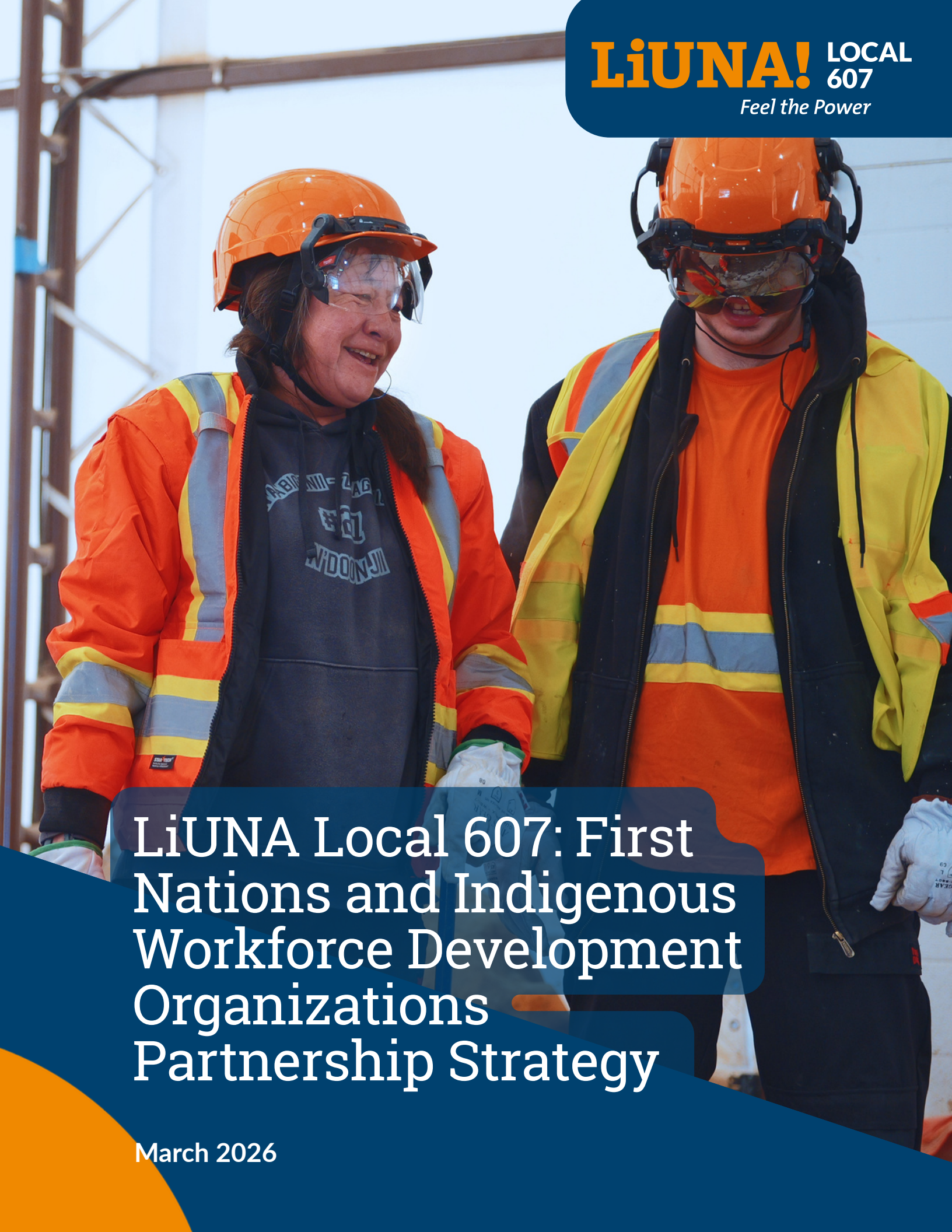


A photograph of two workers in safety gear. On the left, a woman wearing an orange hard hat, safety glasses, and an orange high-visibility jacket over a grey hoodie with 'LiUNA' text. On the right, a man wearing an orange hard hat, safety glasses, and a yellow high-visibility jacket over an orange shirt. They are standing in front of industrial equipment.

LiUNA! LOCAL
607

Feel the Power

LiUNA Local 607: First Nations and Indigenous Workforce Development Organizations Partnership Strategy

March 2026



ABOUT THIS STRATEGY

LiUNA Local 607 developed this First Nations and Indigenous Workforce Development Organizations Partnership Strategy to strengthen our relationships with First Nations communities and Indigenous workforce development partners across Northwestern Ontario.

Based in Thunder Bay on the traditional territory of the Anishnawbe people and the Treaty Territory of Fort William First Nation, signatory to the Robinson-Superior Treaty, we recognize the importance of working in partnership with First Nations and Indigenous workforce development organizations to support training, employment, and long-term opportunities in the skilled trades. The partnership values and model in this strategy guide how we undertake this work.

This strategy was informed by insights gathered through an environmental scan looking at practices that support Indigenous apprenticeship, a series of key informant interviews in Fall 2025, and the December 2025 roundtable held in Thunder Bay entitled '*Building First Nations Partnerships to Support the Talent of Tomorrow*'. This roundtable included participants from First Nations, Indigenous employment and training organizations, Indigenous Institutes, K-12 education partners, contractors, and regional workforce development organizations.

Local 607 acknowledges the support of Elder Lawrence W. Jourdain of Lac La Croix First Nation in guiding participants to engage in the roundtable in a good way.

We extend our sincere gratitude to all those who generously contributed their time, knowledge, and perspectives.

CONTEXT FOR PARTNERSHIP

Local 607 currently represents approximately 1,100 members and anticipates growing to 2,000 members by 2035 to meet the workforce demands associated with major infrastructure and development projects across the region. Achieving this growth will require meaningful recruitment from among the rapidly expanding Indigenous workforce in Northwestern Ontario.

Building authentic, mutually beneficial partnerships with First Nations communities and Indigenous employment, training, and educational organizations is not only a practical necessity – it is an expression of Local 607's values.

OUR PARTNERSHIP VALUES

Our work as a leader in developing Northwestern Ontario's skilled trades workforce and in partnering with First Nations and Indigenous employment, training, and educational organizations is grounded in the following values:

- TRAINING FOR EMPLOYMENT
- OPEN AND CLEAR COMMUNICATION
- RECIPROCITY AND HONESTY
- COMMUNITY FOCUS
- ECONOMIC RECONCILIATION
- SUPPORT FOR INDIGENOUS-LED TRAINING AND EDUCATION INITIATIVES
- CULTURALLY COMPETENT PROGRAM DESIGN AND DELIVERY



OUR PARTNERSHIP MODEL

Every partnership is different, with goals ranging from early skilled trades career awareness through to full training delivery intended to lead directly to employment. This partnership model represents a flexible, relationship-based approach that supports a range of partnerships, from short-term, informal, or project-based collaborations, through to long-term relationships and formal agreements.

It is intended to apply in a variety of contexts, always focusing on meeting prospective trainees and apprentices where they are in their journey to skilled trades employment.

The following partnership model stages are designed to support LiUNA Local 607's approach in working with First Nations and Indigenous workforce development organizations:

**STAGE 1:
ENGAGING**



**STAGE 2:
LISTENING**



**STAGE 3:
DEVELOPING**



**STAGE 4:
DELIVERING**



REFLECTING

PARTNERSHIP STAGES

STAGE 1: ENGAGING

Build trust through respectful, face-to-face engagement.

Connect with communities and organizations to learn who they are and understand local contexts, priorities, and protocols to create authentic relationships, and network to increase awareness of LiUNA 607.

STAGE 2: LISTENING

Learn about community goals by asking questions and identifying shared purpose.

Deepen understanding of community and organizational goals through open dialogue and active listening. Focus on shared purpose, mutual benefit, and alignment on priorities. Assess readiness for partnerships, including capacity, roles, and the supports needed to move forward.

STAGE 3: DEVELOPING

Co-design culturally relevant initiatives grounded in community needs.

Co-design initiatives with community and organizational partners that reflect community needs, lived realities, and local labour market demand, including developing training pathways, culturally informed curriculum, holistic intake and assessment approaches, and comprehensive participant supports.

STAGE 4: DELIVERING

Implement initiatives and provide wraparound supports for learner success.

Implement wraparound supports that are adaptive, comprehensive, and regularly assessed and adjust them to meet the evolving needs of trainees and partners. Foster culturally safe environments where learners feel respected, understood, and empowered to thrive.

REFLECTING: A PRACTICE ACROSS STAGES

Communicate, learn, and adapt together to strengthen partnerships.

Throughout the partnership, assess effectiveness, goals, and alignment through honest conversations and feedback to identify what works, what needs adjustment, and emerging opportunities that support a sustainable, adaptive, and accountable partnership approach.

THE PATH FORWARD

This is a living document. As Local 607 continues to build relationships and learn from partners, this strategy may be updated to reflect new insights, evolving priorities, and lessons learned.

Local 607 looks forward to engaging with partners to deepen our collective work to build opportunity and strengthen the Northwestern Ontario skilled trades workforce.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This strategy was developed with support from Ontario's Skills Development Fund and with assistance from the teams at Bridging Concepts and Medow Consulting. Bridging Concepts is a 100% First Nations-owned and led consultancy that has been supporting Indigenous talent development and more inclusive workforces since 2011. Founded in 2017, Medow Consulting supports organizations of all forms to shape public policy and program delivery through solutions-focused analysis, engagement, and strategy.

Photographs in this strategy are of participants in Introduction to Trades Training delivered at the Local 607 Training Centre in March 2026 for Kiikenomaga Kikenjigewen Employment and Training Services (KKETS) and Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation. Photography by Curtis Jensen (Apple Wagon Films).