

# Province spends \$4M to bring college students to northern Ontario

 [cbc.ca/news/canada/sudbury/study-north-colleges-1.3579070](https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/sudbury/study-north-colleges-1.3579070)

The Ontario provincial government is spending \$4 million on a marketing program aiming to draw students from southern Ontario to colleges in the north.

Sault College president Ron Common says the goal of the program, called Study North, is to attract youth who wouldn't otherwise consider Ontario's six northern colleges as a primary destination.

The Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation funds the program.

| *We hope they learn, work and stay in the north. - Ron Common, Sault College President*

Study North employs five recruiters who plan on attending 62 high school events next year — marketing not only the college programs, but also the lifestyle and accessibility of the region.

Part of the recruitment team's focus is to generate leads from prospective students who may be frozen out of southern college programs' limited enrolment spaces.

"In southern Ontario there are many wait-listed programs," says Common.

"And [they] frequently are saying to government we need more capital to build more buildings."

- [Northern Ontario colleges band together to help keep graduates here](#)
- [Study finds students highly satisfied with northern Ontario colleges](#)

Students in southern Ontario who express an interest in touring a northern college can qualify for \$500 travel incentive, and another \$1,000 incentive when they register.

Although the \$4 million price tag appears steep, Common says, it makes more sense to invest in bringing students north to established campuses rather than enlarge already overcrowded campuses in the south.

The program exceeded its goal of 50 students by its second year, which wrapped up May 1, with 67 students accepting offers to attend, and another 14 on the undecided list.

Each student can potentially bring \$20,000 to their community, Common says.

Sault College President Ron Common says the Study North recruitment program has been a success for the six colleges involved. (CBC)

Common also says the program assists students to find employment in their respective northern Ontario communities after graduation, and alleviate some of the demographic challenges the region faces.

"We hope they learn, work and stay in the north," Common says.



But not everyone in the education sector considers the program a wise investment.

Laurentian University economist David Robinson thinks a private sector ad agency might have a better recruitment rate given the same amount of money.

"It doesn't sound like it's a very successful program but it's a good idea in principle," Robinson says.

[Listen to the interview with Ron Common on CBC Sudbury's Morning North Radio show](#)

Morning North

Study North - student recruitment program

