

**CONTACT NORTH | CONTACT NORD  
2020-2021  
BUSINESS PLAN  
AND FUNDING REQUEST  
TO GOVERNMENT OF ONTARIO**

**Helping Underserved Ontarians in 800 Small,  
Rural, Remote, Indigenous and Francophone  
Communities Get Education and Training for Jobs  
without Leaving their Communities**

December 20, 2019

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## A Community-Based Organization

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As a community-based organization, Contact North | Contact Nord helps underserved Ontarians in 800 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 **900,000+** requests for services per year (projected for 2019-2020) 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

We generate **58,000+** student registrations in online courses per year for 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.

Our local staff in **116** online learning centres located in communities across Ontario deliver these services in English and French with the support of our province-wide Student Information Hotline and our [studyonline.ca](http://studyonline.ca) / [etudiezenligne.ca](http://etudiezenligne.ca) and [e-channel.ca](http://e-channel.ca) / [apprentissageenligne.ca](http://apprentissageenligne.ca) portals, which provide information and resources for students and prospective students. Our portals support 783,000 pageviews per year (projected for 2019-2020).

Contact North | Contact Nord is funded by the Government of Ontario through the Ministry of Colleges and Universities.

## 2020-2021 Funding Requests and Outcomes Executive Summary

Contact North | Contact Nord is pleased to provide an executive summary of the operating and capital funding requests and related outcomes.

The specific details and related budgets can be found on the pages indicated below each summary.

### 2020-2021 Operating Funding Request

Contact North | Contact Nord requests annual operating funding of \$9,995,256 for 2020-2021, which represents a 2.5% increase (\$243,787) over 2019-2020 approved operating funding of \$9,751,469.

The additional funding is allocated to the Registration, Advisory Services and Online Learning Centres budget to support the operation of 12 new online learning centres and to support the expansion of operating hours for the Student Information Hotline to evenings and weekends to improve service delivery.

### 2020-2021 Operating Outcomes

By March 31, 2021, Contact North | Contact Nord delivers the following 10 outcomes for underserved Ontarians in 800 small, rural, remote, Indigenous and Francophone communities:

1. **62,400** registrations generated
2. **917,555** requests for services fulfilled
3. **54** province-wide targeted recruitment campaigns executed
4. **128** local online learning centres and **185** access points maintained
5. **6,480** inquiries to the Student Information Hotline fulfilled
6. **4,984** calls to Technical Hotline supported
7. **253,065** visitors generated **823,057** pageviews of portals
8. **170** Ontario Works offices engaged supporting **313** clients
9. **188** Employment Ontario offices engaged supporting **313** clients
10. **98.6%** uptime on distance delivery platforms

See page 4 for the 2020-2021 Project Activities and page 20 for the 2020-2021 Operating Budget.

### 2020-2021 Capital Funding Request

Contact North | Contact Nord requests capital funding of \$1,287,045 for 2020-2021 (Year 1 of a three-year request) to support the following capital investments:

1. 12 New Online Learning Centres
2. Customer Relationship Management (CRM) replacement
3. Online Learning Centre e-Learning Equipment Renewal

4. New Shared Services – Exam Proctoring Solution

#### 2020-2021 Capital Outcomes

1. Greater access to Contact North | Contact Nord's services for Ontarians
2. Better business information management and reporting
3. Higher quality learning experience in the online learning centres
4. A new shared service for Ontario's education and training providers

See page 23 for the Capital Funding Request and budget.

## 2020-2021 Project Activities

The Projections from the 5-Year Framework, used to identify 2020-2021 Proposed Outcomes, are included on pages 16-17.

1. Registration, Advisory Services and Online Learning Centres	
Activity	2020-2021 Proposed Outcomes
<p>a. Operate and maintain free of charge, high-touch, local support services in English and French to students and prospective students of its Education and Training Providers that are within the Target Base using its 128 online learning centres and 195 Access Points. Each online learning centre and Access Point shall be operated in a manner conducive to academic study and shall offer the following free services to the Target Base, to be scaled according to demand:</p> <p>i. The use of distance delivery platforms (including, by way of example only, web and video conferencing platforms) and computers equipped with</p> <p>ii. Internet access (using the highest connection speeds available).</p> <p>iii. Advisory services including, without limitation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• assistance with registration in online courses and programs;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>128</b> online learning centres and <b>195</b> Access Points operated and available for students and prospective students to access high-touch, local support services.</li> <li>• <b>917,555</b> Requests for Services fulfilled.</li> <li>• <b>62,400</b> student registrations in online courses from 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 providers.</li> <li>• <b>4,984</b> support requests to the IT Technical Hotline fulfilled (each support request can take up to 30 minutes to fulfill based on the nature of the request).</li> <li>• <b>13,410</b> exams invigilated (invigilation of an exam can take up to 3 hours) for students from Ontario's colleges, universities, district school boards, Independent Learning Centre (ILC) and Indigenous institutes.</li> </ul>

1. Registration, Advisory Services and Online Learning Centres	
Activity	2020-2021 Proposed Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the provision of current information on available online programs and courses;</li> <li>• the provision of current information on educational financial aid options;</li> <li>• referrals to colleges and universities for career and educational mapping;</li> <li>• referrals to other local educational and employment support services; and</li> <li>• moral support and encouragement.</li> </ul> <p>iv. Technical support in respect of the use of on-site computers, tools and equipment.</p> <p>v. A dedicated quiet study space.</p> <p>vi. Exam invigilation services.</p>	
<p>b. Secure the facilities for the online learning centres in rent-free space.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>126</b> local online learning centres housed in rent-free space provided by a local community partner (the two operations centres in Sudbury and Thunder Bay make up the 128 online learning centres). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ This operating model generates estimated savings of <b>\$962,000</b> annually for space.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• All partnership agreements for rent-free space up-to-date and managed in a database.</li> </ul>
<p>c. Staff and operate the Student Information Hotline as defined above</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student Information Hotline staffed during advertised operating hours of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Eastern Time Monday to Thursday</li> </ol> </li> </ul>

## 1. Registration, Advisory Services and Online Learning Centres

Activity	2020-2021 Proposed Outcomes
	<p data-bbox="821 298 1451 329">2) 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time Friday</p> <p data-bbox="821 334 1488 365">3) 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Eastern Time Saturday</p> <p data-bbox="821 375 1885 516">The above hours represent 20 additional hours of availability (4 evenings per week and Saturday) for the Student Information Hotline to provide clients with additional options to connect for live support. Inquiries received after operating hours responded to the next business day.</p> <ul data-bbox="779 526 1843 592" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="779 526 1843 592">• Student Information Officers responded to <b>6,480</b> inquiries (each inquiry can take up to 30 minutes to fulfill based on the nature of the inquiry).</li></ul>



2. Shared and Collaborative Services	
Activity	2020-2021 Proposed Outcomes
a. Provide its recruitment and local services as a core shared service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment and local support services to students available to Ontario's: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 24 public colleges</li> <li>○ 22 public universities</li> <li>○ 9 Indigenous Institutes</li> <li>○ 76 district school boards</li> <li>○ 200 literacy and basic skills providers</li> <li>○ 50 skills development training providers</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>62,400</b> student registrations generated in online courses generated for all categories of providers.</li> </ul>
b. Provide Education and Training Providers with data on specific programs and courses not currently available online for which there is learner or labour market demand.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requests received for different online programs and courses not currently available shared with education and training providers.</li> </ul>
c. Develop and implement targeted recruitment campaigns for its Education and Training Providers to maximize course and program registrations from the Target Base.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Executed <b>54</b> province-wide Targeted Recruitment Campaigns for Ontario's public colleges and universities in 800 small, remote, rural, Indigenous and Francophone communities across Ontario.</li> </ul>
d. Engage with those Ontario Works and Employment Ontario offices whose clients include individuals within the Target Base, to promote, advise and facilitate their clients' enrolment into online courses and programs, as appropriate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact North   Contact Nord engaged with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>170</b> Ontario Works offices (65 of these offices are in First Nation communities)</li> <li>○ <b>188</b> Employment Ontario offices</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Contact North   Contact Nord generated 313 online course registrations from Ontario Works clients and 313 online course registrations from Employment Ontario clients (The number of Ontario Works and Employment Ontario clients supported to be updated in January 2020 when data updating is complete).</li> </ul>

## 2. Shared and Collaborative Services

Activity	2020-2021 Proposed Outcomes
<p>e. Provide a suite of free shared services to the Target Base and the Education and Training Providers consisting of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Web conferencing platform</li> <li>○ Videoconferencing platform</li> <li>○ Moodle Learning Management System</li> <li>○ Training for faculty and instructors of the Education and Training Providers in English and French, on the use of technology platforms to deliver their online programs and courses</li> <li>○ Technical support as further described in Section 3 (a).</li> </ul>	<p><u>3 Shared Service Learning Platforms</u></p> <p>Since 2003, Contact North   Contact Nord has offered 3 shared service learning platforms for 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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Web conferencing (Adobe Connect) platform available.</li> <li>● Videoconferencing platform available.</li> <li>● Moodle Learning Management System available.</li> </ul> <p>Platforms available <b>98.6%</b> of the time for student use.</p> <p><u>Training for College and University Faculty and Instructors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Contact North   Contact Nord delivered training to <b>210</b> faculty and instructors on How to Use the Web Conferencing Platform to Teach Effectively during the period.</li> <li>● <b>28</b> <a href="#">web conferencing resources</a> available.</li> <li>● <b>11</b> <a href="#">videoconferencing resources</a> available.</li> </ul> <p><u>Technical Support</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>4,984</b> support requests to the IT Technical Hotline fulfilled (each support request can take up to 30 minutes to fulfill based on the nature of the request).</li> </ul>

### 3. Information Technology (IT) & Web Services

Activity	2020-2021 Proposed Outcomes
<p>a. Provide technical support services in English and French from 7:30 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday to Friday, for all information technology resources used by students, faculty, instructors and any other stakeholders, as required.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical support provided for students, faculty, instructors from 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 and other stakeholders as required during the advertised hours.</li> <li>• <b>4,984</b> support requests to the IT Technical Hotline fulfilled (each support request can take up to 30 minutes to fulfill based on the nature of the request).             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The full adoption of the Adobe Connect web conferencing platform in September 2019 reduced the number of calls to the IT Support Hotline as this platform and the custom portal built by Contact North   Contact Nord are more user friendly and requires less technical support. The number of calls is projected to continue to decline. Contact North   Contact Nord is exploring different metrics to assess the outcomes of the IT Technical Support Hotline.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>b. Manage and maintain Contact North   Contact Nord's online portals and websites.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 Contact North   Contact Nord portals (English and French) maintained and available for student and general public use.</li> <li>• 253,065 users generated 823,057 pageviews on portals:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 200,377 users generated 651,697 pageviews on studyonline.ca / etudiezenligne.ca.</li> <li>○ 44,736 users generated 145,497 pageviews on contactnorth.ca / contactnord.ca.</li> <li>○ 7,952 users generated 25,863 pageviews on e-channel.ca / apprentissageenligne.ca.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Collection of program and course information completed for all academic semesters for posting to studyonline.ca / etudiezenligne.ca.</li> <li>• Portals monitored continuously to ensure posted content is current and up-to-date.</li> </ul>

<b>3. Information Technology (IT) &amp; Web Services</b>	
<b>Activity</b>	<b>2020-2021 Proposed Outcomes</b>
c. Manage, maintain and ensure the security, performance, stability and reliability of Contact North   Contact Nord's information technology infrastructure, including without limitation, Internet connectivity, telecommunications, hardware, software, web conferencing and videoconferencing platforms, and the Moodle learning management system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All information technology infrastructure managed during the period to ensure high quality services delivered for students and education and training providers.</li> <li>• All information technology infrastructure available <b>98.6%</b> of the time during the period.</li> </ul>
d. Undertake to deliver uninterrupted services (i.e., less than 5% downtime during service hours) in connection with the IT and Web Service resources utilized by students, faculty, instructors, staff, and other stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact North   Contact Nord achieved <b>98.6%</b> uptime on its services.</li> </ul>
e. Continually enhance broadband Internet access at online learning centres as service becomes available/improved in Target Base communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upgrades completed where new services available from providers.</li> </ul>
f. Develop, manage and maintain the IT and communications infrastructure necessary to perform activities and to meet the objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All IT and communications infrastructure managed and maintained to perform Project activities, including reporting requirements.</li> <li>• Implemented the Action Plan to Modernize Contact North   Contact Nord Information Technology &amp; Web Services with 5 targeted outcomes:</li> </ul>

### 3. Information Technology (IT) & Web Services

Activity	2020-2021 Proposed Outcomes
and obligations, including reporting obligations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Deliver improved and expanded services</li><li>○ Increase efficiency and capacity</li><li>○ Ensure full reliability and redundancy</li><li>○ Provide customized support to students and education and training providers</li><li>○ Leverage new and emerging technologies</li></ul> <p>See Appendix 1 for the Action Plan.</p>

4. Communications and Marketing	
Activity	2020-2021 Proposed Outcomes
a. Develop and implement strategies to maximize student registrations in online programs and courses offered by the Education and Training Providers to the Target Base.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>54</b> targeted recruitment campaigns executed for public colleges and universities to generate registrations from Ontarians.</li> <li>• Semester-based versions of Online Programs from Ontario's Public Universities and Online Programs from Ontario's Public Universities, a digital guide to the online and distance programs from Ontario's public colleges and universities distributed via <a href="http://studyonline.ca/etudiezenligne.ca">studyonline.ca/etudiezenligne.ca</a>.</li> <li>• Posters, flyers, and trade show materials produced and distributed to support awareness activities.</li> <li>• Local print and radio advertising campaigns developed and implemented.</li> </ul>
b. Develop and implement marketing and communication strategies to enhance and promote awareness of Contact North   Contact Nord's services within the Target Base using a combination of traditional and digital media platforms (e.g., social media, GoogleAds, radio, print, etc.).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Google Adwords utilized to drive traffic to the <a href="http://studyonline.ca">studyonline.ca</a> / <a href="http://etudiezenligne.ca">etudiezenligne.ca</a> portal for students and prospective students.</li> <li>• Corporate and local Facebook pages maintained to engage with students and prospective students.</li> <li>• Corporate Twitter page maintained to engage with students and prospective students.</li> <li>• Corporate LinkedIn page maintained to engage with students and prospective students.</li> </ul>
c. Provide information about its services to current and prospective learners within the Target Base and to its Education and Training Providers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact North   Contact Nord engaged with <b>4,721</b> local organizations across Ontario to recruit and support underserved Ontarians.</li> <li>• Contact North   Contact Nord liaised with Ontario's <b>24</b> public colleges and <b>22</b> public universities to provide information on its services and identify opportunities for targeted recruitment campaigns.</li> </ul>
d. Engage with stakeholders on Contact North   Contact Nord's activities and strategic direction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact North   Contact Nord provided regular updates to its stakeholders on activities and strategic directions, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ontario's education and training providers</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<b>4. Communications and Marketing</b>	
<b>Activity</b>	<b>2020-2021 Proposed Outcomes</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Local partners who host the <b>126</b> local online learning centres (the operations centres in Sudbury and Thunder Bay account for the remaining 2 online learning centres and are housed in leased space) and <b>195</b> access points</li> <li>○ Provincial and local decision-makers</li> </ul>
e. Track and analyze the results of marketing campaigns including, without limitation, engagement and conversion metrics related to its social media and digital marketing initiatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>253,065</b> users generated <b>823,057</b> pageviews on portals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 200,377 users generated 651,697 pageviews on studyonline.ca / etudiezenligne.ca.</li> <li>○ 44,736 users generated 145,497 pageviews on contactnorth.ca / contactnord.ca.</li> <li>○ 7,952 users generated 25,863 pageviews on e-channel.ca / apprentissageenligne.ca.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
f. Develop and adhere to the public communications protocol to be developed with the Province.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● All communications protocols adhered to.</li> </ul>

5. Administration	
Activity	2020-2021 Proposed Outcomes
a. Staff, office space rentals in respect of its Sudbury and Thunder Bay Operations Centres, and appropriate equipment and technology to support its operations.	<p><u>Staff</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>265</b> staff deployed in communities across Ontario delivering services (an increase of 15 over 2019-2020 to staff the 12 new online learning centres).</li> <li>• Staff vacancies promptly filled to avoid gaps in service.</li> </ul> <p><u>Operations Centres</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leases in place for the Sudbury Operations Centre (expiry February 28, 2023, with option to renew for 5 additional years) and Thunder Bay Operations Centre (expiry November 30, 2022 with option to renew for 5 additional years).</li> </ul> <p><u>Appropriate Equipment and Technology</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All appropriate equipment in place for efficient operation of both operations centres.</li> <li>• Technology infrastructure operational <b>98.6%</b> of the time during the period to support operations.</li> </ul>
b. Travel expenditures for staff and members of the Board of Directors that are directly attributable to and necessary for achieving the activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All travel expenditures for staff and members of the Board of Directors directly attributable to and necessary for achieving the objectives of the Project and incurred in accordance with <a href="#">Contact North   Contact Nord Financial Policy</a>.</li> <li>• The Financial Policy, approved by the Contact North   Contact Nord Board of Directors, meets the requirements of the Broader Public Sector Expenses Directive, 2011.</li> <li>• In applying Contact North   Contact Nord policy, staff apply appropriate conflict of interest rules that reflect the spirit of Regulation 381/07 of the <i>Public Service of Ontario Act, 2006</i>.</li> </ul>
c. Professional services (i.e., financial, legal, procurement, consulting, web hosting, etc.).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional services acquired in accordance with <a href="#">Contact North   Contact Nord Financial Policy</a> as required to support its operations.</li> </ul>



<b>5. Administration</b>	
<b>Activity</b>	<b>2020-2021 Proposed Outcomes</b>
d. Administration necessary to carry out the activities and to meet the reporting obligations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completed administration necessary to meet the project objectives and reporting requirements in accordance with internally developed policies.</li> <li>• <b>10</b> monthly CEO Updates distributed to the Board of Directors on Operations during the period.</li> <li>• Audio briefing on operations with the Chair of the Board of Directors completed every two weeks.</li> <li>• <b>4</b> quarterly meetings held of the Board of Directors.</li> <li>• Weekly Updates submitted by each member of the operations team on their respective deliverables.</li> <li>• Daily updates on operations submitted by front end recruitment and service departments.</li> <li>• All required reports prepared and submitted to the Ministry of Colleges and Universities.</li> </ul>
e. Prepare and deliver a Performance Report to the Province covering the Term, which reports on the goals, activities, performance measures and metrics set out in the 2020-2021 Transfer Payment Agreement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance Report prepared and delivered for the period April 1, 2020, to March 31, 2021.</li> </ul>

## Projections from the 5-Year Framework

<b>Actions</b> (Definitions on Next Page)	<b>2019-2020 Forecast</b>	<b>2019-2020 Projected</b>	<b>2020-2021</b>	<b>2021-2022</b>	<b>2022-2023</b>	<b>2023-2024</b>
<b>Performance Indicators</b>						
Requests for Services Fulfilled	699,398	873,862	917,555	963,433	1,011,604	1,062,185
Registrations Generated	58,400	58,400	62,400	66,400	70,400	74,400
Targeted Recruitment Campaigns Executed	60	49	54	59	64	69
Communities Supported	800	800	800	800	800	800
Pageviews of Portals Supported	674,398	783,864	823,057	864,210	907,421	952,792
Student Information Hotline Inquiries Fulfilled	5,565	5,891	6,480	6,804	7,144	7,502
Exams Invigilated	11,131	12,191	13,410	14,751	16,226	17,849
Instructors Trained <sup>1</sup>	200	325	210	221	232	243
Visitors to Portals Supported	216,786	241,014	253,065	265,718	279,004	292,954
Ontario Works Clients Supported	250	250 <sup>2</sup>	313	391	488	610
Employment Ontario Clients Supported	250	250 <sup>2</sup>	313	391	488	610
Ontario Works Referral Partners Engaged	50	170	195	195	195	195
Employment Ontario Referral Partners Engaged	25	188	213	213	213	213
Online Learning Centres and Access Points Operated	311	323	323	323	323	323
Organizations Engaged	4,496	4,496	4,721	4,957	5,205	5,465
Calls to Technical Support Hotline Fulfilled <sup>3</sup>	9,817	5,034	4,984	4,934	5,205	4,836
Staff Deployed	250	250	265	280	280	280

<b>Actions</b> (Definitions on Next Page)	<b>2019-2020 Forecast</b>	<b>2019-2020 Projected</b>	<b>2020-2021</b>	<b>2021-2022</b>	<b>2022-2023</b>	<b>2023-2024</b>
<b>Performance Indicators</b>						
Correctional Facilities Engaged	10	10	14	18	22	26
<b>Shared Services - Technology</b>						
Web Conferencing Platform	1,319	1,362	1,430	1,502	1,577	1,656
Videoconferencing Platform <sup>4</sup>	316	116	300	285	271	257
Exam Proctoring Solution			5	10	15	20
Student Collaboration Tool					1,000	1,500
<b>Budget</b>						
Base Operating Funding from Ontario	\$9,751,469	\$9,751,469	\$9,995,257	\$10,495,019	\$10,495,019	\$10,495,019
% of Base on Administration	9.98%	9.98%	9.79%	9.79%	9.79%	9.79%

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> The increase in the number of instructors trained is due to the completion of the transition to Adobe Connect web conferencing platform in September 2019 as all instructors participated in training.
- <sup>2</sup> The number of Ontario Works and Employment Ontario clients supported to be updated in January 2020 when data updating is complete.
- <sup>3</sup> The full adoption of the Adobe Connect web conferencing platform in September 2019 reduced the number of calls to the IT Support Hotline as this platform and the custom portal built by Contact North | Contact Nord are more user friendly and require less technical support. The number of calls is projected to continue to decline. Contact North | Contact Nord is exploring different metrics to assess the outcomes of the IT Technical Support Hotline.
- <sup>4</sup> While the number of videoconferencing courses is projected to decline for 2019-2020, we have several education and training providers who signalled they intend to start using our videoconferencing platform in 2020-2021.

## Project Outcomes and Performance Measures Summary

Description	2020-2021 Metric
Number of student registrations in online courses and programs (offered by the Education and Training Providers) which are directly attributable to Contact North   Contact Nord's activities and supports and broken down by sector (e.g., college, university, literacy and basic skills, etc.) and age.	62,400
Number and nature of registration-related requests for services received from the Target Base, by the Student Information Hotline	6,480
User trends and detailed anonymous demographic information for individuals accessing each existing online learning centre.	As per results of survey in April 2021
Number of Online Learning Centres and Access Points in operation (categorized by location and anonymous client demographics).	333 in total:  128 Online Learning Centres 195 Access Points
Up time on distance delivery platforms per operating system reports	95%
Detailed web traffic stats (categorized by site)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 253,065 users generated 823,057 pageviews on portals:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 200,377 users generated 651,697 pageviews on studyonline.ca / etudiezenligne.ca.</li> <li>○ 44,736 users generated 145,497 pageviews on contactnorth.ca / contactnord.ca.</li> <li>○ 7,952 users generated 25,863 pageviews on e-channel.ca / apprentissageenligne.ca.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Number of office partnerships established	Ontario Works – 170 Employment Ontario – 188
Number of Ontario Works and Employment Ontario clients served	Ontario Works – 313 Employment Ontario – 313 (The number of Ontario Works and Employment Ontario clients supported to be updated in January 2020 when data updating is complete.)

Description	2020-2021 Metric
Number and type of online and distance education delivery tools used by faculty and instructors of the Education and Training Providers to facilitate and enhance online and distance course delivery	3
Number of Faculty and Instructors trained on the Contact North   Contact Nord's online delivery tools and resources	210
Number and nature of IT support requests from faculty and instructors within the Target Base	4,984
Demonstrate the direct impact of Contact North   Contact Nord's services on its clients' academic program completion rates	As per results of survey in April 2021
Metrics which demonstrate the direct impact of Contact North   Contact Nord's services on employment rates within the Target Base	As per results of survey in April 2021
Requests for Services	917,555
Communities Served	800

## 2020-2021 Proposed Operating Budget

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### Contact North | Contact Nord 2020-2021 Proposed Budget to MCU

	\$	%age of Budget
<b>Revenue</b>		
Base Grant	\$ 9,995,256	
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 9,995,256</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>		
Recruitment & Student Services		
Regional Services and Online Learning Centres	4,123,647	
Promotion & Recruitment	793,932	
Statistics Collection & Reporting	209,884	
Student Information Hotline	236,893	
Central Support Services	190,347	
<b>Total Recruitment &amp; Student Services</b>	<b>\$ 5,554,703</b>	<b>55.57%</b>
Information Technology (IT) & Web Services		
IT & Web Services Department	\$ 1,761,813	
Telecommunications	209,115	
Capital	300,000	
<b>Total IT &amp; Web Services</b>	<b>\$ 2,270,928</b>	<b>22.72%</b>
Operations Support Services		
Regional Operations Centres	\$ 904,839	
e-Learning Support Services	98,928	
CRM Data Integrity & Training	187,717	
<b>Total Operations Support Services</b>	<b>\$ 1,191,484</b>	<b>11.92%</b>
Governance & Administration		
Financial Services	\$ 300,289	
Human Resources Services	325,221	
Governance & CEO	352,631	
<b>Total Governance &amp; Administration</b>	<b>\$ 978,141</b>	<b>9.79%</b>
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$ 9,995,256</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Revenue less Expenditures</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	

## 2020-2021 Quarterly Cash Flow Projection

<b>Contact North   Contact Nord</b>					
<b>2020-2021 Proposed Cashflow Projection to MCU</b>					
	<u>Budget</u>	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Cost Recovery & Interest	-	-	-	-	-
<b><u>Recruitment &amp; Partnerships</u></b>					
Wages & Benefits	3,983,505	1,072,482	919,270	1,072,482	919,270
Promotion & Recruitment	434,960	104,390	52,195	78,293	200,082
Office Expense	58,838	14,710	14,710	14,710	14,710
Professional & Other Services	226,053	56,513	56,513	56,513	56,513
Facilities	74,562	18,641	18,641	18,641	18,641
Software Licensing, Equipment & Maintenance	7,400	1,850	1,850	1,850	1,850
Phones & Internet	330,358	82,590	82,590	82,590	82,590
Staff Training & Development	70,200	27,800	6,400	18,000	18,000
Travel	268,200	67,050	67,050	67,050	67,050
	<b>5,454,076</b>	<b>1,446,025</b>	<b>1,219,218</b>	<b>1,410,128</b>	<b>1,378,705</b>
<b><u>Information Technology (IT) &amp; Web Services</u></b>					
Wages & Benefits	813,450	219,006	187,719	219,006	187,719
Promotion & Recruitment	41,784	10,446	10,446	10,446	10,446
Professional & Other Services	189,560	47,390	47,390	47,390	47,390
Facilities	7,300	1,825	1,825	1,825	1,825
Software Licensing, Equipment & Maintenance	588,500	354,091	78,136	78,136	78,136
Phones & Internet	214,538	102,007	37,510	37,510	37,510
Staff Training & Development	35,000	15,000	5,000	10,000	5,000
Travel	71,900	17,975	17,975	17,975	17,975
Vehicle Lease & Maintenance	8,895	2,224	2,224	2,224	2,224
Capital	300,000	210,000	30,000	30,000	30,000
	<b>2,270,928</b>	<b>979,964</b>	<b>418,226</b>	<b>454,513</b>	<b>418,226</b>
<b><u>Operations Centres</u></b>					
<b><u>Sudbury Operations Centre</u></b>					
Wages & Benefits	331,243	89,181	76,441	89,181	76,441
Promotion & Recruitment	775	775	-	-	-
Office Expense	17,500	4,375	4,375	4,375	4,375
Professional & Other Services	7,500	1,875	1,875	1,875	1,875
Facilities	197,431	49,358	49,358	49,358	49,358
Phones & Internet	1,722	431	431	431	431
Staff Training & Development	8,500	3,500	1,000	2,000	2,000
Travel	3,500	875	875	875	875
	<b>568,171</b>	<b>150,369</b>	<b>134,354</b>	<b>148,094</b>	<b>135,354</b>
<b><u>Thunder Bay Operations Centre</u></b>					
Wages & Benefits	288,828	77,761	66,653	77,761	66,653
Promotion & Recruitment	500	225	-	275	-
Office Expense	17,500	4,375	4,375	4,375	4,375
Professional & Other Services	7,500	1,875	1,875	1,875	1,875
Facilities	198,484	49,621	49,621	49,621	49,621
Phones & Internet	1,248	312	312	312	312
Staff Training & Development	8,500	3,500	1,000	2,000	2,000
Travel	3,500	875	875	875	875
	<b>526,060</b>	<b>138,544</b>	<b>124,711</b>	<b>137,094</b>	<b>125,711</b>

	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Q1</u>	<u>Q2</u>	<u>Q3</u>	<u>Q4</u>
<b><u>Communications &amp; Administration</u></b>					
<b><u>Finance</u></b>					
Wages & Benefits	286,518	77,139	66,120	77,139	66,120
Promotion & Recruitment	1,900	1,400	-	500	-
Office Expense	5,000	1,250	1,250	1,250	1,250
Facilities	1,175	294	294	294	294
Software Licensing, Equipment & Maint.	-	-	-	-	-
Phones & Internet	396	99	99	99	99
Staff Training & Development	5,000	2,500	-	2,500	-
Travel	300	75	75	75	75
	<b>300,289</b>	<b>82,757</b>	<b>67,837</b>	<b>81,857</b>	<b>67,837</b>
<b><u>Human Resources</u></b>					
Wages & Benefits	244,522	65,833	56,428	65,833	56,428
Insurance	31,800	-	-	31,800	-
Office Expense	13,220	3,305	3,305	3,305	3,305
Professional & Other Services	17,500	4,375	4,375	4,375	4,375
Phones & Internet	180	45	45	45	45
Staff Training & Development	12,000	7,500	1,000	3,500	-
Travel	6,000	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500
	<b>325,222</b>	<b>82,558</b>	<b>66,653</b>	<b>110,358</b>	<b>65,653</b>
<b><u>Communications</u></b>					
Wages & Benefits	103,243	27,796	23,825	27,796	23,825
Promotion & Recruitment	7,900	1,975	1,975	1,975	1,975
Professional & Other Services	84,850	21,213	21,213	21,213	21,213
Phones & Internet	386	97	97	97	97
Travel	1,500	375	375	375	375
	<b>197,879</b>	<b>51,455</b>	<b>47,484</b>	<b>51,455</b>	<b>47,484</b>
<b><u>Governance &amp; CEO</u></b>					
Wages & Benefits	225,326	60,665	51,998	60,665	51,998
Insurance	4,200	2,400	-	1,800	-
Promotion & Recruitment	13,842	3,461	3,461	3,461	3,461
Office Expense	2,500	625	625	625	625
Professional & Other Services	28,000	7,000	7,000	7,000	7,000
Facilities	500	125	125	125	125
Phones & Internet	10,262	2,566	2,566	2,566	2,566
Board Training & Development	-	-	-	-	-
Travel	68,000	17,000	17,000	17,000	17,000
	<b>352,631</b>	<b>93,841</b>	<b>82,775</b>	<b>93,241</b>	<b>82,775</b>
<b><u>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</u></b>	<b><u>9,995,256</u></b>	<b><u>3,025,513</u></b>	<b><u>2,161,258</u></b>	<b><u>2,486,740</u></b>	<b><u>2,321,745</u></b>
<b><u>FUNDING REQUIRED</u></b>	<b><u>9,995,256</u></b>	<b><u>3,025,513</u></b>	<b><u>2,161,258</u></b>	<b><u>2,486,740</u></b>	<b><u>2,321,745</u></b>



# Capital Funding Request

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Contact North | Contact Nord developed a multi-year Capital Funding Request which identifies the specific items in four categories (see descriptions below) required by year, with a total estimated cost of \$7,217,045 over three years.

We provided a detailed outline of our funding requirements for 2020-2021, along with the associated costs and a projection for the next two years. Cost projections identified in this proposal for Year 2 and beyond are based on best estimates at this time and are updated annually.

## **1. Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and Online Booking Tool (OBT)**

Phase 1 needs analysis completed in 2019-2020. In Phase 2, Contact North | Contact Nord is re-developing its existing Customer Relationship Management Tool (CRM) (internal tool used by staff to track activity and provide customized services and information to students and prospective students) in 2020-2021. In Phase 3, the Online Booking Tool (OBT) (external tool used by education and training providers to schedule the use of online learning centres, web conferencing and videoconferencing platforms) is re-developed in 2021-2022.

## **2. Connectivity**

To provide a quality learning environment at its online learning centres, Contact North | Contact Nord is continuously enhancing broadband Internet access as service becomes available / improved in communities across Ontario, particularly in Far North and Indigenous communities

## **3. Online Learning Centre Technology Renewal**

In 2013-2014, Contact North | Contact Nord renewed the technology at its online learning centres, including new computer workstations, peripherals, videoconferencing equipment and Voice over IP (VoIP) telephone system.

While the number of videoconferencing courses is projected to decline for 2019-2020, we have several education and training providers who signalled they intend to start using our videoconferencing platform in 2020-2021. Videoconferencing is an important platform for the delivery of courses requiring the student to be able to observe the instructor performing a series of tasks (i.e. skills training). In addition, videoconferencing is ideally suited for learners in Indigenous communities who favour a virtual learner environment similar to a face-to-face classroom.

As this equipment is now beyond its end-of-life, Contact North | Contact Nord is renewing this technology to continue to provide a quality learning environment for Ontarians using the online learning centres and to support new technologies as they

become available. Contact North | Contact Nord is planning technology renewal on the assumption equipment is renewed every 3 years on a rotating cycle.

### **New Shared Services**

Contact North | Contact Nord is exploring the potential for new shared services to support students and Ontario’s education and training providers, including:

- Exam Proctoring Solution
- Immersive videoconferencing technology rooms
- HoloLenses
- Student Collaboration Tool

### **3-Year Capital Request Summary**

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Funded from Operating</b>	<b>Capital Funding Request</b>
Year 1 2020-2021	\$1,587,045	\$300,000	\$1,287,045
Year 2 2021-2022	\$1,320,000	\$300,000	\$1,020,000
Year 3 2022-2023	\$4,310,000	\$300,000	\$4,010,000
Total 3 years	\$7,217,045	\$900,000	\$6,317,045

The three tables on the following pages outline the specific investments under each of these three categories by year.

## Year 1 (2020-2021)

<b>12 New Online Learning Centres</b>		
Average online learning centre equipment and set-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12 x \$51,720 per online learning centre</li> <li>New locations to be identified based on established criteria, including local needs assessment</li> </ul>	\$620,640
<b>Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and Online Booking Tool (OBT)</b>		
Phase 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CRM replacement</li> <li>Builds on Phase 1 (needs analysis) completed in 2019-2020</li> </ul>	\$300,000
<b>Connectivity</b>		
Prepare online learning centres for fiber connectivity	Replace online learning centre routers with pfSense and fibre connectors (\$600 each) 30 online learning centres	\$18,000
<b>Online Learning Centre e-Learning Equipment Renewal</b>		
Computer Workstations and Laptops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Replace end of life computers</li> <li>Increased requirement for laptops for flexibility, reconfiguration of classes and work areas from semester to semester based on registrations</li> <li>100 x \$1,100</li> </ul>	\$110,000
Video Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Replace end of life HDX7000 units in online learning centres with Group 500 (classroom, single camera) (42 x \$8,500)</li> <li>Replace end of life HDX8000 units in online learning centres with Group 700 (dual camera/teacher + classroom) (2 x \$15,000)</li> <li>Replace end of life EX90 Video desktop units (35 x \$1,468.74)</li> </ul>	\$438,405
<b>New Shared Services</b>		
Exam Proctoring Solution		\$100,000
<b>Year 1 Total</b>		<b>\$1,587,045</b>
<b>Funded from Operating Funds</b>		<b>\$300,000</b>
<b>Year 1 Request</b>		<b>\$1,287,045</b>

**Year 2 (2021-2022)**

<b>Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and Online Booking Tool (OBT)</b>		
Phase 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scheduling and Space Allocation Module</li> </ul>	\$300,000
<b>Online Learning Centre e-Learning Equipment Renewal</b>		
Computer Workstations and Laptops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Replace end of life computers</li> <li>Increased requirement for laptops for flexibility, reconfiguration of classes and work areas from semester to semester based on registrations</li> <li>100 x \$1,100</li> </ul>	\$110,000
Voice over IP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Replacement of VoIP phones in operations centres and all online learning centres</li> <li>150 x \$500</li> </ul>	\$75,000
<b>Online Learning Centre Technology</b>		
Immersive Videoconferencing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thunder Bay and Sudbury</li> <li>2 x \$360,000</li> </ul>	\$720,000
HoloLens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Online learning centres located on satellite campuses</li> <li>13 x \$5,000</li> </ul>	\$65,000
<b>New Shared Services</b>		
Student Collaboration Tool		\$50,000
<b>Year 2 Total</b>		<b>\$1,320,000</b>
<b>Funded from Operating Funds</b>		<b>300,000</b>
<b>Year 2 Request</b>		<b>\$1,020,000</b>

**Year 3 (2022-2023)**

<b>Online Learning Centre e-Learning Equipment Renewal</b>		
Computer Workstations and Laptops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replace end of life computers</li> <li>• Increased requirement for laptops for flexibility, reconfiguration of classes and work areas from semester to semester based on registrations</li> <li>• 100 x \$1,100</li> </ul>	\$110,000
<b>New Shared Services</b>		
Simulation Tool for Apprenticeship Training		\$300,000
Immersive Videoconferencing 6-person	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6-person immersive rooms</li> <li>• 5 online learning centres x \$360,000</li> </ul>	\$1,800,000
Immersive Videoconferencing 15-person	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15-person immersive rooms</li> <li>• 3 online learning centres x \$800,000</li> </ul>	\$2,400,000
<b>Year 3 Total</b>		<b>\$4,310,000</b>
<b>Funded from Operating Funds</b>		<b>300,000</b>
<b>Year 3 Request</b>		<b>\$4,010,000</b>

**Appendix 1 – Action Plan to Modernize Contact North | Contact Nord  
Information Technology & Web Services**

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## **ACTION PLAN TO MODERNIZE CONTACT NORTH | CONTACT NORD INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY & WEB SERVICES**

### **Enabling Contact North | Contact Nord to:**

- **Deliver improved and expanded services**
- **Increase efficiency and capacity**
- **Ensure full reliability and redundancy**
- **Provide customized support to students and education and training providers**
- **Leverage new and emerging technologies**

## A. SNAPSHOT

As a community-based organization, 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.

In order to meet increasing and evolving needs of students (students using our 116 local online learning centres, students connecting from their home computer or device), education and training providers, and staff, Contact North | Contact Nord is transforming its Information Technology (IT) & Web Services department (ITWS) to deliver five outcomes:

1. Improve and expand its services to more users in every corner of Ontario, expanding on the 800,000+ requests for services responded to annually;
2. Ensure reliability and redundancy of Contact North | Contact Nord's information technology infrastructure;
3. Establish an integrated structure focused on supporting users (rather than equipment), including appropriate backup for all ITWS team members;
4. Enable the ITWS team to anticipate and be nimble at adapting to new technological developments, evolving needs of students and education and training partners and evolving context; and
5. Fully leverage the skills and experience of the current ITWS team.

To achieve these five outcomes, Contact North | Contact Nord is undertaking two key transformational activities:

1. Moving all IT infrastructure (servers, platforms, software applications hosting, telephone system) currently based in Thunder Bay and Sudbury to offsite hosting ("in the cloud") by an experienced third-party technology (cloud) provider, with a staff of 80+ IT professionals delivering guaranteed 99.9999% up-time and 24/7/365 monitoring and support; and
2. Refocusing the ITWS team to provide direct support and customized services to students and education and training providers, shifting from investing money, time and energy on serving technology to investing money, time and energy on serving students and partners.

Through these two transformational activities, to be completed over a 2-year period, Contact North | Contact Nord delivers on the five outcomes above by complementing the service of the cloud provider with the expertise of our in-house ITWS team.



## B. THE PROCESS TO DEVELOP THIS ACTION PLAN

In June, 2018, the President – Chief Executive Officer appointed me to lead ITWS and to conduct a comprehensive review of Contact North | Contact Nord's ITWS department, with the following five outcomes:

1. Increased efficiency through more streamlined processes;
2. Increased quality of service to students, staff, partner institutions and other stakeholders;
3. Increased capacity of ITWS to support the growing number of requests for services within the same budget;
4. Modernized Contact North | Contact Nord technology infrastructure to minimize downtime and ensure full redundancy; and
5. Fully leveraged skills and experience of our current existing staff complement in ITWS.

Over the course of a year, I undertook the following three activities:

1. Reviewed and analyzed every aspect of the department, our IT infrastructure, platforms and processes;
2. Engaged in extensive discussions with department staff and internal stakeholders; and
3. Gained a deeper understanding of the needs and expectations of external clients through direct contact with them during the transition process to the Adobe Connect web conferencing platform.

In April 2019, I enlisted the Ontario College Application Service (OCAS) to conduct a full review of our IT infrastructure and operations and make recommendations going forward from an outside, expert perspective. A summary of the review and 11 recommendations is attached as Appendix A.

## C. FOUR KEY COMPONENTS OF THE ACTION PLAN

The Action Plan includes four key components, executed over the course of the next 2 years, between August 2019 and July 2021.

### Modernize the IT Infrastructure

1. Concentrate ITWS staff resources on directly supporting users: configuring our hardware and software to meet our specific needs, Technical Support Hotline for students and staff, delivering customized solutions (such as the Adobe Connect portal), and outsource all non-core IT applications and services to cloud providers.

*Additional Investment: \$0, achieved with existing IT budget allocation and refocusing current ITWS team.*

2. Invest in IT human capital through training and development.

*Additional Investment: \$0, achieved within existing IT budget allocations*

3. Undertake a complete rewrite of the customer relations management (CRM) tool (scrap the current CRM upon completion) or customize an off-the-shelf CRM solution, developed based on input from all users, that is:

- a. Intuitive and easy to use for all users;
- b. Flexible and allows us to easily add new features to meet evolving needs; and
- c. Supports our recruitment and reporting requirements.

*See Section H for Capital Funding Requirements for this action.*

### Upgrade Online Learning Centre Technology

4. Make a capital investment in online learning centre technology, equipment and tools to provide a better learning experience for students using the online learning centres and students accessing our web conferencing and videoconferencing platforms from their home computer or mobile devices.

*See Section H below for Capital Funding Requirements for this action.*

## D. CONTEXT AND ANALYSIS

1. Since its inception 33 years ago, Contact North | Contact Nord delivers in English and French a suite of shared services (local student support services via online learning centres and Student Information Hotline, local and province-wide recruitment activities and web conferencing and videoconferencing platforms) to help underserved Ontarians in small, rural remote communities access education and training without having to leave their communities and support enable education and training providers in the distance delivery of their courses throughout Ontario.

This service is integrated, centrally managed, and available to all Ontarians in all corners of the province free of charge due to funding by the Government of Ontario, but with an expectation for service delivery levels and quality equivalent to that of customized solutions for large corporations.

2. Hosting and infrastructure in many organizations and industry sectors have become a utility service. Spending staff time and funds internally supporting these commodity services takes effort, requires certain skills, and most importantly, distracts from supporting core business objectives. Modern organizations rapidly adapted to this utility model and aggressively started moving non-essential systems and services to third party service and cloud providers. Businesses no longer need to carry the high costs of maintaining data centres, building redundancies, and ever growing IT needs to support an IT centric business model.
3. Server upgrades at the Thunder Bay Operations Centre and Sudbury Operations Centres to build redundancy is estimated at \$500,000 in capital infrastructure investment. The same investment, or more, is required every 3 to 5 years to remain current and for our IT infrastructure to remain stable and reliable. Contact North | Contact Nord's inability to accumulate reserves makes it difficult to make the large investments needed on a 5-7 year cycle to maintain its own IT infrastructure.
4. The 116 local online learning centres are the core element in the delivery of Contact North | Contact Nord's community-based services. Treating the online learning centres as a strategic resource and dedicating time, energy, and resources towards integrating the computer workstations into the overall IT infrastructure (versus being stand-alone computers) allows them to be monitored, configured, managed, and supported centrally.

This integration is essential to providing quality service to students at the online learning centres. Creating tools and

processes to minimize staff involvement, while updating the IT infrastructure and tools to support them, significantly reduces overall support volumes. A central management solution for the online learning centres immediately results in an improvement in quality of service, both in terms of preventing issues and resolution of issues, with minimal involvement by online learning centre staff. This allows Contact North | Contact Nord to scale up and support more students in the online learning centres, from their own homes and from their mobile devices.

5. Contact North | Contact Nord's current customer relationship management (CRM) application, online booking tool (OBT) and room scheduling software (TCR) are outdated, not integrated with each other and no longer meet business needs.
  - The CRM is a critical business tool used by front line staff in developing study options, recruiting and supporting students and is basis for statistical reporting on registrations and services Contact North | Contact Nord provides.
  - The OBT is the online tool used by our education and training partners to book the use of our distance delivery platforms (web conferencing and videoconferencing), schedule exam invigilation for students and book the use of our online learning centres.
  - The TCR is used internally to manage scheduling of rooms and resources at our 116 online learning centres.

The CRM and OBT were developed internally and evolved over the past 15 years. As Contact North | Contact Nord supports more students, delivers more services, works with a wider variety of partners, learning platforms change and tracking and reporting requirements evolve, adapting the existing applications is not feasible nor cost-effective. "Off-the-shelf" CRM applications from major software providers have evolved considerably since Contact North | Contact Nord first developed its CRM, including the ability to customize extensively to meet our unique needs and to integrate with other business applications. Contact North | Contact Nord must review its requirements and processes and look for an off-the-shelf solution that can be customized to deliver the functionality of the CRM, OBT and TCR in a single solution.

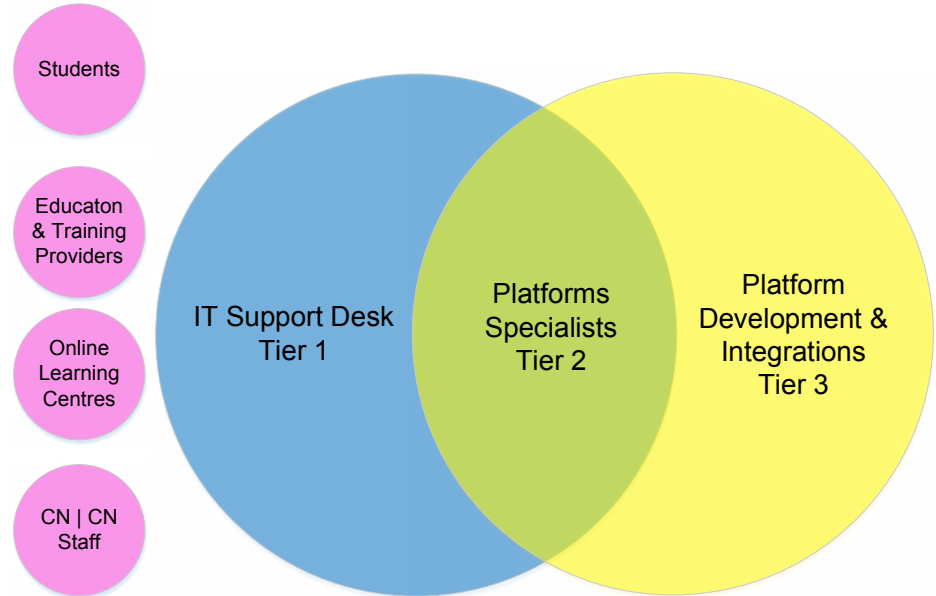
This single solution must:

- Meet our current and future business requirements.
- Be easy-to-use by our staff and our training provider partners.
- Have robust reporting tools accessible to all users.
- Be supported by a major software provider with a strong

track record of not only supporting their solutions but also continually updating and adding new functionality.

## E. STRUCTURE

### Information Technology (IT) & Web Services (ITWS)



Graphically shown above, ITWS becomes the bridge between students and education and training providers using Contact North | Contact Nord's services and our staff and the service. Mandated with high-touch, local customer service, the ITWS team is responsible for ensuring the services are well functioning and meeting the needs of the users, including configuring the IT infrastructure, technical support and troubleshooting end user issues.

Moving from where we are today to where we want to be is a 2-year process, with Year 1 a transition year as we identify outside technology providers and execute the migration of services and applications to these outside providers. Year 2, with the migration largely complete, focuses on building capacity, knowledge and expertise for the new roles and functions of the ITWS team. That's not to say there won't be some overlap; during the first 6 months, the ITWS team will be consumed with the transition as an "all-hands-on-deck" project. As the migration moves forward, more time is devoted to training and planning for the new phase in Contact North | Contact Nord's IT history.

In order to support the transition and the shift in focus, the Action Plan includes the following staffing structure for the next 2 years, with a full review in June 2021.

### **IT Support Desk (Tier 1/2)**

Consists of IT Support Technician (Tier 1) and Platform Specialist (Tier 2). The IT Support Desk provides first call response, is responsible for the majority of end user related issues, and works directly with students (at online learning centres, from their own homes and from their mobile devices), education and training providers, and the infrastructure at online learning centres.

### **Platform Specialists (Tier 2)**

Platform Specialists are part of the IT Support Desk but more in an overflow capacity, rather than taking front line calls. Platform Specialists are focused on responding to requests for IT support submitting through the ticket system, working on problems and issues that Tier 1 escalate to them. Platform Support Specialists work closely with both the Platform Development & Integrations team, providing the link between front line support and development.

Platform Specialists configure and administer the platforms provided by the platform team or an outside vendor (e.g. Polycom for videoconferencing). The practice of having a technology primary lead and a standby continues. As Platform Specialists are more experienced, they identify trends in issues and problems and to report those to the platform team to be incorporated into work plans and bug reduction.

### **Platform Development & Integrations (Tier 3)**

The Platform Development & Integrations team, comprised of systems administrators, developers/programmers, a Senior Technical Lead/Business Analyst, has the primary responsibility, with the input of the Platform Specialists, to build the platforms, integrations, customizations, and information systems needed to effectively and efficiently deliver Contact North | Contact Nord's service.

Developers/programmers and Platform Specialists work together to resolve complex issues, identify, design and implement enhancements and develop customized solutions/integrations to improve user experience (e.g. Adobe Connect portal, CRM/OBT).

The senior technical lead works with the team to build, fix, design, and run projects that involve application development. This team is also responsible for customizing the new CRM, with the Director as the lead, and assists with integrations and reporting, as requested.

To support this structure, the following roles are required. All positions have a direct service component, whether it be providing front line support to students, faculty and staff or developing applications and tools that improve the user experience. All positions continue to be based out of the Sudbury or Thunder Bay Operations Centre, with temporary approvals to be home based for operational reasons.

## 1. Director

**Leads ITWS and accountable for the overall performance of ITWS and achieving IT and IT service performance metrics, in a cost-effective manner and within allocated resources, provides direct supervision, motivation, leadership and direction to staff, provides strategic IT planning and direction for the organization and leads the new CRM development project.**

### **Duties**

- Provides strategic IT planning, including constant monitoring of immediate and upcoming developments in IT and online education that have an impact on Contact North | Contact Nord
- Provides direct supervision, motivation, leadership and direction to the ITWS team
- Develops and establishes IT service standards – established and posted by September 30, 2019
- Once established, monitors performance against IT service standards
- Provides proactive monitoring and review of the ITWS support processes, procedures, and allocation of resources to ensure optimal reliability, security, and continuous developments and improvement in the quality of ITWS support services
- Plans, assigns, monitors, and evaluates major ITWS projects to deliver optimal reliability and continuous improvement in IT services
- Provides a reliable and secure IT infrastructure (connectivity, telecommunications, hardware, and software), including appropriate redundancy, privacy protection, and emergency plan/procedures
- Plans for the introduction of new services, including responding to requests from education and training providers and development of roll out plans for requested new services, subject to approval and availability of resources
- Communicates with the internal and external stakeholders regarding developments, issues and updates

## 2. **IT Support Technician** (Two bilingual positions based in the Sudbury Operations Centre)

**Provides direct support to students, faculty and staff using Contact North | Contact Nord's shared services.**

### **Duties**

- Delivers front line support, first line – Technical Support Hotline, screens service requests
- Performs basic/routine administrative functions (creating new accounts for staff, assigning rights, setting up VoIP telephone numbers)
- Performs routine maintenance, monitoring and updates to staff and student computer workstations

## 3. **Platform Support Specialist** (Three positions, one bilingual, based in the Sudbury Operations Centre)

**Provides Tier 2 support to students, faculty and staff and backup on Help Desk and acts as technical lead on one or more of Contact North | Contact Nord's shared services.**

### **Duties**

- Provides Tier 2 support on issues escalated by Tier 1
- Provides backup on the Help Desk
- Serves as technical lead on one or more shared services and backup lead for others
  - Update and implement new features
  - Research options and new developments/technologies in lead area (e.g. video, web conferencing) and recommend improvements, upgrades and enhancements to better serve users
  - Work with Platform Development & Integrations team in identifying and implementing enhancements, customizations and integrations (e.g. Adobe Connect portal)
  - Provides training to staff on use of Contact North | Contact Nord's shared services

## 4. **IT Support Coordinator** (One bilingual position, based in the Sudbury Operations Centre)

**Leads the overall operations and maintain service levels of the IT Help Desk and management of online learning centres equipment and technologies.**

### **Duties**

- Monitors support calls ensuring they are handled appropriately and in a timely manner, a “ticket” is created for all calls



and requests, troubleshooting is properly documented and appropriate troubleshooting procedures followed

- Monitors escalation from Tier 1 to Tier 2 and from Tier 2 to Tier 3 and ensures appropriate follow-up and resolution
- Manages shift schedule for IT Help Desk, ensuring adequate staffing during Hotline hours (7:30 a.m. to 11 p.m. Monday to Friday)
- Fills in as Tier 2 on IT Support Desk when required
- Analyses support requests to identify trends, broader systemic issues, gaps in training or equipment leading to reported issues; provides guidance/instructions to the support team, escalates to Development team or makes recommendation to Director on solutions
- Monitors and manages online learning centre equipment and connectivity, deploys Tier 1 or Tier 2 technical staff onsite when required, reviews requests and recommends replacement of equipment, return/disposal/donation of equipment (Director approval required for purchase of equipment)
- Manages the online learning centre management system and works with Development & Integrations team in identifying and implementing tools for improved management
- Provides statistical reporting on ITWS services
- Manages and monitors external service provider contracts and service delivery, liaises with suppliers

**5. Senior Data Programmer** (One position, based in the Sudbury or Thunder Bay Operations Centre)

**Provides programming and user support for internal software systems, ensuring accurate and timely reports and appropriate documentation. Reviews and provides technical input for improvements to internal software systems (e.g. CRM/OBT).**

**Duties**

- Provides telephone, e-mail and ticketing system support to internal users
- Programs changes to improve efficiency and performance
- Performs program modifications
- Analyses, troubleshoots and identifies solutions to internal software system problems and failure, then implement solutions
- Designs SQL database queries and reports
- Creates and updates instruction documents to provide assistance to internal and external clients

- Accurately manages and implements data reporting requirements
- Provides technical input for possible improvements to internal software systems
- Programs approved improvements in a test environment for review
- Consults user groups during the testing phase to provide feedback on functionality
- Implements approved and tested improvements in live environment

**6. Programmer/Analyst** (One position, based in the Sudbury or Thunder Bay Operations Centre)

**Develops applications, extensions and customization for IT resources and software systems, manage databases, assist with software upgrades and deployment of new technology and provide third tier support on systems and IT resources.**

**Duties**

- Develops applications, extensions and customizations for IT resources and software systems, for connectivity and integration with existing resources and software and for the automation of functions and reports
- Applies software development methodologies for the planning, designing and building of application components
- Interacts with suppliers and stakeholders to implement changes, troubleshoots and resolves technology software and integration issues
- Manages databases and integrations to provide security, integrity and efficiency
- Analyzes and troubleshoots problems and failures of IT resources and software solutions, identifies and implements solutions
- Researches, recommends, plans and implements new technologies and provide technical expertise and recommendations in assessing new software projects and initiatives
- Provides third tier technical support for software applications
- Provides training and technical updates to staff and other IT team members

**7. Senior Technical Lead/Business Analyst** (One position, based in the Sudbury or Thunder Bay Operations Centre)

**In addition to programmer/analyst functions, serves as the interface between programmers/developers and the rest of the organization, proactively identifying business needs and improvements, and ensures technical solutions are designed with a consistent design pattern, meet standard technical specifications and are properly documented.**

**Duties**

- Observes, studies and analyzes current use of technology within Contact North | Contact Nord, researches options and recommends improvements to deliver better outcomes for internal and external users, to streamline processes, and to reduce or avoid additional costs
- Proactively identifies business needs and improvements, focusing on integrations and application development specific to core service platforms
- Works to understand the role core services play for Contact North | Contact Nord as a whole and helps design technical solutions around a consistent design pattern
- Interfaces between programmers/developers and the rest of the organization in planning for and designing solutions that can be supported within existing and/or anticipated resources and recognize pitfalls before committing resources to a non-sustainable solution
- Develops specifications for requested improvements
- Assists with prioritization and allocation of work within the Platform Development & Integrations team, focusing on business priorities, such as CRM rebuild and Adobe Connect integrations
- Advises the Director on development direction and priorities

**8. IT Development Administrator/Project Manager** (One bilingual position, based in the Sudbury or Thunder Bay Operations Centre)

**Supports the implementation of corporate-wide current and future projects by coordinating, monitoring and tracking project tasks, resources and schedules. Conducts research and analyses options for new technologies and recommends improvements to deliver better service or outcomes. Manages the organization's portals, acts as Business Analyst for legacy CRM/OBT projects. Acts as backup to the Director.**

## Duties

- Supports the implementation of corporate-wide current and future projects including:
  - Conducts internal and external research
  - Completes cost/benefit and other analysis to support decision-making
  - Delivers or coordinates training
  - Supports the integration of new applications and technologies
  - Works with all parts of the team to organize and schedule projects
  - Identifies resource requirements for projects
  - Breaks down projects into tasks and assigns staff resources
  - Tracks project progress, issues and risk
  - Communicates with project sponsors and works with sponsors to get direction
  - Forecasts resource requirements for projects (i.e. who is busy where, where we have capacity)
  - Develops the process, communication and status reporting for projects
- Observes, studies and analyzes current use of technology within the corporation, researches options and recommends improvements to deliver better outcomes for internal and external users, to streamline processes, and to reduce or avoid additional costs
- Recommends standards and policies to support efficiency, integration and compatibility throughout the corporation's IT systems
- Trains end users and drafts instruction material
- Manages organization's portals and contract with service provider
- Acts as backup to the Director as required
- Acts as Business Analyst for legacy CRM/OBT projects

### 9. **Data Integrity Officer** (One position, based in the Sudbury Operations Centre)

**Coordinates the process for accurate entry of up-to-date education and training provider program and course data into the CRM.**

## Duties

- Communicates with education and training providers for the file request at the beginning of every semester
- Receives and reviews files from education and training providers, edits as required and uploads to the CRM
- Searches education and training provider websites for missing or incomplete information
- Coordinates website changes and monitors the list of programs and courses and registration links
- Monitors the support requests received and actions all items relating to data entry issues
- Provides reports as requested by internal and external clients

Appendix B outlines the assignment the above duties among the existing positions.

## F. BUDGET

	Annual	2019-2020	2020-2021
<u>Savings</u>			
Software & Maintenance	\$ 102,300	\$ 8,333	\$ 64,429
Website hosting	4,370	-	4,370
Building Maintenance	7,300	7,300	7,300
Capital (servers)	100,000	210,000	100,000
Not filling 1 vacancy		65,700	65,700
<b>Total Savings</b>	<b>\$ 213,970</b>	<b>\$ 291,333</b>	<b>\$ 241,799</b>
<u>New</u>			
Servers and Cloud Hosting	\$ 105,600	\$ 52,800	\$ 105,600
Servers and Cloud Hosting Mgmt	132,000	66,000	132,000
Networking and Security	6,000	3,000	6,000
Cloud Backups	49,152	24,576	49,152
One-time Migration Fees		150,000	30,000
<b>Total New</b>	<b>\$ 292,752</b>	<b>\$ 296,376</b>	<b>\$ 322,752</b>
<b>Additional Cost (Savings) of Option 4</b>	<b>78,782</b>	<b>5,043</b>	<b>80,953</b>
Existing savings from contracts expiring not renewed	78,782	5,043	80,953
<b>Total Budget Impact</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

\*2019-20 New costs assume 6 months

\*\*One-Time in 2020-21 is for migration of e-mail and SharePoint to Office 365 solution

**Notes:**

1. Once fully implemented, the Action Plan results in no additional cost.
2. Due to migration costs and existing contractual obligations for licensing, migration is phased over two years ensuring it is fully funded within existing budgeted resources.
3. Budget allocated for replacement of servers in Sudbury in 2019-2020 is used to offset migration costs.
4. Other savings (warranty and licensing for discontinued infrastructure) help offset costs in year 2.

**G. RISK ANALYSIS**

1. Outsourcing this most critical infrastructure (the foundation of our services), while it may well be a “utility service,” puts this outside of our control and reliant on an outside provider. Contact North | Contact Nord is reliant on its IT infrastructure to deliver its services.

**Mitigation Strategy**

- Partner with OCAS, already established within the public and education sector, providing services to Ontario colleges, with existing partnerships with world-class service providers that:
  - Have a solid foundation, experience and track record for reliability and performance and an enterprise grade environment
  - Meet data security and privacy requirements
  - Meet requirements for data hosting in Canada
- 2. Employee resistance to the perceived reduction in technical responsibilities could hamper implementation and result in the loss of key team members. The success of the migration and transition requires organization-wide support and buy-in and refocusing the ITWS team.

**Mitigation Strategy**

- Ensure staff understand and believe the solution is the most viable for the organization, give them plenty of opportunity to question
  - Provide each team member with a clear path for their role in the organization and opportunity to grow
  - Invest in professional development so team members have the skills required to contribute in a meaningful way to the new focus
3. Without tight control on when to create new servers, server sprawl can lead to increasing costs with the cloud providers.

**Mitigation Strategy**

- Tight vendor and inventory governance
  - Single point of accountability for server inventory management (Technical Lead)
4. Users may have difficulty accepting the standards-based demands of a different way of delivering services in the short term (e.g. e-mail folder size).

**Mitigation Strategy**

- Education and training of Contact North | Contact Nord staff on managing within these limitations
  - Buy-in and support from the highest levels of the organization
5. A long migration period could limit the ITWS team's ability to take on new projects in the short term due to the need to focus on the migration.

**Mitigation Strategy**

- Manage expectations – this is a two-year transition
- While the migration involves the entire team, assign clear leadership roles and accountability to the migration project itself

**H. CAPITAL INVESTMENT REQUIRED**

A complete Capital Investment Plan will be developed by October 2019 to address the following two actions from this plan:

1. Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Tool

Purchase and customize a fully integrated solution to our customer relationship management, scheduling and resource management needs, developed based on input from all users, that is:

- Meet our current and future business requirements.
- Be easy-to-use by our staff and our education and training provider partners.
- Have robust reporting tools accessible to all users.
- Be supported by a major software provider with a strong track record of not only supporting their solutions but also continually updating and adding new functionality.

2. Online Learning Centre Technology

Equipment and tools to provide a better learning experience for students using the online learning centres and students

accessing our web conferencing and videoconferencing platforms from their home computer or mobile devices.

## **I. DELIVERING HIGH QUALITY SERVICE TO STUDENTS, EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROVIDERS AND STAFF**

Through the implementation of this Action Plan, Contact North | Contact Nord is well-positioned to deliver on these five commitments:

1. Improve and expand its services to more users in every corner of Ontario, expanding on the 800,000+ requests for services responded to annually;
2. Ensure reliability and redundancy of Contact North | Contact Nord's information technology infrastructure;
3. Establish an integrated structure focused on supporting users (rather than equipment), including appropriate backup for all ITWS team members;
4. Enable the ITWS team to anticipate and be nimble at adapting to new technological developments, evolving needs of students and education and training partners and evolving context; and
5. Fully leverage the skills and experience of the current ITWS team.



## APPENDIX A:

### IT REVIEW & RECOMMENDATIONS CONTACT NORTH | CONTACT NORD

BY: ONTARIO COLLEGE APPLICATION SERVICE (OCAS) JULY 2019

#### Summary and Key Recommendations

Further to a full review of Contact North | Contact North's infrastructure and staffing, including interviews with IT staff and key administrators, onsite examination of hardware and network infrastructure and review of key documents, OCAS made the following recommendations:

1. Minimize the time, money and energy spent on supporting and maintaining non-essential IT infrastructure by outsourcing or transferring this function to a third party cloud service provider (CSP). Outsource all non-essential IT applications and services to cloud providers, with bias towards Software as a Service (SaaS). For core platform services (e.g. video bridge, Adobe Connect), bias towards Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS) when necessary.
2. Refocus the work of the IT team into a Platform as a Service (PaaS) and support the delivery of the platform, including the online learning centre infrastructure, which is incorporated into a centralized management and service solution.
3. Prioritize IT into delivering core IT services: the delivery of platform services, including the IT deployed at online learning centres. Reorganize the team, with clear differentiation of roles and responsibilities between developing and supporting platforms:
  - A services support team by way of the service desk, supported by IT Support Technicians (Tier 1), a Telecommunications Officer and Technical Support Specialists (Tier 2), coordinated by a Support Service Lead
  - A Technical Support Specialists lead and a backup for each platform
  - A platform support team, supported by Technical Support Specialists, developers, a Technical Lead, a Project Manager and a business analyst role, that is project-based and tasked with the responsibility of building integrations and future proofing IT
4. IT department takes on a technical leadership role within Contact North | Contact Nord enabling the ability to drive innovation. Innovation is created by experimenting and initiating deliberate changes to provide faster, easier and better service to clients/customers and increase operational efficiency. This is done through a combination of new operational processes and the introduction, adaptation and integration of new technologies to

support those operational processes and/or provide added benefit to clients/customers.

5. Undertake a rewrite of the customer relationship management (CRM) application, or customization of an off-the-shelf solution, that leverages current enterprise software development best practices, adopts a formal planning and design process, and utilizes stable, well-supported application development tools and platforms.
6. Implement a methodical recording/ticketing for every service call, troubleshooting steps and solution in order to ensure thorough documentation for escalating tickets and to build a knowledge base to assist in troubleshooting similar problems and/or identify trends and possible system-wide issues.
7. Assess the distribution of responsibilities and the technologies assigned to individuals to ensure optimal and equitably distribution, taking into account skill levels and capabilities, capacity to manage and availability.
8. Continue to implement measures to improve team cohesion, between locations and between the support and development teams by implementing the following measures:
  - Establish daily scrum style departmental video calls with audio feeds that allow teams to talk through problems as a group, and to further utilize video, audio, and conferencing capabilities for remote work
9. Consolidate database and web servers from the current 64 production servers to 44 or fewer. Consolidate to 1 or 2 database platforms, standardize on those platforms, and build application redundancy into those platforms for high availability and uptime.
10. Make a capital investment in online learning centre technology, investing in ways to better integrate, manage, and support these vital touchpoints where students, instructors and technology intersect. Building a centrally managed learning centre management solution will have an immediate return on investment.
11. Make an investment in IT human capital through training and development. With the changing pace of technology, it is critical IT staff not only remain current, but stay abreast of upcoming developments. Additionally, the successful transition and refocusing of the department from supporting infrastructure to a PaaS and a technical leadership role as outlined above is dependent on equipping staff with the tools needed to be both successful and act as subject matter experts when advising the business.

**APPENDIX B:**  
**ASSIGNMENT OF DUTIES**

	Old Title	New Title	2-year Assignment	Key Responsibilities
1	Former Technical Support Specialist	IT Support Technician		Provides direct support to students, faculty and staff on Contact North   Contact Nord platforms and basic systems operations.
2	Former Data Clerk	IT Support Technician (vacant, recruiting)		Provides direct support to students, faculty and staff on Contact North   Contact Nord platforms and basic systems operations.
3	Technical Support Specialist	Platform Support Specialist Lead*: Video Backup: Adobe Connect		Provides tier 2 support to students, faculty and staff and backup on Help Desk and acts as technical lead on one or more of Contact North   Contact Nord's platforms.
4	Technical Support Specialist	Platform Support Specialist Lead*: SharePoint Backup: Video		Provides tier 2 support to students, faculty and staff and backup on Help Desk and acts as technical lead on one or more of Contact North   Contact Nord's platforms.
5	Technical Support Specialist	Platform Support Specialist Lead*: Adobe Connect Backup: SharePoint		Provides tier 2 support to students, faculty and staff and backup on Help Desk and acts as technical lead on one or more of Contact North   Contact Nord's platforms.
6	Systems Network Specialist	Platform Support Specialist	IT Support Coordinator Transition Lead	As the front line leadership role, is responsible for the overall operations and service levels of the IT Help Desk and management of online learning centres equipment and technologies.  One of the two leads for the migration. Continues as Systems Network Specialist during the transition.
7	Programmer/Analyst	Programmer/ Analyst	Senior Technical Lead/Business Analyst Transition Lead	In addition to programmer/analyst duties, acts as the interface between programmers/developers and the rest of the organization, proactively identifying business needs and improvements, and ensuring technical solutions are designed around a consistent design pattern, meet standard technical specifications and are properly documented.  One of the two leads for the migration.
8	Senior Data Programmer	Senior Data Programmer		Provide programming and user support for internal software systems, ensuring accurate and timely reports and appropriate documentation. Review and provide technical input for improvements to internal software systems (e.g. CRM/OBT).

	<b>Old Title</b>	<b>New Title</b>	<b>2-year Assignment</b>	<b>Key Responsibilities</b>
9	<b>IT Development Administrator</b>	<b>IT Development Administrator</b>	Project Manager Business Analyst (legacy CRM)	Supports the implementation of corporate-wide current and future projects by coordinating, monitoring and tracking project tasks, resources and schedules. Conducts research and analyses option for new technologies and recommends improvements to deliver better service or outcomes. Manages the organization's websites and portals and acts as Business Analyst for legacy CRM/OBT projects. Acts as backup to the Director.
10	<b>Data Integrity Officer</b>	<b>Data Integrity Officer</b>		Coordinate the process for data entry of education and training partner course and program information into the CRM to ensure information is accurate and up-to-date
11	<b>Technical Support Specialist</b>	<b>Platform Support Specialist</b>	Programmer/Analyst	Develop applications, extensions and customization for IT resources and software systems, manage databases, assist with software upgrades and deployment of new technology and provide third tier support on systems and IT resources.
12	<b>Vacant (former Webmaster)</b>		Leave vacant until review in 2021	

\* Other leads may be assigned for more minor platforms and applications.

## Appendix 2 – 2020-2021 Opportunities and Risks

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Contact North | Contact Nord identifies the following opportunities and risks for 2020-2021.

### Opportunities

- 1) Build on existing partnerships with Ontario Works offices and Employment Ontario offices across the province, presenting the opportunity to scale up and support significantly more clients to access the education and training they need to get a job and exit provincial support systems.
- 2) The government's direction for social assistance, with its multi-ministry approach focusing on education and training as a pathway for Ontario Works recipients to get a job, presents an opportunity for Contact North | Contact Nord to support these Ontarians.
- 3) The successful launch of Adobe Connect web conferencing in September 2019 leading to increased interest by college and university partners in the use of web conferencing to deliver their online courses.
- 4) The addition of 12 new online learning centres presents an opportunity to support more underserved Ontarians to access education and training without leaving their communities.
- 5) The 185 Access Points offering a smaller number of services presents an opportunity to support more underserved Ontarians to access education and training.

### Risks

- 1) Significant loss of rent-free space in communities to house its local online learning centres leading to less online learning centres available to provide services to Ontarians and/or a gap in the availability of online learning centres as we seek new locations within the affected communities. In an average fiscal year, Contact North | Contact Nord re-locates between 12 and 15 online learning centres as a result of the following factors:
  - The local host requires the space for its own purposes and/or has the opportunity to rent the space to a paying client
  - The local host closes its location and the space is no longer available
  - The space is no longer large enough for Contact North | Contact Nord's purposes or there are other issues such as accessibility to the space or a lack of Internet connectivity to support our needs
- 2) A significant cut to Contact North | Contact Nord's annual operating funding from the Ministry of Colleges and Universities requires it to scale back its services to underserved Ontarians in small, rural, remote, Indigenous and Francophone communities to work within the approved budget.

- 3) Recruiting qualified staff in the communities where we operate. Contact North | Contact Nord is regularly challenged to recruit qualified staff, particularly Online Learning Recruitment Officers and Student Recruitment and Service Representatives who are critical to providing the local, high-touch services to Ontarians. At any time, we have 20 open-ended recruitment competitions ongoing for part-time Student Recruitment and Service Representatives who are critical to staffing our online learning centres to meet the local needs.
- 4) A potential economic slowdown in Ontario can increase the overall demand for local access to education and training. During previous economic slowdowns, Contact North | Contact Nord experienced a spike in the demand for its services as Ontarians upgraded their skills or re-trained for new positions. A significant increase in demand can overwhelm our existing space, platforms and staffing resources.
- 5) Unforeseen closures of major employers in the small communities Contact North | Contact Nord serves present the risk of overwhelming our capacity to support the workers to re-train for new jobs.
- 6) The lack of full redundancy for Contact North | Contact Nord's IT infrastructure poses a risk to prolonged downtime due to events beyond our control, such as power and Internet outages, that can affect services to Ontarians, including access to our distance delivery platforms.

**Appendix 3 – Updated Contact North | Contact Nord 5-Year Framework**

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# CONTACT NORTH | CONTACT NORD 5-YEAR FRAMEWORK



## CONTACT NORTH | CONTACT NORD 5-YEAR FRAMEWORK

The 5-Year Framework provides a roadmap covering Contact North | Contact Nord's next phase of development over the 5-year period from 2019-2020 to 2023-2024.

The Framework includes:

- Specific actions for each fiscal year
- Investments required to execute the actions
- Outcomes to measure the impact of the actions and investments

The Framework is used to guide the development of Contact North | Contact Nord's annual operating and capital funding submissions to the Ministry of Colleges and Universities.

In keeping with Contact North | Contact Nord's commitment to full transparency, the 5-Year Framework is shared with the Contact North | Contact Nord Board of Directors, Contact North | Contact Nord staff and external stakeholders.

### Further Information

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## **CONTACT NORTH | CONTACT NORD VALUE PROPOSITION AND MANDATE**

### **Value Proposition**

We help underserved Ontarians in 800 small, rural, remote, Indigenous and Francophone communities get jobs by making it possible for them to access education and training without having to leave their communities.

Contact North | Contact Nord's services are available in English and French.

### **Mandate**

Contact North | Contact Nord, a not-for-profit corporation established in 1986 with its headquarters in Thunder Bay, has the following mandate:

To improve access to formal education and training at the basic skills, secondary, and post-secondary levels and to informal education opportunities for residents of Ontario.

To collaborate with Indigenous peoples, Francophones and communities in Ontario to facilitate response by educational providers (working with Ontario institutions specifically) to meet identified needs.

To support innovation in education and learning through testing and applied research of new modes of "delivery" using technology and to share information in Ontario, nationally, and internationally.

## 5-YEAR FRAMEWORK ASSUMPTIONS

### 1. Annual Operating Granting from the Ministry of Colleges and Universities over the 2019-2020 to 2023-2024 Period

Contact North | Contact Nord projects the following change in its annual operating grant:

- 2019-2020 – No change as per 2019-2020 Transfer Payment Agreement
- 2020-2021 – 2.5% increase
- 2021-2022 – 5% increase
- 2022-2023 – No change
- 2023-2024 – No change

Contact North | Contact Nord projects a specific need for capital funding in 2020-2021, 2021-2022, and 2022-2023 for implementation of new shared services and re-development of its CRM and OBT tools, currently estimated at \$6.6 million over a three-year period.

The annual funding submission will include specific capital amounts in each of these three years and a list of specific activities and outcomes.

### 2. Continued Investment in IT Infrastructure and Online Learning Centres

Contact North | Contact Nord is investing to:

- Re-develop its existing customer relationship management tool (CRM) (internal tool used by staff to track activity and provide customized services and information to prospective students) and online booking tool (OBT) (external tool used by colleges, universities, etc. to book the use of online learning centres, web conferencing and videoconferencing platforms)
- Continually enhance broadband Internet access at its online learning centres as service becomes available / improved in communities across Ontario, particularly in Far North and Indigenous communities
- Renew computer workstations, peripherals and videoconferencing equipment and Voice over IP (VoIP) telephone system at its online learning centres, as part of a regular, end-of-life renewal strategy
- Open 12 new online learning centres, using established criteria, to support Ontarians access education and training without having to leave their communities

### 3. A Set of Measurable Performance Indicators

Contact North | Contact Nord projects:

- Requests for Services Fulfilled to grow from 873,862 in 2019-2020 to 1,062,185 in 2023-2024

- Registrations to grow from a base of 58,400 in 2019-2020 to 74,400 in 2023-2024 (base was impacted by the 2017 college strike and cascading effect in 2018-2019)
- Province-wide Targeted Recruitment Campaigns for colleges and universities to grow from 49 in 2019-2020 to 69 in 2023-2024
- Small, rural, remote, Indigenous, and Francophone communities supported to grow to 800 in 2019-2020 and remain steady over the five-year period
- Pageviews of portals to grow from 783,864 in 2019-2020 to 952,792 in 2023-2024

#### **4. Contact North | Contact Nord Supporting Two Priorities of the Government of Ontario**

Contact North | Contact Nord's mandate, as a 33-year old shared service for Ontarians, aligns with the Government of Ontario's priorities to help transition Ontario Works and Employment Ontario clients to jobs and to support the education and training needs of Francophones.

Through targeted initiatives at each of its 116 online learning centres across the province, Contact North | Contact Nord is directly supporting these priorities, which are reflected in its 2019-2020 Transfer Payment Agreement with the Ministry of Colleges and Universities.

##### **Two Actions to Support Government Priorities as Part of the 5-Year Framework**

- 1) At its 116 local online learning centres, supporting 800 small, rural, remote, Indigenous and Francophone communities, staff are actively engaging with local Ontario Works and local Employment Ontario offices to establish a referral relationship whereby each office refers clients who need education and training to get a job to Contact North | Contact Nord for support.

Contact North | Contact Nord currently engages with 170 Ontario Works offices across the province with a target to support 250 of their clients and 188 Employment Ontario offices across the province with a target to support 250 of their clients access the education and training they need to get a job.

- 2) Contact North | Contact Nord is ramping up its support to execute Targeted Recruitment Campaigns for online French-language programs and courses in identified small and remote Francophone communities across the province, as part of making its services available in English and French.

These French-language campaigns, part of our total projected 49 campaigns for both English- and French-language online programs and courses in 2019-2020, feature a month-long, intensive, proactive campaign by our local staff to recruit students for French-language online programs and courses identified by the French-language colleges and bilingual universities.

### 3 BASIC FACTS ABOUT CONTACT NORTH | CONTACT NORD

Across Ontario, Contact North | Contact Nord:

- 1. Offers high-touch, direct, local support services, in English and French, to help underserved Ontarians in 800 small, rural, remote, Indigenous and Francophone communities get jobs by making it possible for them to access education and training without having to leave their communities.**

Contact North | Contact Nord places a special focus on serving these 8 groups of underserved Ontarians:

- Apprentices
- People with disabilities
- Employment Ontario clients (unemployed)
- Francophones
- Incarcerated
- Indigenous
- Newcomers and refugees
- Ontario Works clients

- 2. Collaborates with over 4,500 local and provincial organizations, including:**

- 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
- ACE DISTANCE / ONLINE, Deaf Learn Now, FORMATION À DISTANCE, Good Learning Anywhere, and the LearningHUB (part of the e-Channel Transfer Payment Agreement)
- eCampusOntario, Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO), Independent Learning Centre (ILC), OntarioLearn, Ontario College Application Service, Ontario Universities' Application Centre, ONTransfer, TFO, and TVOntario
- 114 local community partners who provide rent-free space for online learning centres (the 2 Operations Centres make up the current 116 online learning centres)
- Ontario Works and Employment Ontario
- 4,282 local organizations Contact North | Contact Nord liaises without through Ontario

### **3. Provides a series of shared services to institutions throughout Ontario**

Contact North | Contact Nord provides the following shared services to support 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:

- Adobe Connect web conferencing platform (Saba Meeting phased out as of August 31, 2019)
- Videoconferencing platform (currently available; the number of courses offered via videoconferencing continues to decline as the popularity and functionality of web conferencing grows)
- Exam proctoring tool (2019-2020 identify solution, 2020-2021 implement solution)
- Student collaboration tool (2021-2022 identify solution, 2022-2023 implement solution)

Contact North | Contact Nord continues to monitor new and emerging platforms and tools to provide additional shared services and may add further shared services as part of the 5-Year Framework.

## CONTACT NORTH | CONTACT NORD 5-YEAR FRAMEWORK

Actions (Definitions on Next Page)	2019-2020 Forecast	2019-2020 Projected	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
<b>Performance Indicators</b>						
Requests for Services Fulfilled	699,398	873,862	917,555	963,433	1,011,604	1,062,185
Registrations Generated	58,400	58,400	62,400	66,400	70,400	74,400
Targeted Recruitment Campaigns Executed	60	49	54	59	64	69
Communities Supported	800	800	800	800	800	800
Pageviews of Portals Supported	674,398	783,864	823,057	864,210	907,421	952,792
Student Information Hotline Inquiries Fulfilled	5,565	5,891	6,480	6,804	7,144	7,502
Exams Invigilated	11,131	12,191	13,410	14,751	16,226	17,849
Instructors Trained <sup>1</sup>	200	325	210	221	232	243
Visitors to Portals Supported	216,786	241,014	253,065	265,718	279,004	292,954
Ontario Works Clients Supported	250	250 <sup>2</sup>	313	391	488	610
Employment Ontario Clients Supported	250	250 <sup>2</sup>	313	391	488	610
Ontario Works Referral Partners Engaged	50	170	195	195	195	195
Employment Ontario Referral Partners Engaged	25	188	213	213	213	213
Online Learning Centres and Access Points Operated	311	323	323	323	323	323
Organizations Engaged	4,496	4,496	4,721	4,957	5,205	5,465
Calls to Technical Support Hotline Fulfilled <sup>3</sup>	9,817	5,034	4,984	4,934	5,205	4,836
Staff Deployed	250	250	265	280	280	280
Correctional Facilities Engaged	10	10	14	18	22	26
<b>Shared Services - Technology</b>						
Web Conferencing Platform	1,319	1,362	1,430	1,502	1,577	1,656
Videoconferencing Platform <sup>4</sup>	316	116	300	285	271	257
Exam Proctoring Solution			5	10	15	20
Student Collaboration Tool					1,000	1,500
<b>Budget</b>						
Base Operating Funding from Ontario	\$9,751,469	\$9,751,469	\$9,995,257	\$10,495,019	\$10,495,019	\$10,495,019
% of Base on Administration	9.98%	9.98%	9.79%	9.79%	9.79%	9.79%

### Notes

- The increase in the number of instructors trained is due to the completion of the transition to Adobe Connect web conferencing platform in September 2019 as all instructors participated in training.
- The number of Ontario Works and Employment Ontario clients supported to be updated in January 2020 when data updating is complete.
- The full adoption of the Adobe Connect web conferencing platform in September 2019 reduced the number of calls to the IT Support Hotline as this platform and the custom portal built by Contact North | Contact Nord are more user friendly and require less technical support. The number of calls is projected to continue to decline. Contact North | Contact Nord is exploring different metrics to assess the outcomes of the IT Technical Support Hotline.
- While the number of videoconferencing courses is projected to decline for 2019-2020, we have several education and training providers who signaled they intend to start using our videoconferencing platform in 2020-2021.

## DEFINITIONS

<b>Performance Indicator</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Requests for Services Fulfilled	The number of requests for services from Ontarians, educational providers and organizations fulfilled annually
Registrations Generated	The number of student registrations generated annually for 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
Small, Rural, Remote, Indigenous, Francophone Communities Supported	The number of communities supported across Ontario
Province-Wide Targeted Recruitment Campaigns Executed (English- and French-language)	The number of Targeted Recruitment Campaigns executed annually for Ontario's 24 public colleges and 22 public universities for English- and French-language online programs and courses
Pageviews of Portals Supported	The number of annual pageviews by visitors to contactnorth.ca, studyonline.ca, e-channel.ca portals
Student Information Hotline Inquiries Fulfilled	The number of annual inquiries to the Student Information Hotline
Exams Invigilated	The number of exams invigilated annually
Instructors Supported	The number of instructors trained annually to use the shared platforms
Visitors to Portals Supported	The number of visitors annually to contactnorth.ca, studyonline.ca, e-channel.ca portals
Ontario Works Clients Supported	The number of Ontario Works clients supported with information on available online programs and courses and assistance with the registration process
Employment Ontario Clients Supported	The number of Employment Ontario clients supported with information on available online programs and courses and assistance with the registration process
Ontario Works Referral Partners Engaged	The number of Ontario Works offices referring clients to Contact North   Contact Nord for support
Employment Ontario Referral Partners Engaged	The number of Employment Ontario offices referring clients to Contact North   Contact Nord for support
Online Learning Centres and Access Points Operated	The number of online learning centres and access points operated
Organizations Engaged	The number of local community organizations Contact North   Contact Nord engages with to provide its services
Calls to Technical Support Hotline Fulfilled	The number of calls to the Technical Support Hotline annually
Staff Deployed	The number of staff (FT/PT) deployed across Ontario
Correctional Facilities Engaged	The number of correctional facilities referring clients to Contact North   Contact Nord for support
<b>Shared Services - Technology</b>	
Web Conferencing Platform	The number of courses offered via web conferencing
Videoconferencing Platform	The number of courses offered via videoconferencing
Exam Proctoring Tool	The number of institutions using the tool
Student Collaboration Tool	The number of students signing on to the collaboration tool



## **Appendix 4 – List of 800 Small, Rural, Remote, Indigenous and Francophone Communities Served**

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Updated list to be provided in January 2020 with full list of 800.

## Appendix 5 – List of Current Online Learning Centres and Access Points

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Contact North | Contact Nord has two categories of locations:

### 1) Online Learning Centres

For a location to be designated a Contact North | Contact Nord online learning centre, the location must be staffed on a permanent basis (either full-time or part-time staff based on the local needs) and offer the following 8 services to Ontarians:

- Use computers with equipped with Internet access to connect to classes and complete class work
- Use web conferencing and videoconferencing platforms to connect to classes
- Write supervised or unsupervised tests or exams
- Get referrals to other local support services to further support their educational, personal and professional needs
- Get help to find available online programs and courses to meet their needs
- Get help to register in their chosen program and courses
- Get information on financial aid options and get help to complete application forms for financial aid
- Receive support and encouragement from Contact North | Contact Nord staff as they complete their education

Contact North | Contact Nord currently has 116 online learning centres.

### 2) Access Points

Locations that do not offer all 8 services in the criteria for designation as an online learning centre in 1) are designated as an “access point” where Ontarians can access a smaller number of the 8 services and Contact North | Contact Nord staff may be onsite depending on the location and the demand for services.

Access Points are co-located in facilities maintained by other local stakeholders and referral partners where Contact North | Contact Nord can provide service to Ontarians in communities without an online learning centre or where the demand is not sufficient to open an online learning centre.

Contact North | Contact Nord currently has 195 access points.

There are communities with both an Online Learning Centre and Access Points.

Depending on the geographic size of the community, there may be multiple Access Points. As an example, the municipality of Chatham-Kent is the ninth-largest city / town in Canada by area (2,457.90 square kilometres) and has 9 Access Points throughout the municipality serving Ontarians in their local area / community.

Examples of local organizations hosting Access Points include:

- Canadian Forces Bases
- College regional campuses and district school board locations (public and secondary schools)
- Community health care facilities
- Correctional facilities
- Employment service providers
- First Nation administration offices and education authority offices
- Francophone organizations
- Literacy providers
- Ontario Disability Support Program offices
- Ontario Works offices
- Public libraries
- YMCA facilities

Examples of Contact North | Contact Nord supporting Ontarians at access points:

- Staff has a regular schedule of hours at a local public library where students and prospective students can make an appointment with staff and get information on available online programs and courses and help with the registration process.
- As part of a referral partnership, staff regularly attend a local Ontario Works office to assist clients with information on available online programs and courses and help with the registration process.
- Contact North | Contact Nord maintains computer workstations in a First Nation education authority office for local students participating in courses offered via Contact North | Contact Nord's web conferencing platform to access their courses. The students have access to Contact North | Contact Nord's Technical Support Hotline and regular follow-ups by staff.

## List of 116 Communities with an Online Learning Centre

Akwesasne
Astorville
Atikokan
Attawapiskat First Nation
Bear Island First Nation
Beardmore
Big Grassy First Nation
Big Trout Lake First Nation
Blind River
Bonfield
Bracebridge
Brantford
Bruce Mines
Chapleau
Clinton
Cobalt
Cobourg
Cochrane
Constance Lake First Nation
Cornwall
Dokis First Nation
Dryden
Dubreuilville
Ear Falls
Earlton
Elk Lake
Elliot Lake
Emo
Englehart
Espanola
Fort Frances
Georgina
Geraldton
Ginoogaming First Nation
Gogama
Gore Bay
Haileybury
Haliburton
Hawkesbury
Hearst

Ignace
Iroquois Falls
Kapuskasing
Kenora
Kincardine
Kirkland Lake
Latchford
Longlac
M'Chigeeng First Nation
Madoc
Magnetawan First Nation
Manitouwadge
Marathon
Massey
Matachewan First Nation
Matheson
Mattawa
Mississauga First Nation
Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation
Moose Factory First Nation
Moosonee
Nakina
Nipigon Nipissing First Nation
Noëlville
Nolalu
North Bay
North Caribou Lake First Nation
Onaping
Orléans
Parry Sound
Pic Moberg First Nation
Pic River First Nation
Pickle Lake
Rainy River
Ramore
Red Lake
Red Rock Indian Band
Rocky Bay First Nation
Sagamok First Nation
Sandy Lake First Nation
Sault Ste. Marie

Schreiber
Serpent River First Nation
Shelburne
Sioux Lookout
Six Nations First Nation
Smooth Rock Falls
South Porcupine
South River
Spanish
St. Catharines
St. Charles
St. Thomas
Stratford
Sturgeon Falls
Sudbury
Summer Beaver First Nation
Temagami
Terrace Bay
Thessalon First Nation
Thorne
Thunder Bay
Virginiatown
Wahgoshig First Nation
Wallaceburg
Warren
Wasauksing First Nation
Wawa
White River
Wikwemikong First Nation
Windsor
Woodstock
Wunnumin Lake First Nation

## List of Communities with 195 Access Points

Community	Number of Access Points
Ailsa Craig	1
Ajax	1
Akwesasne	2
Alderville First Nation	1
Alexandria	2
Algonquin Highlands	1
Alliston	4
Angus	1
Aurora	2
Barrie	4
Beamsville	1
Bobcaygeon	1
Bracebridge	1
Bradford	2
Brampton	1
Brantford	4
Brockville	1
Caledonia	1
Cambridge	1
Cardiff	1
Chatham	8
Collingwood	3
Cornwall	9
Curve Lake First Nation	1
Deer Lake First Nation	1
Dorchester	1
Dorset	1
Dunnville	2
Edwardsburg	1
Exeter	1
Fergus	2
Fort Erie	1
Gloucester	1
Goderich	1
Gooderham	1
Grand Bend	1
Gravenhurst	3

Grimsby	1
Hagersville	1
Haliburton	2
Hanover	1
Hawkesbury	1
Hiawatha First Nation	1
Highland Grove	1
Huntsville	1
Innisfil	1
Kemptville	1
Keswick	3
Kincardine	1
Kitchener	1
Lac Seul First Nation	1
Lakefield	1
Leamington	1
Lindsay	3
Listowel	1
London	2
Lucan	1
Markdale	1
Markham	1
Meaford	1
Migisi Sahgaigan (Eagle Lake) First Nation	1
Minden	2
Mississaugus of the New Credit First Nation	1
Moraviantown	1
Morrisburg	1
Mount Forest	1
Nepean	2
New Liskeard	1
Newmarket	2
Newmarket	2
Niagara Falls	3
North Bay	1
North York	1
Orangeville	3
Orillia	4
Ottawa	1
Owen Sound	4



Paris	1
Park Hill	1
Pembroke	1
Peterborough	3
Pikangikum First Nation	1
Port Elgin	2
Port Hope	1
Prescott	2
Rama	2
Rockland	1
Sandy Lake First Nation	1
Sarnia	1
Saugeen First Nation	1
Scugog Island First Nation	1
Shelburne	4
Simcoe	3
Six Nations of the Grand River Territory	4
Smithville	1
St. Catharines	2
St. Thomas	3
Stouffville	1
Stratford	1
Strathroy	1
Summerstown	1
Sutton	4
Teeswater	1
Thorold	2
Timmins	1
Trenton	1
Uxbridge	1
Vaughan	1
Walkerton	4
Welland	1
West Lorne	1
Whitesand First Nation	1
Wilberforce	1
Williamsburg	1
Winchester	1
Windsor	3

## Appendix 6 – Contact North | Contact Nord Context

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### Value Proposition

We help underserved Ontarians in 800 small, rural, remote, Indigenous and Francophone communities get jobs by making it possible for them to access education and training without leaving their communities.

Pursuing their education and training at home saves money for Ontarians by avoiding travel, accommodation, meal, parking and other costs of attending on-campus and allows them to continue to contribute economically and socially to their community while pursuing their education and training. This makes it possible for Ontarians without the financial means to access education and training.

Contact North | Contact Nord's provides its services in English and French and are available free to Ontarians.

### Mandate

Contact North | Contact Nord, a not-for-profit corporation established in 1986 with its headquarters in Thunder Bay, has the following mandate since inception:

To improve access to formal education and training at the basic skills, secondary, and post-secondary levels and to informal education opportunities for residents of Ontario.

To collaborate with Indigenous peoples, Francophones and communities in Ontario to facilitate response by educational providers (working with Ontario institutions specifically) to meet identified needs.

To support innovation in education and learning through testing and applied research of new modes of “delivery” using technology and to share information in Ontario, nationally, and internationally.

### Saving Money for Ontarians

By supporting Ontarians to pursue their education and training without leaving their community, Contact North | Contact Nord helps Ontarians save money each year in three specific ways:

1. Ontarians do not have to incur travel, accommodation, meal, parking and other costs of attending on-campus, which represents a significant and substantial saving over the course of a 3- or 4-year credential or for the current worker who needs to upgrade his or her skills. Local access also allows these Ontarians to continue to contribute economically and socially to their community while pursuing their education.

2. Adult learners want flexible learning so they can work, raise a family and learn at the same time. Using Contact North | Contact Nord's services in their community can save on childcare costs, travel costs, meals, etc. incurred by adult learners to study.
3. At the local online learning centres across the province, Ontarians can use the computer workstations and Internet access to complete their course work at no cost, thus saving the expense of having to purchase a computer and Internet access for low-income Ontarians and those who otherwise cannot afford it. The online learning centres have all necessary software to connect to courses and complete course work, again saving these costs for the student.

Through these savings opportunities, Contact North | Contact Nord makes it possible for Ontarians without the financial means to access education and training.

### **Helping Education and Training Providers Reduce Costs Through a Suite of Shared Services**

Through its suite of free shared services to 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, Contact North | Contact Nord helps these providers reduce their costs in three specific ways:

1. Providing free use of the videoconferencing platform, web conferencing platform and Moodle learning management system eliminates the need for the providers to invest in, maintain and provide technical support for their own platforms.
2. Providing free training on the effective use of the platforms reduces training costs.
3. Providing free local recruiting services in 800 small, rural, remote, Indigenous and Francophone communities helps reduce the per student cost of recruitment and helps to maximize the investment in developing online programs and courses by ensuring the courses have sufficient numbers of students.

### **What We Do**

Across Ontario, Contact North | Contact Nord:

1. Offers free, high touch, direct, local support services, in English and French, to help underserved Ontarians in 800 small, rural, remote, Indigenous and Francophone communities get jobs by making it possible for them to access education and training without leaving their communities.

Contact North | Contact Nord places a special focus on serving these 8 groups of underserved Ontarians:

- Apprentices
- Disabled
- Employment Ontario clients (unemployed)

- Francophones
- Incarcerated
- Indigenous
- Newcomers and Refugees
- Ontario Works Clients

2. Collaborates with 4,777 local and provincial organizations, including:

- 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
- ACE DISTANCE / ONLINE, Deaf Learn Now, FORMATION À DISTANCE, Good Learning Anywhere Sioux-Hudson Literacy Council, and the learning hub (part of the e-Channel Transfer Payment Agreement)
- eCampusOntario, Independent Learning Centre (ILC), OntarioLearn, Ontario College Application Service, Ontario Universities' Application Centre, ONTransfer, TFO, and TVOntario
- Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities (FONOM), Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO), Northern Policy Institute (NPI), Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA), and Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association (NOMA)
- 114 local community partners who provide rent-free space for online learning centres (the 2 Operations Centres make up the current 116 online learning centres)
- 170 Ontario Works offices and 188 Employment Ontario offices
- 4,282 local organizations Contact North | Contact Nord liaises without through Ontario

3. Provides a suite of free shared services to education and training providers throughout Ontario

Contact North | Contact Nord provides the following shared services to support 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:

- Adobe Connect web conferencing platform
- Videoconferencing platform

- Moodle learning management system
- Training for faculty and instructors in English and French on using the platforms to deliver their online programs and courses
- Technical support in English and French from 7:30 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday to Friday for students and faculty and instructors using the platforms

## **Contact North | Contact Nord's Operating Model**

As a proven community-based partnership, Contact North | Contact Nord delivers its services in a cost effective and efficient way with the following partners:

### 1) Government of Ontario

For the past 34 years, the Government of Ontario, through the Ministry of Colleges and Universities, provides the operating and capital funding to deliver its services for Ontarians and for 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.

As originally envisioned in 1986, the government funds Contact North | Contact Nord to acquire, operate and support the technology infrastructure and to operate the local online learning centres as opposed to each education and training provider setting up their own technology infrastructure and local centres to support their students. This approach avoids duplication, allows for economies of scale in providing support and provides Ontarians with access to over 1,000 online programs and 18,000 online courses no matter where they live.

### 2) Ontario's Education and Training Providers

Faculty, instructors and teachers from 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 can deliver their online programs and courses via Contact North | Contact Nord's platforms at no charge to students or the education and training providers.

These providers also benefit from the local recruitment and support services available from Contact North | Contact Nord in over 800 small, remote, rural, Indigenous and Francophone communities across Ontario.

### 3) Local Community Partners

Contact North | Contact Nord's local community partners provide rent-free space in 114 communities across Ontario to host its local online learning centres. While at times, this model can be a challenge in many small communities where there are limited options for rent-free space, it also ensures Contact North | Contact Nord builds strong relationships with the community and is deeply rooted within the community.

Examples of the community partners hosting the online learning centres include:

- Public/secondary schools
- Local college/university regional campuses
- Community centres
- Municipal offices
- Public libraries
- Other community resource centres

Contact North | Contact Nord rents space for its operations centres in Sudbury and Thunder Bay, which make up the total 116 online learning centres.

## Appendix 7 – Contact North | Contact Nord Operational Challenges

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As Contact North | Contact Nord prepares to start its 34<sup>th</sup> year of providing free, high-touch, local services in English and French to help underserved Ontarians in 800 small, rural, remote, Indigenous and Francophone communities, it identifies three operational challenges:

### 1. Renewal of Technology Infrastructure

Technology infrastructure – computer workstations, peripherals, videoconferencing equipment, distance delivery platforms, routers, switches and other equipment – has a maximum five-year life cycle.

Contact North | Contact Nord’s last major technology renewal was completed in 2013-2014, using funds from accumulated positive variances in its budget in prior years. As Contact North | Contact Nord must now return any positive variance in its annual operating budget to the Ministry of Colleges and Universities at year end, it can no longer accumulate funds for major technology renewal and must make required investments in technology infrastructure within in-year operational budgets.

As we reached the end-of-life of the technology infrastructure renewed in 2013-2014, we are planning for the next required renewal.

### 2. Staff Training and Development

Contact North | Contact Nord has approximately 250 staff spread out in its six regions across the province and its operations centres in Sudbury and Thunder Bay.

In an average year, we complete 100 staff recruitment campaigns, primarily for staff in our online learning centres in small, remote, rural, Indigenous and Francophone communities across the province where we are regularly challenged to fill positions and have open-ended recruitment campaigns.

The high staff turnover for these positions, coupled with the fact we have staff distributed across 116 communities, presents operational challenges in delivering consistent, effective staff training.

We are continuing our efforts in 2020-2021 to find new tools (training platforms and content) to effectively and efficiently deliver staff training and development to ensure our staff have the necessary skills to deliver outcomes needed for Ontario.

### 3. Broadband Internet Connectivity

To provide a quality learning experience for students using its services, Contact North | Contact Nord relies on the availability of broadband Internet for its web conferencing and videoconferencing platforms and for students using Internet-connected workstations in its online learning centres. Access to broadband Internet

continues to be a challenge in the small and remote communities, particularly Far North and Indigenous communities, we serve.

Contact North | Contact Nord is available to participate and contribute to any discussions within government and the private sector to ensure all Ontarians have access to affordable broadband Internet.



## Appendix 8 – Needs Assessment

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Contact North | Contact Nord assesses the need for its services in communities across Ontario in the following four ways:

1) Responding to a Specific Request from Ontario’s Public Colleges and Universities

Contact North | Contact Nord responds to requests from Ontario’s public colleges and universities to set up online learning centres in specific communities to support their students who need access to its distance delivery platforms to complete their program or courses.

As an example, in 2001, Contact North | Contact Nord worked with Northern College to set up and equip online learning centres with videoconferencing technology to support the delivery of Northern’s 3-year, full-time Nursing Diploma program in 10 communities. In 2004, a total of 139 nurses graduated from the program, helping to meet the health care needs of residents in these communities.

2) Responding to a Specific Request from a Community

Contact North | Contact Nord responds to specific requests from communities when its services are needed to address specific local challenges, such as a major employer shutting down or other needs. The community must make a formal request to Contact North | Contact Nord and provide evidence of the need in the community for its services.

As an example, in 2014, the Attawapiskat First Nation invited Contact North | Contact Nord to establish an online learning centre in the community to help local residents take advantage of employment opportunities available through an impact benefit agreement with De Beers Canada. The community’s needs were evident from Statistics Canada Census 2016 data – 70% of the residents had no certificate, diploma or credential and the community had a 32% unemployment rate. With the support of De Beers, an online learning centre was established to support the community.

3) Identifying Communities with a Need for Education and Training

In the past, Contact North | Contact Nord received one-time funding to expand the number of local online learning centres to meet needs. Such funding was available in 2007 (to open online learning centres in Southern Ontario for the first time) and 2010 (to open additional online learning centres in Northern Ontario).

In each case, Contact North | Contact Nord completed a needs assessment using Statistics Canada Community Profile data from the most recent census, looking specifically at:

1. Districts and counties with educational attainment rates below the provincial averages; and
2. Districts and counties with unemployment rates higher than the provincial average.

In addition to Statistics Canada data, we also look at the following criteria:

1. The availability of a main or regional campus of a public college or university and the distances required to travel to such campuses; and
2. The availability of local community partners as potential sources of client referrals to our services and prospective hosts for our online learning centres.

Once we identify districts and counties with needs, we approached prospective community partners to submit expressions of interest to host an online learning centre (rent-free as per our operating model), identify specific other local partners we could work with to meet identified needs and identify specific unmet needs in the community we could meet working with 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.

In both 2007 and 2010, we received more expressions of interest than we could accommodate within the available funding.

To support the need for its existing complement of online learning centres and their locations, Contact North | Contact Nord uses data from Statistics Canada Census 2016 Community profiles to demonstrate the need using four specific data points:

1. The % of local residents with no certificate, diploma or degree
2. The % of local residents who completed a high school diploma
3. The % of local residents who completed a post-secondary credential
4. The local unemployment rate

We examine the census division data for the districts in Northern Ontario and the counties in Southern Ontario where our online learning centres are located. In Southern Ontario, one online learning centre typically serves a county (or parts of rural areas of a region) whereas in Northern Ontario, we have multiple online learning centres per district as the districts are geographically much larger than a county and the distances are often vast between the communities.

In each case, we compare the individual district or county data against the provincial average for the four data points.

## The Data Confirms the Need for Contact North | Contact Nord Services

The 2019 analysis of Statistics Canada data from the 2016 Census demonstrates a clear need for Contact North | Contact Nord's services in the 28 districts and counties where it currently maintains online learning centres.

The data clearly shows Ontarians in the districts and counties served by Contact North | Contact Nord have lower levels of education and training than the provincial average and these district and counties have higher unemployment rates than the provincial average.

The data shows:

1. **25** districts and counties (89%) are above the provincial average of residents with no certificate, diploma or degree, which demonstrates an overall need for local access to education to improve this result.
2. **18** districts and counties (64%) are above the provincial average of residents with a high school diploma, which demonstrates there is a strong base for residents to move to post-secondary and address the need identified in 3.
3. **26** districts and counties (93%) are below the provincial average of residents with a post-secondary credential, demonstrating a need for local access to post-secondary education.
4. **15** districts and counties (54%) have an unemployment rate higher than the provincial average, including all districts in Northern Ontario, which demonstrates the need for local access to education and training as way to improve job prospects.

Table 1 on the next page provides the specific data by district and county. The values highlighted in red demonstrate where the districts and counties are either above or below provincial averages, depending on the data point.

Contact North | Contact Nord will use the same process to identify locations for the 12 proposed online learning centres to be opened in 2020-2021.

Table 1 – Assessment of Districts and Counties Served by Contact North | Contact Nord Online Learning Centres

District/County	Educational Attainment <sup>1</sup>											Unemployment Rate <sup>2</sup>	
	No Certificate, Diploma or Degree			High School			Post-Secondary			Unemployment Rate <sup>2</sup>			
	Dist/County	Ontario	Difference	Dist/County	Ontario	Difference	Dist/County	Ontario	Difference	Dist/County	Ontario		Difference
<b>Northern Ontario</b>													
Algoma District	21%	18%	3%	29%	27%	2%	50%	55%	-5%	10.5%	7.4%	3.1%	
Cochrane	28%	18%	10%	26%	27%	-1%	47%	55%	-8%	9.0%	7.4%	1.6%	
Greater Sudbury	20%	18%	2%	26%	27%	-1%	54%	55%	-1%	8.3%	7.4%	0.9%	
Kenora	35%	18%	17%	24%	27%	-3%	40%	55%	-15%	11.6%	7.4%	4.2%	
Manitoulin	24%	18%	6%	24%	27%	-3%	52%	55%	-3%	13.4%	7.4%	6.0%	
Nipissing	21%	18%	3%	26%	27%	-1%	53%	55%	-2%	9.9%	7.4%	2.5%	
Parry Sound	21%	18%	3%	29%	27%	2%	50%	55%	-5%	9.3%	7.4%	1.9%	
Rainy River	24%	18%	6%	29%	27%	2%	47%	55%	-8%	9.1%	7.4%	1.7%	
Sudbury	27%	18%	9%	27%	27%	0%	46%	55%	-9%	9.9%	7.4%	2.5%	
Thunder Bay	21%	18%	3%	26%	27%	-1%	53%	55%	-2%	8.2%	7.4%	0.8%	
Timiskaming	28%	18%	10%	25%	27%	-2%	47%	55%	-8%	8.6%	7.4%	1.2%	
<b>Southern Ontario</b>													
Brant	21%	18%	3%	31%	27%	4%	48%	55%	-7%	6.1%	7.4%	-1.3%	
Bruce	20%	18%	2%	27%	27%	0%	54%	55%	-1%	6.2%	7.4%	-1.2%	
Dufferin	18%	18%	0%	32%	27%	5%	49%	55%	-6%	5.9%	7.4%	-1.5%	
Elgin	25%	18%	7%	29%	27%	2%	46%	55%	-9%	6.3%	7.4%	-1.1%	
Essex	19%	18%	1%	31%	27%	4%	50%	55%	-5%	7.3%	7.4%	-0.1%	
Haliburton	21%	18%	3%	28%	27%	1%	51%	55%	-4%	9.6%	7.4%	2.2%	
Hastings	22%	18%	4%	31%	27%	4%	47%	55%	-8%	7.1%	7.4%	-0.3%	
Huron	19%	18%	1%	26%	27%	-1%	54%	55%	-1%	8.3%	7.4%	0.9%	
Lambton	17%	18%	-1%	29%	27%	2%	54%	55%	-1%	8.1%	7.4%	0.7%	
Muskoka	18%	18%	0%	31%	27%	4%	52%	55%	-3%	7.1%	7.4%	-0.3%	
Niagara	18%	18%	0%	31%	27%	4%	51%	55%	-4%	7.4%	7.4%	0.0%	
Northumberland	18%	18%	0%	31%	27%	4%	51%	55%	-4%	7.3%	7.4%	-0.1%	
Ottawa	12%	18%	-6%	24%	27%	-3%	64%	55%	9%	7.2%	7.4%	-0.2%	
Oxford	23%	18%	5%	31%	27%	4%	45%	55%	-10%	4.8%	7.4%	-2.6%	
Prescott and Russell	20%	18%	2%	31%	27%	4%	49%	55%	-6%	5.3%	7.4%	-2.1%	
Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry	22%	18%	4%	31%	27%	4%	46%	55%	-9%	7.8%	7.4%	0.4%	
York Region	16%	18%	-2%	26%	27%	-1%	58%	55%	3%	6.4%	7.4%	-1.0%	
<b>Notes</b>													
<sup>1</sup> Data for 15+ Years Old, Census 2016													
<sup>2</sup> Census 2016 Data													
Data Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census Division Profiles													
<a href="https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/search-recherche/lst/results-resultats.cfm?Lang=E&amp;TABID=1&amp;G=1&amp;Geo1=&amp;Code1=&amp;Geo2=&amp;Code2=&amp;GEOCODE=35">https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/search-recherche/lst/results-resultats.cfm?Lang=E&amp;TABID=1&amp;G=1&amp;Geo1=&amp;Code1=&amp;Geo2=&amp;Code2=&amp;GEOCODE=35</a>													