



BACKGROUND

FedNor invests more than \$4.5 million to advance AI solutions and maximize business and economic opportunities in Nipissing-Timiskaming

March 19, 2026 Today, Pauline Rochefort, Parliamentary Secretary to the Secretary of State (Rural Development), and Member of Parliament for Nipissing-Timiskaming, announced a Government of Canada investment of \$4,574,347 to support six strategic initiatives in Nipissing-Timiskaming. The funded projects will support Canada's defence sector and accelerate AI adoption, innovation, job creation and business growth in North Bay and surrounding areas. The announcement was made on behalf of the Honourable Patty Hajdu, Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario (FedNor).

FedNor Funded Initiatives

Innovation Initiatives Ontario North (IION) \$2,503,800

Step Forward Entrepreneurs Program (\$1,400,000)

FedNor funding of \$1.4 million will support the evolution of IION's Step Forward Entrepreneurs Program (SFEP). The program provides up to \$10,000 in non-repayable funding to qualifying businesses for sales and marketing, product development, innovation adoption or business enhancement initiatives.

Ignite AI (\$700,000)

FedNor funding of \$700,000 will allow IION to kick-start its Ignite AI program to help innovative companies build capacity and integrate and leverage AI technologies to drive commercialization, efficiency and productivity enhancements.

Skills Development Placement Program (\$403,800)

FedNor funding of \$403,800 will allow IION to extend its Skills Development Placement Program (SDPP) to help businesses increase productivity, competitiveness and commercialize new products. The SDPP connects innovative companies with qualified workers for a 16-week work placement, allowing them to gain hands-on experiences and develop transferable skills in a risk-free environment. Once complete, these projects are expected to support close to 150 businesses, create 120 jobs and maintain 105 more.



Canadore College \$2,070,547***Advanced Training Simulation Wing – Phase 1 & 2 (\$1,350,547)***

FedNor Funding of \$1,350,547 helped Canadore College develop a new Maintenance Training Simulation Lab and proceed with phase two of its expansion plans, the development an Advanced Simulation Training Wing. Of the total, \$226,411 allowed Canadore College to complete phase one of the project, which involved establishing the Maintenance Training Simulation Lab to enhance its aircraft maintenance training programs and support workforce development. Based on the success of phase one of the project, FedNor is investing \$1,124,136 in phase two, which will allow Canadore to create an Advanced Simulation Training Wing. This 7,000 squarefoot expansion will introduce additional advanced training labs, enhanced simulation software suites, and integrated aerospace systems that deepen the realism, safety, and repeatability of both flight and maintenance training. In addition, the facility will incorporate new flight simulation technology and associated aerospace systems, enabling realistic, scenario based flight training applicable to civil aviation and defence oriented operational requirements.

Product Development Fund (\$720,000)

FedNor funding of \$720,000 will allow Canadore College to establish a Product Development Fund to help businesses develop and commercialize new products. The fund will support all phases of the product development process including design, prototyping, testing, market validation, investment readiness, and commercialization. By leveraging the cutting-edge technology, equipment and services offered through iCAMP, this priority project will ultimately help businesses and entrepreneurs transform ideas into products the world wants and needs.

Associated links

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