

Northern Ontario

A Profile

The vast regions of Northern Ontario are home to many different businesses operating at the leading edge of the 21st century's global economy. From sophisticated wood and paper products to mass-transit vehicles to remote-control mining equipment, Northern Ontario's products and services are known around the world. Northern Ontario encompasses vast natural resources, lands and waters, provincial parks, fisheries, and natural wilderness areas that are among the most pristine and beautiful in the world.

Geography

Northern Ontario covers over 800,000 square kilometres, representing nearly 90% of the Province of Ontario's land area. It extends across two time zones, from the southern boundary of the District of Parry Sound, north to Hudson Bay and James Bay, and westerly from Quebec to the Manitoba border.

Northern Ontario is comprised of 10 territorial districts, 144 municipalities, 106 First Nations, and over 150 unincorporated communities, including 44 Local Services Boards.

Population

Although Northern Ontario comprises nearly 90% of the area of Ontario, its population of approximately 805,250 represents only 6% of the total population for the province. This large land area and relatively small population results in a density of approximately 1 person per square kilometre, compared to 115 persons per square kilometre in Southern Ontario.

The *Francophone Profile* report by the Office of Francophone Affairs states that there are close to 139,000 Francophones residing in the North, representing 24% of the province's Francophone population and 18% of Northern Ontario's population.

The North is home to 106 of the 134 First Nations in Ontario, as well as 40% of Ontario's Aboriginal population (approximately 98,000 people). Aboriginal people represent close to 13% of Northern Ontario's population. ²

Key Facts

- 10 territorial districts
- 144 municipalities
- 106 First Nations
- Over 150 unincorporated communities, including 44 Local Services Boards.
- Population of 805,247 ¹
- Land area of 802,396.06km²
- 139,010 Francophones
- Aboriginal population of 97,930 ²



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| Northern Ontario Population by Region | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|---|
| Region | Population 2010 | % of Total N. Ont. Population | Land Area (km ²) | Population density (persons per km ²) |
| Canada | 34,108,752 | - | 9,017,698.92 | 3.8 |
| Ontario | 13,210,667 | - | 907,573.82 | 14.5 |
| Algoma District | 118,959 | 14.8% | 48,734.66 | 2.4 |
| Cochrane District | 84,565 | 10.5% | 141,247.30 | 0.6 |
| Kenora District | 67,862 | 8.4% | 407,192.66 | 0.2 |
| Manitoulin District | 13,489 | 1.7% | 4,759.74 | 2.8 |
| Nipissing District | 86,494 | 10.7% | 17,065.07 | 5.1 |
| Parry Sound District | 41,997 | 5.2% | 9,222.04 | 4.6 |
| Rainy River District | 21,335 | 2.7% | 15,472.94 | 1.4 |
| Sudbury District | 185,918 | 23.1% | 41,715.50 | 4.5 |
| Thunder Bay District | 151,401 | 18.8% | 103,706.27 | 1.5 |
| Timiskaming District | 33,227 | 4.2% | 13,279.88 | 2.5 |
| Northern Ontario Total | 805,247 | 100.0% | 802,396.06 | 1.0 |

(Source: Statistics Canada 2010 Annual Population Estimates)

Northern Ontario's rural population (the population living outside of Census Metropolitan Areas and Census Agglomerations) comprises more than one third of the total northern population. In Southern Ontario, 11% of the population lives in rural areas. Within rural areas, population densities and living conditions can vary greatly, from small towns and villages, to rural fringes, to agricultural land, to undeveloped lands, to remote and wilderness areas.

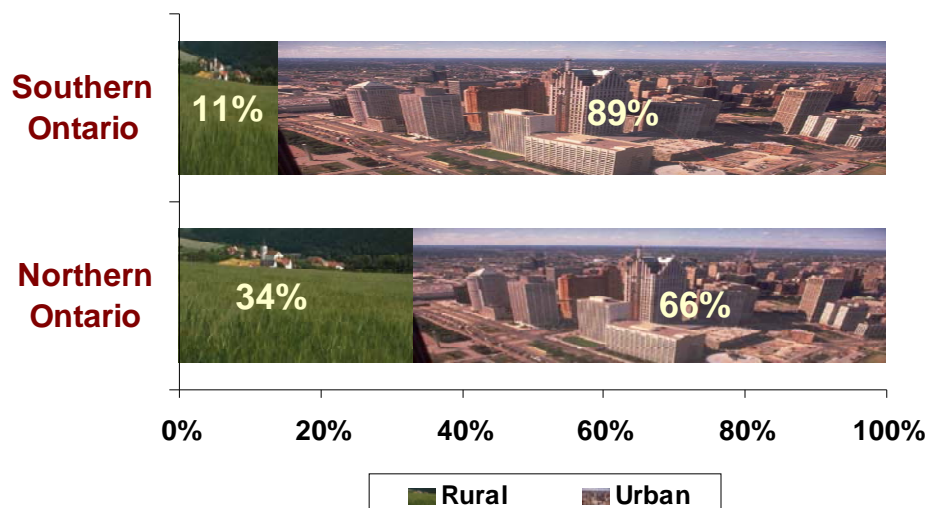
The remaining two-thirds of the North's population live in urban areas. Over 50% of the North's population live in the five biggest cities of Thunder Bay, Sault Ste. Marie, Timmins, Greater Sudbury, and North Bay.

Employment

Northern Ontario's employment distribution by industry varies from Ontario as a whole. Many northern communities remain reliant on primary industry sectors such as mining and forestry. These sectors accounted for close to 6.6% of the North's total

employment in 2010, compared to only 0.6% for the Province. Northern Ontario is also more reliant on public sector employment, including public administration, education and health care. The educational services, public administration, and health care and social assistance sectors accounted for 31.8% of the North's total employment in 2010, compared to 23.9% for the province. ³

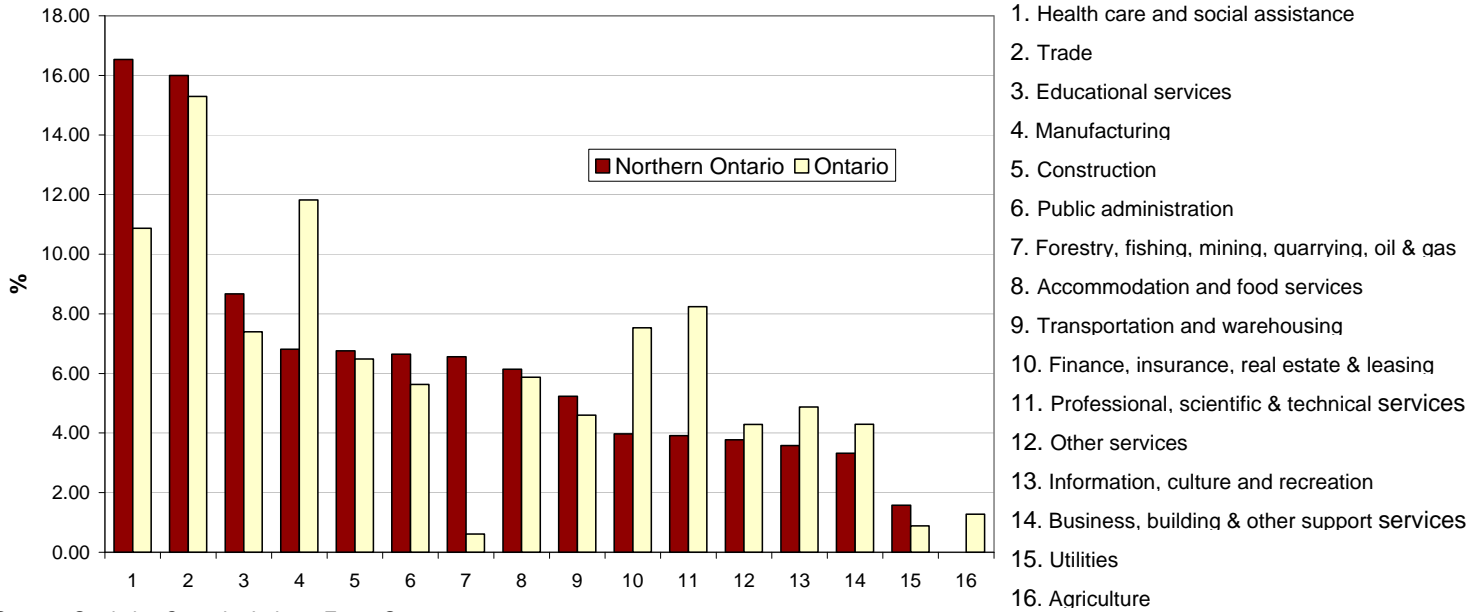
Rural / Urban Population Distribution



Source: Statistics Canada 2009 Annual Population Estimates

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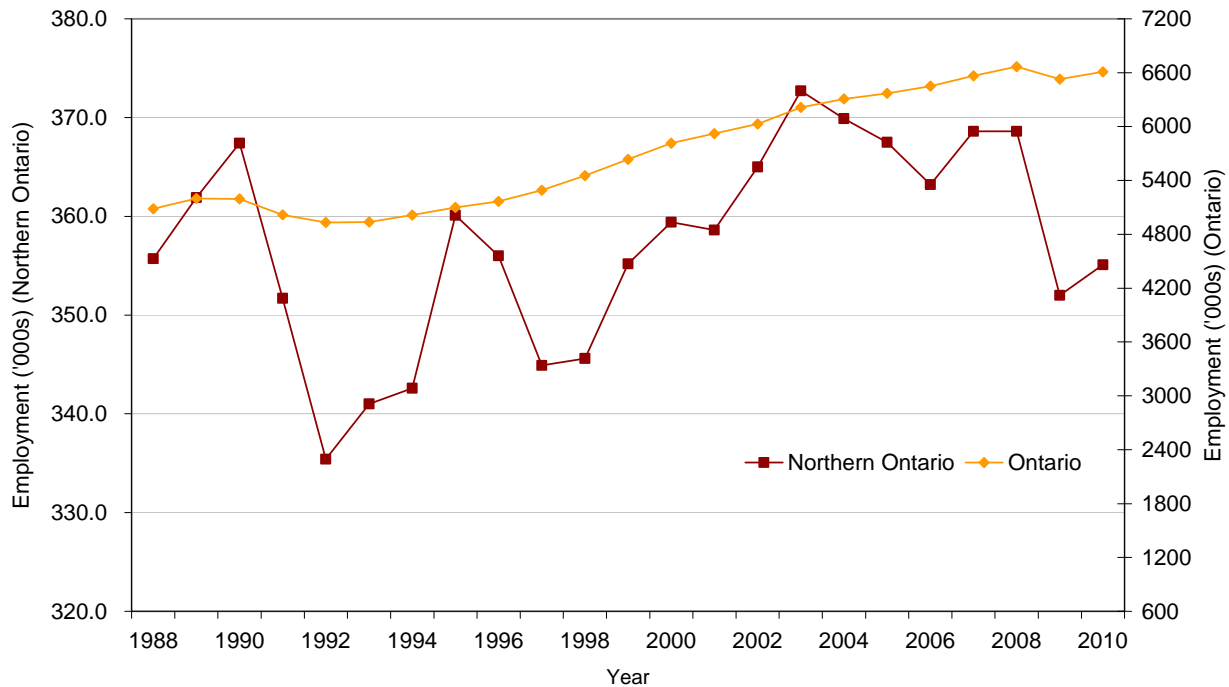
Employment by Industry - 2010



Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey

Employment in the North has increased to 355,100 in 2010 from 352,000 in 2009, representing a gain of 3,100 jobs. Between 1988 and 2010, employment in Northern Ontario has greatly fluctuated, ranged from a low of 335,400 in 1992 to a high of over 372,700 in 2003. Between 1993 and 2008, employment in Ontario steadily increased until 2009 when employment in Ontario dropped to 6,526,100 representing a loss of 161,200 jobs from 2008.³

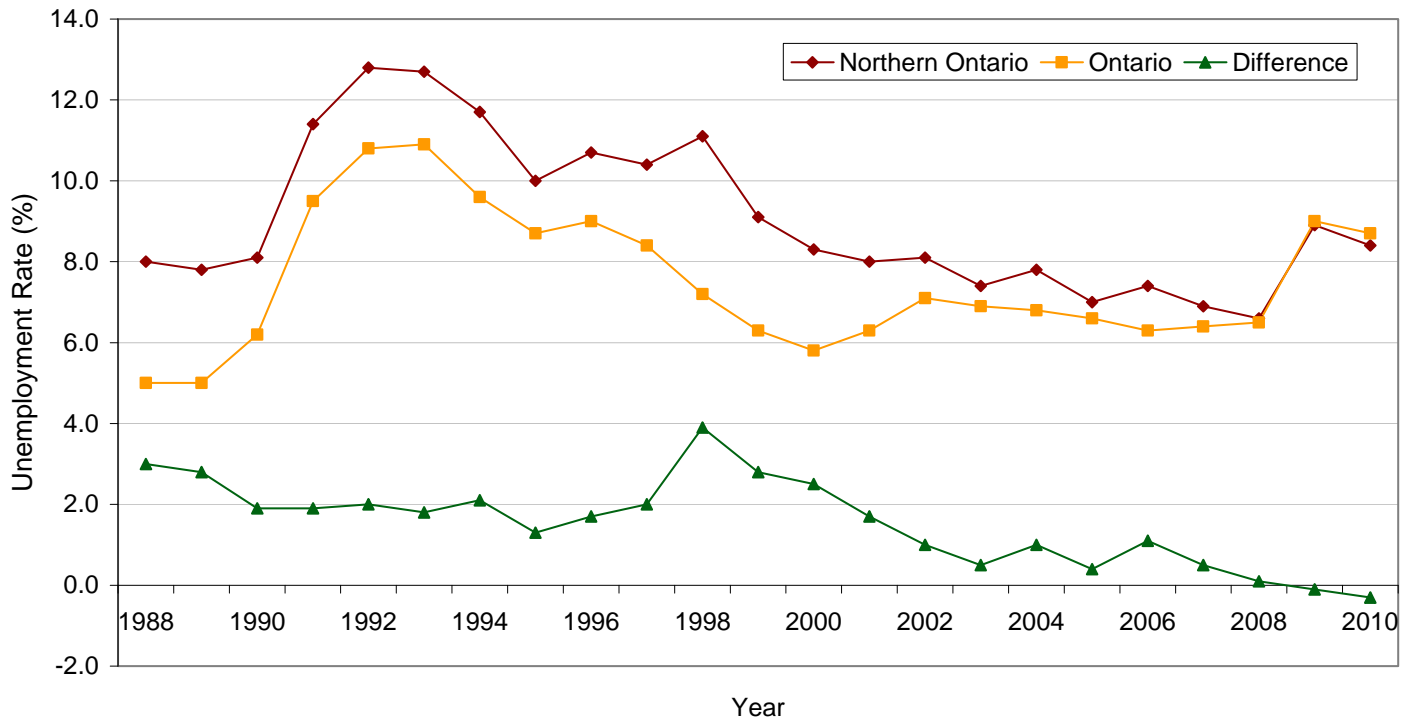
Employment Trend 1988 - 2010



Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey

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Unemployment Rate Trend 1988 - 2010



Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey

Since reaching a high of 12.8% in 1992, Northern Ontario's unemployment rate dropped by 6.2% in 2008 compared to a 4.3% drop in Ontario's unemployment rate. In 2010, unemployment went down to 8.4% in Northern Ontario, a decrease of 0.5 from 2009. In the past, on average, Northern Ontario's unemployment rate had been 2 percentage points higher than Ontario's. In recent years this gap decreased and in 2010 the rate for Northern Ontario was lower than Ontario's rate of 8.7%.³

1 Statistics Canada 2010 Annual Population Estimates

2 Statistics Canada, 2006 Census

3 Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey

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