



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ROI announces launch of the RHIS in Northern Ontario

GUELPH, ON, July 17, 2024 – The Rural Ontario Institute (ROI), Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association (NOMA), the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities (FONOM), and the Northern Policy Institute (NPI) announce the launch of the Rural Housing Information System (RHIS) to rural Northern Ontario municipalities.

“NOMA is thrilled the RHIS was successful in receiving funding to launch this interactive and useful tool in Northwestern Ontario. Housing data is limited and challenging in the North given our vast geographic landscape,” says Wendy Landry, President of the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association. “The RHIS will be beneficial for municipalities to access meaningful housing data for the North in one central location. This will be helpful to identify current available housing stock to address housing needs and inform and improve planning and policymaking in the housing sector.”

“We are excited to share the addition of 145 northern municipalities to the RHIS with our users,” says Zviko Gwekwerere, ROI Rural Housing Information System Northern Coordinator. “The lack of adequate housing data in Ontario is a barrier to the planning and construction of affordable housing development in many regions. The RHIS tool provides municipalities and stakeholders with accurate data to appropriately strategize housing development plans and bring affordable housing to their region - ultimately keeping residents in their communities of choice.”

The RHIS is an innovative digital dashboard designed to fill the housing information gap. The tool, developed in collaboration with founder Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus, consolidates information that is available through Ontario municipalities', social service administration boards' and GIS departments' existing resources. Using consolidated data acquisition, the RHIS offers a streamlined approach to comprehensive housing data in a centralized, digital platform. Data is accessed through a user-friendly and automated dashboard, encompassing:

- Demographic and economic trends, including population statistics, growth patterns, age distributions, and income data.
- Comprehensive information on average home prices and real time market rental rates.
- Identification of available zoned land suitable for multi-dwelling housing development.
- Exploration of available incentives, including municipal grants or other incentives supporting housing initiatives.
- A detailed inventory of housing assets and amenities within the region.
- The capability to compare housing data among different municipalities, facilitating informed decision-making.

“Comprehensive housing data is scarce and, in the north, it’s even harder to come by,” says Chris Wray, CAO of Black River Matheson and member of the ROI board of directors. “The RHIS will help municipalities and prospective developers view at a glance what is available and where the gaps are.”

This rural housing project is funded in part by FedNor, the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario and the Ontario Ministry of Rural Affairs – Rural Economic Development Program.

“We are grateful for the support of FedNor and the Ontario Ministry of Rural Affairs, as the RHIS continues to provide municipalities, developers and homebuilders with the data they need in the development and planning of social and affordable housing,” says Ellen Sinclair, Executive Director at ROI. “By creating access to housing data, the RHIS will continue to support economic development in Ontario’s rural and northern communities.”

The Rural Housing Information System is open to Municipal staff, builders and developers across Ontario, and they are encouraged to sign up at <https://www.ruralontariohousing.ca/>. ROI will engage Northern partners in user testing throughout July and August 2024.

ABOUT

The Rural Ontario Institute (ROI) is a non-profit organization committed to developing leaders, informing decision makers and connecting communities. ROI delivers the renowned Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program (AALP) entering its 40th year of operation, and the Rural Change Maker program, a youth leadership initiative for young rural, emerging leaders to address local priorities. We provide data research and analysis on rural trends and demographics. Information is disseminated in our Rural Ontario Facts products - factsheets and accompanying dashboards. Currently, ROI is engaged in a rural housing initiative that will help communities to address the housing and homelessness crisis being faced by thousands of Canadians.

ASSOCIATED LINKS

- [RURAL HOUSING INFORMATION SYSTEM](#)
- [RURAL ONTARIO INSTITUTE](#)
- [NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION - GO FORWARD \(NOMA.ON.CA\)](#)
- [NORTHERN POLICY INSTITUTE - EVIDENCE-BASED SOLUTIONS, FOR AND FROM NORTHERN ONTARIO](#)
- [FEDERAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGENCY FOR NORTHERN ONTARIO \(CANADA.CA\)](#)

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