

Northern Development Council Recommendations *Creating Opportunities for Youth in Northern Ontario*

1. Provide support including capital funding and staffing for community youth centres that partner to support youth by:
 - A) Being a focal point for programs and activities including cultural, leadership, leisure and recreation;
 - B) Providing for training and employment opportunities for youth;
 - C) Providing an environment to bring forward a “youth” voice; and
 - D) Demonstrating and helping communities become “youth friendly”.

2. Provide funding to complement the Ontario government’s “learning to 18 strategy” and encourage more students to complete high school by supporting community initiatives that:
 - A) Demonstrate linkages between high school attainment and northern work opportunities for example Grade 7-8 trades camp, science/technology camps, innovation/entrepreneurship competitions, career development resources;
 - B) Provide outreach support to excluded groups to address financial, social and other impediments to completion of high school;
 - C) Work with northern employers to increase cooperative education opportunities in Northern Ontario (e.g. School-College work initiatives);
 - D) Combine completion of high school studies with relevant work experience especially in trades and professions addressing specific northern economic opportunities (e.g. new mines, construction projects)

Provide an additional level of financial support for those initiatives that involve youth participants in the design and delivery of initiatives.

3. Continue/enhance partnerships with funders, educational institutions, Northern businesses, industry and youth to develop and implement coordinated projects/initiatives that grow the northern economy and generate additional employment opportunities for youth.

4. Ensure programs that fall under the Canada-Ontario Labour Market Development Agreement and Labour Market Partnership Agreement (e.g. Job Creation Partnership program) will better meet the needs of Northern clients, and employers by accommodating northern needs (i.e. distance, small numbers, limited alternatives, seasonal employment).

5. Increase support for the development of employment opportunities in Northern Ontario's economy including support for new opportunities in research, innovation, technology, information technology, communication technology, green energy and training education through the following:
 - A) Increase youth internships, apprenticeships, summer employment and co-op positions in these sectors;
 - B) Support initiatives to strengthen collaborative approaches to creating new opportunities that lead to employment;
 - C) Provide incentives for northern employers who hire post secondary graduates; and
 - D) Provide support to increase participation of under-represented groups in northern work places i.e. youth, Aboriginal, women.

6. Provide greater opportunities for youth to train and gain experience for northern employment including culturally appropriate opportunities:
 - A) Amend internship programs to allow for longer internship terms and relocation costs to northern communities;
 - B) Introduce a graduated-employment provision that allows for three- to five-year terms with graduated employer contributions leading to full-time employment;
 - C) Support and increase awareness of flexibility in provincial programs such as NOHFC's Youth Internship and Co-op; Young Entrepreneur, and Community Development programs to accommodate particular circumstances faced by communities including limited access to capital, seasonal employment opportunities, and lifestyles that mix traditional and cash economy activities; and
 - D) Expand the age eligibility requirements for NOHFC Youth Internship and Co-op, and Young Entrepreneur programs to 34 years old.

7. Support/expand participation in education, training and employment in new and emerging sectors:
 - A) Invest in information technology infrastructure, particularly in small remote communities; and
 - B) Provide funding for development of sustainable business models and training (e.g. for network managers, administrators) associated with investments in Northern information technology infrastructure.

8. Support the development, promotion and use of a one-stop northern web portal for employers, students and job seekers to learn about entrepreneur, business, employment and education/training opportunities available to youth in the North.
9. Enhance accessibility to and awareness of distance education and online learning including funding of additional/enhanced community access sites and training equipment loans (e.g. laptops, GPS, survey equipment) to students completing distance education courses.
10. Invest in the development of housing for mature students and their families at northern colleges and universities to facilitate access to a range of housing options for students.
11. Address the significant challenges that many students from First Nations and remote/rural communities experience integrating in off-reserve schools and post-secondary institutions, work with the educators, private industry and communities to develop and implement strategies that support students in a successful transition to complete high school or begin post-secondary studies such as:
 - A) academic upgrading programs
 - B) education / job experience programs in remote communities
 - C) support / liaison workers in the school communities
12. Develop, implement and support a joint marketing strategy of northern post-secondary education institutions with particular emphasis on highlighting new programs.
13. Support the coordinated/integrated delivery of business development services for youth to increase awareness and access to existing support programs for development of new jobs in traditional and new economy sectors.
14. Introduce northern bursaries to cover up to 75 per cent of eligible expenses (tuition, housing, transportation and books) for up to four years for northern students in Ontario who would otherwise not be able to attain post-secondary education due to financial hardship. (Align with or expand upon existing student financial aid criteria).

15. Introduce a bursary to provide additional support and an incentive for students who live more than 80 kilometres from the nearest post-secondary institution.

16. Address short- and long-term labour market needs and provide future employment opportunities:
 - A) Expand eligible professions designated under the Northern Ontario Grant Assistance Program (NOGAP) to include future work force gaps (e.g. mining, forestry, agriculture, green energy, trades, technology).
 - B) Introduce training programs in Northern Ontario for professions designated under NOGAP to achieve the long-term solution of training northerners for these professions.