.4
Transportation and Warehousing	92	5.3	10.0
Information and Cultural Industries	15	0.9	1.8
Finance and Insurance	58	3.3	6.5
Real Estate and Leasing	217	12.5	29.6
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	81	4.7	16.8
Management of Companies and Enterprises	15	0.9	1.0
Admin. support, Waste Mngt., Remediation	48	2.8	4.9
Educational Services	18	1.0	1.4
Health Care and Social Assistance	110	6.3	9.1
Arts, Sports, Entertainment and Recreation	22	1.3	1.9
Accommodation and Food Services	111	6.4	3.6
Other Services	168	9.7	2.5
Public Administration	29	1.7	0.1
Unclassified	104	6.0	14.2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,737</b>		

Source: Canada Business Counts, June 2024

# Career Compass Northwest

As more and more employers turn to online job postings, sites analyzing the number of job postings provide insights into labour market demand. The Northwest Training and Adjustment Board hosts Career Compass Northwest, an online job posting board highlighting local employment opportunities. Tables 8A and B provide a list of the top 20 occupations advertised in both the Kenora and Rainy River Districts in 2024 as per Career Compass Northwest.

**Table 8A: Top 20 occupations advertised in the Kenora District – Jan 1 to Dec 31 2024**

	<b>NOC</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Number of Online Job Postings 2024</b>
1.	31301	Registered Nurses and Registered Psychiatric Nurses	354
2.	65102	Store Shelf Stockers, Clerks and Order Fillers	259
3.	64100	Retail Salespersons and Visual Merchandisers	258
4.	41220	Secondary School Teachers	211
5.	41221	Elementary School and Kindergarten Teachers	172
6.	60020	Retail and Wholesale Trade Managers	171
7.	42201	Social and Community Service Workers	157
8.	13110	Administrative Assistants	119
9.	64409	Other Customer and Information Service Representatives	113
10.	63200	Cooks	112
11.	65100	Cashiers	103
12.	62101	Retail and Wholesale Buyers	102
13.	32101	Licensed Practical Nurses	101
14.	65201	Food Counter Attendants, Kitchen Helpers	99
15.	65310	Light Duty Cleaners	97
16.	54100	Program Leaders and Instructors in Recreation, Sport and Fitness	88
17.	62020	Food Service Supervisors	83
18.	30010	Managers in Health Care	79
19.	72410	Automotive Service Technicians	77
20.	44101	Home Support Workers and Caregivers	74

Table 8B: Top 20 occupations advertised in the Rainy River District – Jan 1 to Dec 31 2024

	<b>NOC</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Number of Online Job Postings 2024</b>
1.	32101	Licensed Practical Nurses	49
2.	65201	Food Counter Attendants, Kitchen Helpers	43
3.	44101	Home Support Workers and Caregivers	37
4.	64100	Retails Salespersons and Visual Merchandisers	32
5.	65102	Store Shelf Stockers, Clerks, Order Fillers	32
6.	42201	Social and Community Support Workers	28
7.	21330	Mining Engineers	27
8.	33109	Other Assisting Occupations in Support of Health Services	26
9.	41220	Secondary School Teachers	26
10.	65310	Light Duty Cleaners	24
11.	13110	Administrative Assistants	23
12.	73301	Bus Drivers and other Transit Operators	22
13.	62020	Food Service Supervisors	19
14.	14100	General Office Support Workers	18
15.	82020	Supervisors, Mining and Quarrying	19
16.	13100	Administrative Officers	17
17.	21102	Geoscientists	17
18.	54100	Program Leaders and Instructors in Recreation, Sport and Fitness	17
19.	94140	Process Control and Machine Operators, Food and Beverage	17
20.	30010	Managers in Health Care	16
21.	72410	Automotive Service Technician	16

## Survey of employers in the Kenora and Rainy River Districts

The Northwest Training and Adjustment Board released an online survey of employers on December 17, 2024.

The survey, distributed to Chamber of Commerce in the Kenora and Rainy River Districts to forward to their members, Employment Ontario Service Providers to forward to their employer network and to the NTAB Board of Directors' network. The survey closed on January 9, 2025, generating thirty completed responses from a cross-section of sectors, business types and business sizes.

NTAB Employer Survey Response by Sector		
Sector	Number of Responses	Percentage of Total
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	2	6.7%
Mining, Quarrying, Oil and Gas Extraction	0	0
Utilities	0	0
Construction	2	6.7%
Manufacturing	2	6.7%
Wholesale Trade	0	0
Retail Trade	1	3.3%
Transportation and Warehousing	0	0
Information and Cultural Industries	0	0
Finance and Insurance	2	6.7%
Real Estate and Leasing	0	0
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	1	3.3%
Management of Companies	0	0
Administrative Support, Waste Management and Remediation	2	6.7%
Educational Service	0	0
Health Care and Social Assistance	5	16.7%
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	0	0
Accommodation and Food Services	1	3.3%
Other Services	5	16.7%
Public Administration	7	23.3%
Tourism	0	0

NTAB Employer Survey by Type of Business		
Type of Business	Number of Responses	Percentage of Total
Not for Profit	8	27%
Corporation	7	23%
Public	6	20%
Private	4	13%
Partnership	2	7%
Aboriginal Controlled	2	7%
Canadian owned	1	3%

NTAB Employer Survey by Size of the Business based on the number of employees		
Employee Size Range	Number of Responses	Percentage of Total
Owner-Operator (0 employees)	2	6.7%
Micro - 1 to 4 employees	10	33.3%
Small - 5 to 99	14	46.7%
Medium - 100 to 499	4	13.3%
Large - 500+	0	0.0%

In addition, 19 of the 30 respondents employed at least 1 part-time employee (63%) while 14 of 30 respondents employed at least 1 seasonal worker. Twelve of 30 respondents (40%) employed at least 1 contractor.

## Summary of Survey Responses

### What are the entry requirements for each type of position at your company?

Respondents indicated that entry-requirements were dependent on the type of position. Management or technical positions largely required a university credential, technicians either possessed secondary school with experience or a college diploma, technologists required a college diploma, labourers required a secondary school diploma. Three of 30 respondents required either an AZ or DZ accreditation. Computer skills and soft skills were identified from a number of respondents.

### What workforce shortages are you experiencing, if any?

18 of 30 respondents (60%) identified workforce shortages ranging from entry level labourers to highly skilled and educated employees and managers.

### Please tell us about any expected growth or reduction in your number of employees in the next year.

15 or 50% of respondents indicated they do not expect to hire or reduce the size of their workforce in 2025. Only one planned to reduce the size of the workforce and that was by five employees. All others indicated their intent to hire. Several indicated they were filling multiple positions and always in a hiring position. Nine respondents indicated that hiring was a result of business growth.

### Describe your challenges in hiring and/or retaining employees.

The inability to offer competitive wages especially considering the mining and forestry sectors, present challenges for both hiring and retaining employees. A lack of suitable applicants was also identified as a challenge. Others pointed to the difficulties in attracting people to the north and a lack of available housing.

### Is there any training that should be made available locally to support your business?

21 of the 30 respondents (70%) indicated that training would be helpful. Some pointed to general topics like change management, leadership, communication, etc. Others were looking for more technical skills training such Health and Safety, the safe use of hand and power tools, heavy equipment operation, DZ and AZ accreditation instruction. One respondent suggested subsidies for on-the-job training.

### Which formats would you prefer? E-Learning

Respondents were divided on the preferred training format. Eighteen preferred E-learning; 12 preferred independent learning while another 12 felt in-class would be more appropriate. Ten preferred in-house instruction.

### Is there anything else we should be aware of?

Only three respondents had additional comments. Two expressed concerns that growth in the community places additional pressure on the labour market shortage in health care. There was also the suggestion that more attention be paid by families and schools to instilling the life skills important to the workforce.

## Employment Ontario Data 2023-2024

Over the past several years, Employment Ontario data has been shared annually with the Northwestern Ontario Training and Adjustment Board to provide further insight about service use and encourage collaboration to address local labour market demand and supply. The following analysis examines service usage in 2023-2024 compared to the previous year, 2022-2023.

### Employment Services

In the Kenora District:

- 357 people received Assisted Employment Services in 2023-2024, slightly fewer than the 441 people who accessed the service in 2022-2023. This is a decrease of 84 clients (19%).
- People did turn to unassisted Employment Services in 2023-2024. The number using the online service grew by 40% from 2,117 to 2,973.
- Of those receiving assisted services, 176 were Indigenous, a decrease of 72 people (29%) over 2022-2023.
- Slightly fewer individuals with a disability accessed Assisted Employment Services decreasing from 74 in 2022-2023 to 72 in 2023-2024.

In the Rainy River District:

- 565 people received Assisted Employment Services or 133 more than 432 people who received Assisted Employment Services in 2022-2023. This is a significant increase of over 31%.
- 3,824 people took advantage of Unassisted Employment Services. This was a decrease of 181 users (4.5%) compared to 2022-2023.
- Of those receiving Assisted Services, 263 were Indigenous. This is a 44.5% increase in use of Assisted Services by this group as compared to 2022-2023. Use of Assisted Services by people with a disability also increased significantly in the past year growing from 71 to 129 (81.7%). The number relying on the Ontario Disability Support Program also grew from 17 to 28 or 64.7%.
- Comparatively, in the Northern Region the use of Assisted Services remained relatively stable, increasing by 0.9% and Unassisted service usage increased by 30%. In Ontario, the number accessing assisted services decreased by 0% while clients seeking unassisted service decreased by 17.3%.

### Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS)

In the Kenora District:

- The numbers participating in the Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) programming continues to grow in the Kenora District. In 2023-2024, 496 new and carry-over learners participated in LBS compared to 463 in 2022-2023 – an increase of 33 learners (7.1%).
- 396 new and carry-over learners (80%) were Indigenous.
- 240 learners (48%) had no source of income.
- Employment was the goal of 272 or 55% of participants. Sixty learners left service for employment while 22 continued on to further training or education.
- 187 or 38% of learners were referred by a provincial training program while 117 (24%) participated as a result of word-of-mouth recommendations.

In the Rainy River District:

- 309 new and carry-over learners participated in LBS in 2023-2024, an increase of 73 or 30% compared to 236 in 2022-2023.
- 78 of 309 (25%) total learners were Indigenous.
- 62 of 309 (20%) total learners were newcomers.
- 49 of 309 (16%) of learners were living with a disability.
- 129 learners (42%) were employed while 89 (29%) had no source of income.
- Employment was the goal of 191 or 62% of learners.
- 141 learners left LBS services for employment. Fewer than ten continued on to other training or education.
- 127 learners or 41% participated in LBS as a result of structured or formal referrals while 161 or 52% of learners sought service after word-of-mouth recommendations.
- Compared to 2022-2023, the number of new and carry-over learners accessing LBS increased by 19% in Northern Ontario and 2% in Ontario. The number of new and carry-over e-learners in Ontario increased by 15%.

## Apprenticeship Training

In the Kenora District

- The number of Apprenticeship Registrations decreased in the Kenora District in 2023-2024. There were 92 new registrations in 2023-2024 compared to 101 in the previous year. This is a decrease of 8.9%
- There were 313 active apprentices in the Kenora District in 2023-2024 compared to 301 in 2022-2023, an increase of 4%.
- There were 45 Certificates of Apprenticeships issued in the past year, an increase of 21 (87.5%) compared to 2022-2023 when 24 were issued.
- The number of modular registrations decreased from 545 issues in 2022-2023 to 461 in 2023-2024.
- Construction electricians generated the most registrations at 18, followed by Truck and Coach Technician (14) and Automotive Service Technician (11).

In the Rainy River District

- There were 31 new registrations issued in the Rainy River District in 2023-2024 compared to 49 in 2022-2023. This is a decrease of 18 or 36.7%
- As of 2023-2024, there were 136 active apprentices, a slight increase from the 134 active apprentices in 2022-2023.
- 18 Certificates of Apprenticeship were issued last year compared to 24 in 2022-2023. This is a decrease of 6 certificates or 25%.
- The number of Modular Training registrations increased from 203 in 2022-2023 to 265 in 2023-2024. This is an increase of 62 or 30.5%.
- Fewer than 10 apprentices were registered in any trade, but registrations did take place in 12 occupations with Construction, Manufacturing and Services sectors.
- In the Northern Region, the number of new registrations in Apprenticeship increased by 3% while Ontario saw a 3% decrease. The number of active apprentices in the north increased by 8.5% while active apprentices in Ontario increased by 6.5%. Compared to 2022-2023, the number of Certificates of Apprenticeship issued in the North increased by 6.5%, while in Ontario, the number increased by 3%. Modular training registrations increased by 14% in the past year in Northern Ontario and by 13% in Ontario.

## Canada Ontario Job Grant (COJG)

In the Kenora and Rainy River Districts

- In 2023-2024, fewer than 10 companies in both the Kenora and Rainy River Districts participated in Canada Ontario Job Grant training.
- The number of workers trained through COJG decreased by 52% in the Kenora District from 33 to 16 people. As in 2022-2023, fewer than ten workers in the Rainy River District participated in COJG sponsored training. That number grew to 15 workers in 2023-2024.
- 100% of participating companies in both the Kenora and Rainy River Districts reported that the training met their workforce needs and improved productivity.
- In Northern Ontario, the number of employers participating in COJG decreased 11% from 2022-2023 to 2023-2024. In Ontario, 4.9% fewer companies took advantage of COJG in 2023-2024 as compared to the previous year.
- The number of workers in Northern Ontario who benefitted from COJG sponsored training decreased by 20% in 2023-2024. In Ontario, the number of workers participating in COJG sponsored training decreased by 3% compared to the previous year.

## Better Jobs Ontario (formerly Second Career)

In the Kenora and Rainy River Districts

- Since 2019, fewer than 10 individuals in the Kenora or Rainy River District have participated in this program.
- Training was limited to Home Support Worker, Human Resources Professional and Underground Production and Development Miners in the Kenora District.
- Participation in the program decreased by 12% in Northern Ontario and by 10% in Ontario between 2022-2023 and 2023-2024.

## Youth Job Connection (YJC)

In the Kenora District

- 32 people participated in YJC in 2023-2024 compared to 55 in 2022-2023. This was a decrease in participation of 23 people or 42%.
- Participation in YJC Summer increased slightly from 35 in 2022-2023 to 38 last year (8.6%).

In the Rainy River District

- 34 youth participated in YJC in 2023-2024 compared to 26 in 2022-2023, an increase of 30%.
- An additional 17 participated in YJC Summer in 2023-2024 compared to 19 in 2022-2023.

## Service Provider Feedback

This Employment Ontario data was shared at a community consultation conducted on November 28, 2024. During the presentation of Apprenticeship data for the region, Northern Community Development Services in Fort Frances noted that they regularly engage with secondary school students to promote Apprenticeship as a career path. More ministry representation at this event would be helpful. In the future, it will be beneficial if Skilled Trades Ontario representatives attend to provide required information to students.

Northern Community Development Services in Fort Frances also indicated they manage the contract for the Canada Ontario Job Grant (COJG) program in both the Kenora and Rainy River Districts. More recently, there has been a marked increase in the number of people accessing the program. It is anticipated that all funding will be depleted by February of 2025. Employers have more time to train and more staff to train and are readily accessing this program.

Service providers continue to point to changes in eligibility to qualify for Better Jobs Ontario as a significant barrier to participation. The need to travel to access training is also a barrier for clients.

Along with this program-specific feedback, services providers engaged in a general discussion about the lack of available housing in both the Kenora and Rainy River Districts. While some communities still have affordable housing, others have experienced a notable increase in the price of a starter home. These challenges can be a real barrier to attracting new people to the area.

It was also noted by organizers that the overall atmosphere during the virtual meeting was one of 'resignation'. Local service providers may be experiencing a feeling of 'burn-out' that seems increasingly common amongst those providing human services province-wide. Also, the Manager of Employment and Community Services Northwest, EmployNext (Powered by Serco) was in attendance and this may have had an affect of the feedback received. That is, some seemed to be encouraged to speak up while others remained silent. There was an overall concern amongst the meeting participants with the need to maintain funding so that clients could access services.

# Action Plan Update 2025

In 2022 NTAB and their partners established a new three-year plan to support workforce development in the Kenora and Rainy River Districts. These short, medium and long-term actions contributed to our region’s efforts to:

- Re-build the local economy through the availability of a resilient and skilled labour force;
- Re-engage with workers as they return to the workforce and students as they prepare for their future;
- Re-ignite a resilient and revitalized local economy.

Preceding the actions for each Key Priority, a summary provides input from community partners.

## Key Priority #1 – Transitioning our Workers in a Changing Economy

The economies in the Kenora and Rainy River Districts are changing. Manufacturing, construction, education and health care are increasingly prominent. Retail and tourism, while still predominant, are unstable. Forestry is also uncertain. Mining can take years to develop. A foundational challenge in transitioning workers to new or evolving opportunities is convincing them that they have to change – that they have to update their education and skills. People are unsure how to transfer their skills to new industries and require a ‘navigator’ to identify how their skills translate and guide them through the process of change. Experiential learning would help to show what is available. There is a lack of training options available locally and a lack of financial support for those seeking training and education.

Key Priority #1 – Transitioning our Workers in a Changing Economy			Timeframe/ Progress			
Action	Outcomes	Partners*	Completed	Short Term	Mid-Term	Long Term
<p><b>Highway Twinning Project</b></p> <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>	<p>Niiwin Wendaanimok</p>			▼	
<p><b>Updates or Points of Interest:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» <i>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.</i></li> <li>» <i>Phase 2 will be double the size and scope. It will require a significant amount of labour to complete the project.</i></li> <li>» <i>The Niiwin Wendaanimok Partnership supplied 30% of labour and equipment to the first phase and is looking to increase its share in phase 2.</i></li> <li>» <i>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.</i></li> </ul>						

Key Priority #1 – Transitioning our Workers in a Changing Economy			Timeframe/ Progress			
Action	Outcomes	Partners*	Completed	Short Term	Mid-Term	Long Term
<p><b>Healthcare Lab Spaces</b></p> <p>New healthcare lab spaces have been installed in all Seven Generations Education Institute Campuses; including Fort Frances, Sioux Lookout, and Kenora.</p>	High tech equipment will improve learning outcomes and experiences for healthcare students.	SGEI				
<p><b>Updates or Points of Interest:</b></p> <p>» Seven Generations Education Institute delivers accredited college and university level programming at our campuses throughout Treaty Three and in First Nations communities, upon request.</p> <p>» Health Disciplines enrollment in 2023 (W23/F23) was 87 (across all 3 campuses). The number of grads from the Healthcare programs in 2023 was 35. As well, SGEI graduated their first BScN cohort in June 2024.</p>						↕
<p><b>Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program</b></p> <p>The Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program (OINP), launched in 2007.</p> <p>Through this program, prospective immigrants with the skills and experience targeted by the province may receive a provincial nomination from Ontario, after which they can apply for Canadian permanent residence with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC).</p>	The main objectives of the OINP are to respond to skill shortages in targeted areas, make it easier to invest in Ontario and make sure newcomers can settle and integrate well in the province.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Kenora</li> <li>• Government of Ontario</li> </ul>				↕
<p><b>This Item is new to the 2025 Action Plan:</b></p> <p>» There were 60 spots designated for the City of Kenora out of 3000 Northern designations.</p>						
<p><b>Pathways to Employment in Kenora's Service Sector:</b></p> <p>In August 2017, the City of Kenora received funding from Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development (MLTSD) through the Sector Partnership Planning Grant. Its purpose is to support the development of partnerships and strategies that will identify workforce needs among industry employers, and develop employment and training solutions that meet the needs of employers, job seekers, and workers. For the purposes of this project, the services sector was scoped as tourism-related industries including hospitality and retail-trade.</p> <p>In 2023 the group was re-established and renamed the <b>Workforce Development Group.</b></p>	Based on discussions with internal and external stakeholders, the City chose to use the funding to assess, plan and implement a strategy to address workforce needs in the services sector. Following the conclusion of the research stage, MDB Insight developed an action plan for City staff to validate amongst the key informants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Kenora</li> <li>• NWBC</li> <li>• NTAB</li> <li>• LOW Dev Corp.</li> <li>• LEAP</li> <li>• SGEI</li> <li>• SWB</li> <li>• KHA</li> <li>• Kenora DCC District C of C</li> <li>• LOW BrewCo.</li> <li>• Harbourtown Biz</li> <li>• Ne-Chee FC</li> <li>• KDSB</li> <li>• Con College</li> <li>• LOWBIC</li> </ul>				↕
<p><b>Updates or Points of Interest:</b></p> <p>» The Workforce Development Group met twice in 2023. A strategy session took place and priorities and committee roles will be released in 2024. The group met once in 2024 and the roles and priorities have moved into 2025.</p>						

Key Priority #1 – Transitioning our Workers in a Changing Economy			Timeframe/ Progress			
Action	Outcomes	Partners*	Completed	Short-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term
<p><b>Better Jobs Ontario (Previously Second Career)</b></p> <p>Effective April 29, 2022, the program was expanded to better help people who may face challenges finding stable jobs such as gig workers, youth and people on social assistance. If you have been unemployed for six months or longer, and are part of a low-income household, you may benefit from these changes.</p> <p>Informed job seekers who understand the importance of transferable skills. Re-employment of individuals through the program.</p>	<p>Informed job seekers who understand the importance of transferable skills. Re-employment of individuals through the program.</p> <p>Better Jobs Ontario provides eligible applicants with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• skills training for in-demand jobs</li> <li>• financial support</li> </ul> <p>Apply for <b>up to \$28,000</b> for costs, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• tuition</li> <li>• books</li> <li>• other instructional costs, including student fees, supplies and electronic devices</li> <li>• transportation</li> <li>• basic living allowance (up to \$500 per week)</li> </ul> <p>Additional funding may be available for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• childcare</li> <li>• disability-related supports</li> <li>• living away from home</li> <li>• Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) and/ or language training</li> </ul>	EOSP				
<p><b>Updates or Points of Interest:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» <i>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.</i></li> <li>» <i>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.</i></li> <li>» <i>Since 2019, fewer than 10 individuals in the Kenora or Rainy River District have participated in this program. Training was limited to Home Support Worker, Human Resources Professional and Underground Production and Development Miners in the Kenora District. Participation in the program decreased by 12% in Northern Ontario and by 10% in Ontario between 2022-2023 and 2023-2024.</i></li> </ul>						

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

## Key Priority #2 – Attraction/Retention of Key Demographics of our Population

It is a priority for local economies and workforce development to attract and retain people in the workforce demographic as these are the key consumer and career years. There are a variety of factors causing out-migration including the lack of affordable housing, education options, lack of cultural activities or activities and amenities for youth. There is also a lack of services and/or a lack of awareness of these services including health care. People don't see future opportunity as an ongoing negative narrative permeates the region. Community partners offered recommendations to counter out-migration including corporate-sponsored housing, ensuring wages reflect the cost of living and the use of social media to promote activities, services and the region as a whole.

Key Priority #2 – Attraction/Retention of Key Demographics of our Population			Timeframe/ Progress			
Action	Outcomes	Partners*	Completed	Short Term	Mid-Term	Long Term
<p><b>Northern Ontario Heritage Funding to Sioux Narrows-Nestor Falls for Tourism</b></p> <p>Sioux Narrows-Nestor Falls has received funding of \$250,000 from the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund to extend trail network and create a bike park. The northwestern Ontario municipality is receiving the funding to support a plan to build 10 kilometres of a multi-use trail, install wayfinding signage, provide a parking area with bike racks, and construct a “small skills-building bike park.</p>	<p>The project is the second of a nine-phase building plan for a network of trails to be located in and around the town of Nestor Falls as part of a local tourism strategy to establish the community of 1,000 as a top-tier, multi-use destination. The town hosts about 5,000 seasonal residents.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Northern Ontario Heritage Fund</li> <li>Sioux Narrows - Nestor Falls</li> </ul>			▼	
<p><b>This Item is New to the 2025 Action Plan:</b></p> <p>» <i>The targeted investments have a lasting impact on local economic development and support the vibrant tourism industry in Sioux Narrows-Nestor Falls.</i></p>						
<p><b>AFNOO (L'Association des Francophones du Nord Ouest de l'Ontario)</b></p> <p>The Economic Development Department hosted an open house, welcoming representatives from Société Économique de l'Ontario (SEO), the Association des Francophones du Nord-Ouest de l'Ontario (AFNOO), and Réseau du Nord. Business owners were invited to connect and explore Francophone pathways to workforce recruitment, growth and opportunity. The representatives expressed enthusiasm for the visit to Kenora and were highly impressed by the active participation from local businesses and the warm reception from the community.</p>	<p>Attract more people to Northwestern Ontario to fill job vacancies.</p> <p>Over 20 families have settled in the community since the initiative's start.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City of Kenora</li> <li>AFNOO</li> </ul>			▼	
<p><b>Update or Points of Interest:</b></p> <p>» <i>Recruit North Program: Due to Kenora's commitment to SEO's initiatives, it was chosen to host the launch of the Recruit North Program (pending official announcement awaiting ministerial approval) this past September. As part of the recent tour in September 2024, 10 job postings from the Kenora region were submitted to the project, paving the way for 10 families of skilled refugees to join the community in 2025.</i></p>						

Key Priority #2 – Attraction/Retention of Key Demographics of our Population			Timeframe/ Progress			
Action	Outcomes	Partners*	Completed	Short Term	Mid-Term	Long Term
<p><b>Choose Kenora Campaign</b></p> <p>The Lake of the Woods Development Commission and its partners have developed strategic community tools to assist in attracting young professionals to Kenora and have created a series of information packages and testimonials about living and working in Kenora for use by the community, by employers seeking new employees and by youth relocating or returning to the community. Campaign materials were developed by Fifth Hammer Marketing Group and Upriver Media.</p>	<p>To date, the video component has 25,000 views on Facebook and has been shared over 750 times. Marketing materials have been distributed and shared with employers and employment agencies in the community. The response to the campaign and the featured candidates has been positive. Young professionals who are interested in being profiled have volunteered to be featured in the next round of material development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KDCC</li> <li>• NWBC</li> <li>• Harbourtown BIZ</li> <li>• Kenora Young Professionals Network</li> <li>• LOWBIC</li> </ul>				▼
<p><b>Update or Points of Interest:</b></p> <p>» <i>This project continues to attract and retain people to Kenora.</i></p>						
<p><b>FSET's Four Day Work Week Pilot</b></p> <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. Their pilot program involves a 32-hour work week, with no reduction in pay or benefits for our 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>	<p>In recent years, the traditional five-day work week has been challenged by the rising trend of the 4-day work week.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FSET Kenora</li> </ul>				▼
<p><b>This Item is New to the 2025 Action Plan:</b></p> <p>» <i>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. FSET is proud to be certified as an Ontario Living Wage employer since 2022.</i></p>						

Key Priority #2 – Attraction/Retention of Key Demographics of our Population			Timeframe/ Progress			
Action	Outcomes	Partners*	Completed	Short Term	Mid-Term	Long Term
<p><b>SkillsAdvance Ontario Project - Healthcare</b></p> <p>The Ontario government is investing more than \$10.6 million to train 500 workers for well-paying and in-demand jobs at hospitals, long-term care homes, and with home care providers in Northern Ontario. This investment will help job seekers get the skills they need to find rewarding careers as medical laboratory assistants, personal support workers, and home support workers.</p>	<p>Led by Confederation College, this project covers training, fees and textbooks for 500 participants, prioritizing those who are unemployed, underemployed, or at risk of losing their jobs. Each participant will receive a job placement in the community and ongoing support, continuing after they graduate.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government of Canada</li> <li>• Government of Ontario</li> <li>• Con College</li> </ul>				▼
<p><b>Update or Points of Interest:</b></p> <p>» <i>The program targets the following communities in the Kenora and Rainy River Districts: Dryden, Kenora, Sioux Lookout, Atikokan, Emo, Fort Frances, Red Lake as well as First Nations in the region. The training is held at Confederation College campus locations. The funding for Confederation College's new project is supported through labour market transfer agreements between the Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario.</i></p>						
<p><b>Quetico Lodge and Conference Centre</b></p> <p>The owners have expanded relationships with First Nations and various <b>Indigenous Training Organizations</b> that have contracted their services. Norcat continues their work offering forestry and surface mining programs concurrently at QLCC.</p>	<p>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 equipment used during the harvesting of trees. This is to include hands on experience actually operating equipment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AEC</li> <li>• AEDC</li> <li>• QLCC</li> <li>• NORCAT</li> </ul>				▼
<p><b>Update or Points of Interest:</b></p> <p>» <i>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 meet regional skills need. NORCAT has received a Skills Development Fund (SDF) grant to provide training services.</i></p>						
<p><b>Francophone Immigration: An Asset</b></p> <p>Employer Information and promotion virtual event; May 23, 2024.</p>	<p>Session provided an opportunity to discover how the mobility francophone program assists in attracting, hiring, and retaining skilled foreign workers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rural Development Network</li> <li>• AFNOO</li> <li>• Société Économique de l'Ontario,</li> <li>• RRFDC</li> </ul>	▼			
<p><b>This Item is New to the 2025 Action Plan:</b></p> <p>» <i>Rainy River Future Development Corporation hosted a virtual employer session to promote Francophone immigration programs to address local difficulties in sourcing skilled and qualified workers.</i></p>						

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

### Key Priority #3 – Evolving Education Requirements

Knowledge and skills are increasingly important in an innovation-based economy. Literacy, numeracy, computer skills as well as ‘soft skills’ like teamwork and communication are now essential in the workplace, and new skill requirements like adaptive thinking, virtual collaboration and cross-cultural competency are new necessities. Consultation participants pointed to the lack of these foundational skills. Smaller communities lack a global perspective and people are unaware of training and education that is available. A shortage of specialized teachers locally limits the opportunity to promote new jobs or careers. There is a lack of apprenticeship opportunities exacerbated by a lack of facilities, local in-school training and licensed journey persons to support experiential learning. Aging workers can be reluctant to learn new things and, as a whole, it is difficult to motivate people to participate in training and education. Program guidelines can create barriers and limited lead-in time to market and recruit eligible and suitable participants often means those that could benefit the most miss the opportunity.

Key Priority #3 – Evolving Education Requirements			Timeframe/ Progress			
Action	Outcomes	Partners*	Completed	Short Term	Mid-term	Long Term
<p><b>Skills Development Fund – Second Round</b></p> <p>More than \$74 million in provincial funds is now available for providers to develop new trades training centres in Ontario.</p> <p>The second round of the province’s Skills Development Fund Capital Stream opened on November 29, 2024. Providers can apply for funding to help build, expand or retrofit facilities to train workers in the trades, including construction, manufacturing, technology and health care.</p>	<p>The second round of funding includes an enhanced, streamlined application process that includes a new SEED pathway to help with the upfront costs of developing construction proposals, such as design drawings and technical plans (up to 40%).</p> <p>It addresses the needs of businesses and training providers who may lack the in-house capacity to develop complex construction plans. The Capital Stream will now also accept funding proposals all year round, which enables faster application reviews.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MLITSD</li> </ul>			▼	
<p><b>This Item is New to the 2025 Action Plan.</b></p> <p>» <i>The new SEED pathway of the Capital Stream will help fund the development of capital plans for training facilities and will complement the already established GROW pathway that will continue to support projects to build, upgrade and expand new training infrastructure. Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development.</i></p>						

Key Priority #3 – Evolving Education Requirements			Timeframe/ Progress			
Action	Outcomes	Partners*	Completed	Short Term	Mid-Term	Long Term
<p><b>eCampusOntario Micro-credentials</b></p> <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>	<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"> <li>• Students seeking to enhance employability.</li> <li>• Professionals looking to upskill or reskill in emerging fields.</li> <li>• Employers seeking tailored training solutions for workforce development.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• eCampusOntario</li> <li>• Participating employers</li> <li>• Participating post-secondary institutions</li> <li>• Ministry of Colleges and Universities</li> </ul>				▼
<p><b>Update or Points of Interest.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» <i>The portal was updated and relaunched in September of 2023.</i></li> <li>» <i>By late 2023, the portal had engaged over 40,000 users.</i></li> </ul> <p>Key Features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short Duration: Programs typically last under 12 weeks.</li> <li>• Affordability: Costs are significantly lower than traditional degrees or diplomas.</li> <li>• Industry Collaboration: Microcredentials are co-developed with employers to ensure relevance and alignment with current job market needs.</li> <li>• Flexibility and Accessibility: Many programs are eligible for financial support through Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP)</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» <i>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.</i></li> <li>» <i>The integration of labor market insights into the portal has resulted in increased user engagement, with a 32% rise in inquiries and 4% boost in click-through rates to postsecondary institutions since its most recent update.</i></li> </ul>						
<p><b>Seven Generations Education Institute</b></p> <p>To assist organizations with a better understanding of Anishinaabe culture, identity, history, inherent and treaty rights.</p> <p>Offered; custom training, engagement and information sessions for schools and organizations.</p>	<p>Indigenous cultural engagement, awareness, and sensitivity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SGEI</li> <li>• Local businesses &amp; organizations</li> </ul>				▼
<p><b>Update or Points of Interest:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» <i>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.</i></li> </ul>						



Key Priority #3 – Evolving Education Requirements			Timeframe/ Progress			
Action	Outcomes	Partners*	Completed	Short Term	Mid-Term	Long Term
<p><b>Confederation College Remote Campuses</b></p> <p>The remote campuses offer a wide variety of programs to meet the education and training needs of Northwestern Ontario.</p>	<p>Programs range from full-time postsecondary diploma programs, full-time and part-time certificate programs, continuing education courses, and other education training opportunities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Con College</li> </ul>				⏪
<p><b>Update or Points of Interest:</b></p> <p>» <i>Students can study and stay in their home communities.</i></p>						
<p><b>SkillsAdvance Ontario Project - Healthcare (Also in Key Priority #2)</b></p> <p>The Ontario government is investing more than \$10.6 million to train 500 workers for well-paying and in-demand jobs at hospitals, long-term care homes, and with home care providers in Northern Ontario. This investment will help job seekers get the skills they need to find rewarding careers as medical laboratory assistants, personal support workers, and home support workers.</p>	<p>Led by Confederation College, this project covers training, fees and textbooks for 500 participants, prioritizing those who are unemployed, underemployed, or at risk of losing their jobs. Each participant will receive a job placement in the community and ongoing support, continuing after they graduate.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government of Canada</li> <li>• Government of Ontario</li> <li>• Con College</li> </ul>				⏪
<p><b>Update or Points of Interest:</b></p> <p>» <i>The program targets the following communities in the Kenora and Rainy River Districts: Dryden, Kenora, Sioux Lookout, Atikokan, Emo, Fort Frances, Red Lake as well as First Nations in the region. The training is held at Confederation College campus locations. The funding for Confederation College's new project is supported through labour market transfer agreements between the Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario.</i></p>						
<p><b>Seven Generations Education Institute (SGEI) and college partnerships</b></p> <p>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.</p>	<p>Training offered locally keeps students and graduates in the Kenora and Rainy River Districts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SGEI</li> <li>• Participating colleges</li> </ul>				
<p><b>Update or Points of Interest:</b></p> <p>» <i>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.</i></p> <p>» <i>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.</i></p> <p>» <i>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.</i></p> <p>» <i>2023 Report Numbers – Training for Employment provided a variety of workplace and employment readiness programs and registered 616 participants; there were a total of 74 Post-Secondary Graduates in 2024, 31 graduates in Adult Education (partnered with Keewatin-Patricia District School Board). 160 students were enrolled in Post-Secondary Education in Fall 2024.</i></p>						⏪

Key Priority #3 – Evolving Education Requirements			Timeframe/ Progress			
Action	Outcomes	Partners*	Completed	Short Term	Mid-Term	Long Term
<p><b>Canada-Ontario Job Grant Program (COJG)</b> 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.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MLTSD</li> <li>• EOSP</li> <li>• Local businesses</li> </ul>				
<p><b>Update or Points of Interest:</b></p> <p>» <i>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.</i></p> <p>Northern Community Development Services of Fort Frances 2024 Update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 applications</li> <li>• 4 trainees</li> <li>• 2 applications pending</li> <li>• 1 cancelled application due to shortage of staff; need staff to be working and cannot take time to be training</li> <li>• Employers have expressed a need for staff to be working and unfortunately, not having time to train; travelling away for training is still being seen as a major barrier</li> </ul>					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

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

### Key Priority #4 – Supporting Entrepreneurs

Entrepreneurs and the small to medium-sized establishments they create are engines of economic growth and often leaders in job creation and innovation. Supporting the development of entrepreneurs from a workforce development perspective is an important contribution to the local economy. Challenges facing entrepreneurs are multi-faceted. The skills required to start and sustain a business are diverse and there is a lack of long-term support. Some are challenged by start-up costs including securing financing, high-cost loans, supply chain disruptions and challenges from a competitive online arena. There is a lack of space for “brick and mortar” businesses and an array of bi-laws to meet and permits to acquire that can be overwhelming. An aging population, local workforce shortages and the upward pressure of wages can be a further barrier.

Key Priority #4 – Supporting Entrepreneurs			Timeframe/ Progress			
Action	Outcomes	Partners*	Completed	Short Term	Mid-Term	Long Term
<p><b>Business Succession Planning Workshop</b></p> <p>Succession planning is the process of identifying and preparing future leaders to assume critical roles within their business. This planning ensures that essential skills and knowledge are passed on, helping organizations thrive through periods of change; retirement or business growth.</p>	<p>The purpose of the event is to guide business owners and leaders in creating smooth transitions and long-term stability for their organizations; to educate business owners about selling or transitioning their businesses and provide key insights to make that process seamless and effective.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CFDCs</li> <li>• FedNor</li> <li>• Succession Matching</li> </ul>				
<p><b>This Item is New to the 2025 Action Plan.</b></p> <p>» <i>Event was hosted virtually by the Lake of the Woods Business Incentive Corporation in partnership with Superior East CFDC and SuccessionMatching.com on November 13, 2024.</i></p>						
<p><b>Starter Company Plus</b></p> <p>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.</p>	<p>The program has delivered positive outcomes and positions businesses for success when applying for loans, the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund or other opportunities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government of Ontario</li> <li>• NWBC</li> </ul>				
<p><b>Update or Points of Interest:</b></p> <p>» <i>The NWBC’s Starter Company Plus program is recognized across the two districts as the starting point for business success. There were 35 participants in 2024.</i></p>						

Key Priority #4 – Supporting Entrepreneurs			Timeframe/ Progress			
Action	Outcomes	Partners*	Completed	Short Term	Mid-Term	Long Term
<p><b>Northwest Ontario Pitch It 2024</b></p> <p>The third 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.</p> <p>The NWO Pitch IT competition was open to individuals located within the Kenora and Rainy River Districts with a business idea, new business start-up or proposed business expansion. Applications were accepted from March 11, 2024 until March 25, 2024 and the event was held virtually on April 25, 2024.</p> <p>The YouTube channel received 148 views.</p> <p>The People's Choice category garnered a remarkable 795 votes, indicating strong engagement and interest from our community.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copperfin Credit Union</li> <li>• BDC</li> <li>• Camp Tech</li> <li>• The Standard Insurance</li> <li>• LOW BrewCo</li> <li>• Bereskin and Parr</li> <li>• NTAB</li> <li>• Northern Ontario Angels</li> <li>• City of Kenora</li> <li>• NWBC</li> <li>• NOIC</li> <li>• PACE</li> <li>• Cliff Lake Entrepreneur Advisors</li> </ul>	▼			
<p><b>Update or Points of Interest:</b></p> <p><i>The event was held on April 25, 2024. 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.</i></p> <p><i>The Finalists:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» <i>1st Place Winner (\$5000) – Agombar Topsoil and Mulch – Dan Agombar</i></li> <li>» <i>2nd Place Winner (\$3000) – Bread + Butter Co. – Hannah Rose</i></li> <li>» <i>People's Choice Winner (\$2000) – You Pick – Shauna Thain</i></li> </ul>						
<p><b>Community Improvement Plan</b></p> <p>The City of Kenora opened application intake for the Community Improvement Plan (CIP) programs in the Harbourtown Centre, Keewatin and the Former Mill Site.</p> <p>In 2024, Council awarded \$125,000 to support five project proposals submitted from local businesses in Harbourtown Centre and Keewatin.</p>	<p>This investment from the private sector and Council was a significant commitment to supporting growth and development in the City of Kenora.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Kenora</li> </ul>	▼			
<p><b>This Item is new to the 2025 Action Plan:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» <i>Hosted a CIP open house in October, applications closed on November 31, 2024, and 9 applications were received. Funding is based on the 2025 budget passing.</i></li> </ul>						

Key Priority #4 – Supporting Entrepreneurs			Timeframe/ Progress			
Action	Outcomes	Partners*	Completed	Short Term	Mid-Term	Long Term
<p><b>Mentorship, Business Incubator and Remote Access to Technology Program; MIRA</b></p> <p>The Mentorship and Incubator Program has moved into Phase 2 with FedNor.</p> <p>There are three incubator spaces in Sioux Lookout and one in Pickle Lake.</p> <p>The purpose of the Mentorship, Business Incubator and Remote Access to Technology programs is to encourage and nurture the growth of new and existing businesses which will create and/or maintain permanent full-time and/or permanent part-time jobs in the PACE region and surrounding First Nations.</p>	<p>Achieved by assisting entrepreneurs and existing small business enterprises to develop necessary business management skills through a variety of training opportunities, and subsidized shared resources. The Remote access to technology fund is intended to assist new and existing businesses to transition to remote work capability and to scale up post pandemic to adapt to evolving marketplace practices that demand increased digital operation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PACE</li> <li>• FedNor</li> </ul>		▼		
<p><b>This Item is New to the 2025 Action Plan.</b></p> <p>» Phase 2 planned start in 2025.</p>						
<p><b>PARO Centre for Women’s Enterprise</b></p> <p>The PARO Centre for Women’s Enterprise’s PAROBiz Program will receive \$1.24 million over three years through the Women’s Economic Security Program. *</p> <p>The investment in the PAROBiz program will equip women with the skills and resources needed to start and grow their businesses. By supporting initiatives that provide vital entrepreneurship training and ongoing support, women are empowered to achieve financial independence. This will help strengthen local economies.</p> <p>This funding is part of the government’s investment of up to \$26.7 million over three years in 25 local programs across the province that provide career training opportunities for women.</p>	<p>The program offers four different training options including skilled trades, entrepreneurship, information technology, and general employment. The goal of the program is to help remove barriers for women.</p> <p>Through the training program, women who have experienced or are at risk of intimate partner violence can also access wraparound support, including referrals to mental health and well-being support, counselling, housing, and legal support.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PARO</li> <li>• Ontario Women’s Economic Security Program</li> </ul>				▼
<p><b>This Item is New to the 2025 Action Plan.</b></p> <p>» These programs help women gain the skills, knowledge, and experience they need to find a job, start a business, and achieve financial independence. PARO was founded in 1995 by Rosalind Lockyer in Thunder Bay. As of 2025, there are over 150+ PARO groups across the province. The organization also has over 125 community partners including organizations in Atikokan, Kenora, Dryden, Rainy River and more.</p> <p>» Announced January 13, 2025.</p>						

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

## Key Priority #5 – Integrating the Marginalized Workforce

Growth in sectors like mining, construction, health care and the service sector will be constrained without a labour force to draw from. A strong economy needs the contribution of everyone. A variety of barriers continue to impede employment for marginalized workers. These include lack of affordable housing, transportation, workplace clothing, and access to technology including high-speed internet. There is a talent deficit and “barriered” individuals are often unaware of programs that could help them build in-demand skills. Programs that are established to build skills and experience are often set up on short notice without the time necessary to properly market and recruit marginalized workers. Employers often lack flexibility and are unwilling to change the structure of traditional job roles to accommodate employee’s abilities or employment requirements.


Key Priority #5 – Integrating the Marginalized Workforce			Timeframe/ Progress			
Action	Outcomes	Partners*	Completed	Short Term	Mid-Term	Long Term
<p><b>FSET Digital Empowerment</b></p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>FSET believes that reliable internet is not a luxury; it is a necessity.</p> <p>FSET ensures that even the most remote communities can access dedicated, rapid, reliable and cost-effective internet connections.</p> <p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FSET Kenora</li> <li>• SpaceX</li> </ul>				▼
<p><b>This Item is New to the 2025 Action Plan:</b></p> <p>» <i>As of January 2025; 4,661+ Starlink Kits installed and 110+ Communities Served.</i></p>						
<p><b>Dryden Urban Indigenous Homeward Bound</b></p> <p>A new program to help unemployed or underemployed Indigenous mother-led families is now operational in Dryden. A holistic job readiness program integrates key local supports to help single urban Indigenous mothers enhance their lives. Successful applicants receive skills training and academic upgrading along with a post-secondary education as well as support in housing, childcare, on the job training and mentoring.</p>	<p>Increased independence and control in life; stabilized or improved health; sustainable social networks and supports; increased involvement in education and/or training; enhanced employment opportunities, and; increased income and access to amenities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KDSB</li> <li>• DNFC</li> <li>• OAHS</li> <li>• Con College</li> <li>• Dryden Literacy</li> <li>• DDC</li> <li>• Woodgreen</li> <li>• OFIFC</li> <li>• OTF</li> </ul>				▼
<p><b>Update or Points of Interest:</b></p> <p>» <i>Applicants to honour a four to five-year commitment.</i></p>						

Key Priority #5 - Integrating the Marginalized Workforce			Timeframe/ Progress			
Action	Outcomes	Partners*	Completed	Short Term	Mid-Term	Long Term
<p><b>Youth Job Connect Program</b></p> <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;</p> <p>Mentorship services; and Education and work transitions supports.</p> <p>The Atikokan Employment Centre has had participants from Upsala, Seine River First Nation and Lac La Croix First Nation.</p>	<p>Upon participating in an initial intake, participants will complete pre-employment training provided through the Atikokan Employment Centre. 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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AEC</li> <li>• EOSP</li> <li>• Local employers</li> </ul>				
<p><b>Update or Points of Interest:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» <i>Effective March 1, 2025, the Atikokan Employment Centre will no longer be providing the Youth Job Connection program. This change has resulted as part of the transition to Employment Ontario programs. Employment Programs provided through Employment Ontario will adopt a new needs assessment protocol in which those that are experiencing barriers to employment regardless of age will be able to access required supports. Up until the end of February, 2025, the Atikokan Employment Centre will continue to provide services related to Employment Ontario YJC program.</i></li> <li>» <i>The Atikokan Employment Centre continues with providing employment related services to the youth in the community, ages 15-29 in the community that have been deemed to have barriers to employment. This may change next year based on Transition to new Service System Manager.</i></li> <li>» <i>Program participants who do access the YJC program, continue to have significant number of barriers to employment. YJC program participants who identify as experiencing Mental health difficulties and the associated stigma, possess a lack of marketable skills, lack of work experience and/or having a poor working reputation in the community often continue to struggle with securing employment. We hope that participating in marketable training, skill development and educating the general public/employers regarding the impacts of employment with respect to the social determinants of health will yield a positive shift in employer hiring and retention practices. We also work with our community partners in an attempt to assist with housing shortages, clothing, food security and appropriate access to digital devices and related services. Note that in our small community, we are one of the only organizations that provide public WIFI access.</i></li> </ul>				▼		

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

## Key Priority #6 – Post COVID-19 Workforce Trends

Local representatives pointed to a variety of reasons for the significant workforce shortages including older workers who have chosen retirement; people seeking more work-life balance; workers who prefer to work from home; workers who are still uneasy about public health concerns; and/or are not interested in working for minimum wage. Those who did return to the labour market are often presented with multiple employment choices. Employer loyalty is weaker as workers are attracted to higher wage opportunities. Some are exploring self-employment. Because of the worker shortage, those who are working are often faced with increased employer expectations.

Key Priority #6 – Post COVID-19 Workforce Trends			Timeframe/ Progress			
Action	Outcomes	Partners*	Completed	Short Term	Mid-Term	Long Term
<p><b>Third Annual New Beginnings Spring Job Fair</b></p> <p>This event featured over 30 local and regional organizations and businesses.</p> <p>The event featured employers from a variety of sectors including Retail, Tourism, Hospitality, Health Care, Transportation, Trades, and Construction.</p>	<p>Held on April 22, 2023</p> <p>There is a major shortage in our labour force across the region.</p> <p>By connecting individuals who are unemployed/under-employed to employers who are experiencing labour shortages, we hope to address some of these gaps to enhance opportunities for employers and job seekers to grow together.</p>	<p>• NEW</p>				
<p><b>Updates or Points of Interest:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» <i>It was held on May 1, 2024 at the Dryden Memorial Arena from 11 a.m. until 6:00 p.m.</i></li> <li>» <i>Job seekers who attended the event made very positive impressions on the employers in attendance. Organizers called it a success.</i></li> </ul>						

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

## Acronym Glossary

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

Alberton (Township)  
 Agency 1 (Indian reserve)  
 Big Grassy River 35G (Indian reserve)  
 Atikokan (Township)  
 Chapple (Township)  
 Big Island Mainland 93 (Indian reserve)  
 Dawson (Township)  
 Couchiching 16A (Indian reserve)  
 Fort Frances (Town)

Emo (Township)  
 Lake of the Woods (Township)  
 La Vallee (Township)  
 Manitou Rapids 11 (Indian reserve)  
 Long Sault 12 (Indian reserve)  
 Neguaguon Lake 25D (Indian reserve)  
 Morley (Township)  
 Rainy Lake 17B (Indian reserve)  
 Rainy Lake 17A (Indian reserve)

Rainy Lake 26A (Indian reserve)  
 Rainy Lake 18C (Indian reserve)  
 Rainy River, Unorganized (Unorganized)  
 Rainy River (Town)  
 Saug-a-Gaw-Sing 1 (Indian reserve)  
 Sabaskong Bay (Part) 35C (Indian reserve)  
 Seine River 23B (Indian reserve)  
 Seine River 23A (Indian reserve)

### Kenora District

Bearskin Lake (Indian reserve)  
 Attawapiskat 91A (Indian reserve)  
 Deer Lake (Indian reserve)  
 Cat Lake 63C (Indian reserve)  
 Eagle Lake 27 (Indian reserve)  
 Dryden (City)  
 English River 21 (Indian reserve)  
 Ear Falls (Township)  
 Fort Hope 64 (Indian reserve)  
 Fort Albany (Part) 67 (Indian reserve)  
 Ignace (Township)  
 Fort Severn 89 (Indian reserve)  
 Kee-Way-Win (Indian reserve)  
 Kasabonika Lake (Indian reserve)  
 Kenora 38B (Indian reserve)  
 Kenora (City)  
 Kingfisher Lake 1 (Indian reserve)  
 Kenora, Unorganized (Unorganized)  
 Lac Seul 28 (Indian reserve)  
 Kitchenuhmaykoosib Aaki 84 (Big Trout Lake) (Indian reserve)  
 Lake Of The Woods 37 (Indian reserve)

Lake Of The Woods 31G (Indian reserve)  
 MacDowell Lake (Indian settlement)  
 Lansdowne House (Indian settlement)  
 Marten Falls 65 (Indian reserve)  
 Machin (Township)  
 Neskantaga (Indian reserve)  
 Muskrat Dam Lake (Indian reserve)  
 Northwest Angle 33B (Indian reserve)  
 North Spirit Lake (Indian reserve)  
 Peawanuck (Indian settlement)  
 Osnaburgh 63B (Indian reserve)  
 Pikangikum 14 (Indian reserve)  
 Pickle Lake (Township)  
 Rat Portage 38A (Indian reserve)  
 Poplar Hill (Indian reserve)  
 Sabaskong Bay (Part) 35C (Indian reserve)  
 Red Lake (Municipality)  
 Sachigo Lake 1 (Indian reserve)  
 Sabaskong Bay 35D (Indian reserve)  
 Sandy Lake 88 (Indian reserve)  
 Sachigo Lake 2 (Indian reserve)  
 Shoal Lake (Part) 40 (Indian reserve)

Shoal Lake (Part) 39A (Indian reserve)  
 Sioux Lookout (Municipality)  
 Shoal Lake 34B2 (Indian reserve)  
 Slate Falls (Indian settlement)  
 Sioux Narrows - Nestor Falls (Township)  
 The Dalles 38C (Indian reserve)  
 Summer Beaver (Indian settlement)  
 Wabauskang 21 (Indian reserve)  
 Wabaseemoong (Indian reserve)  
 Wapekeka 1 (Indian reserve)  
 Wabigoon Lake 27 (Indian reserve)  
 Wawakapewin (Long Dog Lake) (Indian reserve)  
 Wapekeka 2 (Indian reserve)  
 Webequie (Indian reserve)  
 Weagamow Lake 87 (Indian reserve)  
 Whitefish Bay 33A (Indian reserve)  
 Whitefish Bay 32A (Indian reserve)  
 Wunnumin 1 (Indian reserve)  
 Whitefish Bay 34A (Indian reserve)



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