

October 7, 2019

For Immediate Release

**Contact North | Contact Nord and OCAS Partner to Provide Enhanced Services to Students Accessing Online Programs and Courses in 600 Small, Remote, Rural, Indigenous and Francophone Communities in Ontario**

(Thunder Bay / Guelph) – Contact North | Contact Nord and OCAS, a not-for-profit organization delivering shared technology and application services for Ontario’s public colleges, today announced a partnership leading to enhanced services for students participating in online programs and courses in 600 small, remote, rural, Indigenous and Francophone communities across the province.

Through the partnership, OCAS, on a consulting basis, is providing its information technology expertise, experience and capacity to support Contact North | Contact Nord to:

1. Expand and improve services for students.
2. Enhance customized support to students and Ontario’s 24 public colleges, 22 public universities, 9 Indigenous institutes, 76 district school boards, 200 literacy and basic skills providers, and 50 skills development training providers (education and training providers).
3. Increase efficiency and strengthen capacity to support students and education and training providers.
4. Ensure reliability and security of all information technology infrastructure.
5. Leverage new and emerging technologies to support the delivery of more online programs and courses.

“We are excited by the opportunity to leverage OCAS’ extensive experience and in-depth expertise supporting Ontario’s public colleges and transition our information technology infrastructure to the next level ,” stated Maxim Jean-Louis, President – Chief Executive Officer, Contact North | Contact Nord. “This partnership supports our mandate to help underserved Ontarians across the province get jobs by making it possible for them to access education and training without leaving their communities.”

“We are proud to extend our technology services to support Contact North | Contact Nord. Together, we share the mission of opening and improving pathways to postsecondary education for learners in Ontario,” said Karen Creditor, President and CEO of OCAS. “We are excited to have this opportunity to collaborate and consult with another organization within the higher education ecosystem, and we look forward to

seeing the project's success enhance Contact North | Contact Nord's support of underserved individuals."

Under the terms of the partnership, OCAS is supporting Contact North | Contact Nord to move to next generation technologies, which dramatically increase the efficiency and capacity of Contact North | Contact Nord's information technology infrastructure to meet increasing demand for its services at its [116 online learning centres](#) throughout Ontario. Requests for Contact North | Contact Nord services currently exceed 800,000 per year and continue to grow significantly each year.

Over a three-year period, a series of major initiatives are under consideration to provide full redundancy, with no interruption in service to students and education and training providers and to provide a higher level of service to users via Contact North | Contact Nord's Technical Support Hotline.

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### **For Further Information**

Heather Campbell  
Communications Coordinator  
Contact North | Contact Nord  
1-855-345-5035  
[heather@contactnorth.ca](mailto:heather@contactnorth.ca)

Alissa Robson  
Manager, Marketing & Communications  
OCAS  
519-763-2363 ext. 6888  
[robson@ocas.ca](mailto:robson@ocas.ca)

### **About Contact North | Contact Nord**

As a community-based organization, established and funded by the Government of Ontario since 1986 with its headquarters in Thunder Bay, Contact North | Contact Nord helps underserved Ontarians in 600 small, rural, remote, Indigenous and Francophone communities get jobs by making it possible for them to access education and training without leaving their communities.

We respond to 800,000+ requests per year from Ontarians and provide five local services:

- Information about available online programs and courses

- Assistance with the registration process for their program or course of choice
- Free use of computer workstations and high-speed Internet access to complete their online courses
- Free use of web conferencing and videoconferencing distance learning platforms to connect to, and participate in, their live online programs and courses
- Supervision of written exams and tests

Learn more about us at [contactnorth.ca](http://contactnorth.ca).

## **About OCAS**

OCAS is an independent not-for-profit organization based out of Guelph, Ontario. As a member of our province's thriving tech hub and a proud partner of the Ontario college system, technology and innovation are at the heart of our business – we leverage the power of data, people, and partnerships to deliver leading-edge systems, dependable technology, and cost-effective solutions across the higher education sector. Every year, we provide the pathways and support that help almost 300,000 individuals take the first step toward a brighter future through Ontario's public colleges.

We care a lot about what we do. Learn more about us at [www.ocas.ca](http://www.ocas.ca).

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Contact North | Contact Nord  
1139 Alloy Drive, Suite 104  
Thunder Bay, Ontario P7B 6M8  
807-346-1616  
[newsletter@contactnorth.ca](mailto:newsletter@contactnorth.ca)