

MLPAO Budget Submission: Preceptor Allocation



Lab services are foundational to Ontario's healthcare system—**approximately 70% of medical decisions depend on timely and accurate lab test results**. Demand for testing continues to rise due to population growth and aging, increased use of preventative medicine, and the emergence of new pathogens.

The Medical Laboratory Professionals' Association of Ontario (MLPAO) appreciates the province's recent investments, including the 2024 Ontario Budget commitment to add 700 new training seats for Medical Laboratory Technologists (MLTs), Medical Radiation Technologists (MRTs), and MRI Technologists (MRI/Ts), as well as the inclusion of MLT programs in the Learn and Stay Grant.

Despite these important steps, **Ontario's ability to train new MLTs is constrained by a critical shortage of clinical placement capacity**. The province is currently short more than 350 MLTs, and 37% of the existing workforce is expected to retire in the coming years.¹ Because frontline staff are fully engaged in processing and interpreting test results, many laboratories lack the capacity to supervise students during their clinical rotations. An MLPAO survey conducted in August 2025 found that 37% of labs not currently accepting students could do so if funding were available to support dedicated preceptors.

A \$6.25 million investment in Budget 2026 will eliminate a critical training bottleneck in Ontario's medical labs, ensuring a total of 1,300 MLT students are successfully trained.

- **Targeted Preceptor Expansion:** Funding 52 FTE preceptors in high-need, rural and remote labs, empowering sites that currently lack the bandwidth to train new MLTs.
- **Expanding Capacity:** Creating 226 new MLT clinical placements in regions where training was previously unavailable.
- **Scaling the Pipeline:** Supporting an additional 226 MLT students to complement the 1,074 students currently in existing placements.

This shortage has created a self-reinforcing cycle: limited placements restrict enrollment in MLT programs, which in turn reduces the number of graduates entering the workforce. The impact is most severe in rural and remote communities, where recruitment and retention challenges are already significant. Targeted investment in clinical education capacity is essential to breaking this cycle. Funding would allow employers to hire dedicated preceptors—including part-time or recently retired MLTs—to provide hands-on supervision to ensure students can successfully transition from classroom learning to clinical practice.

A \$6.25 million investment over three years would provide a sustainable, system-level solution. This support would enable employers across Ontario—particularly in underserved regions—to establish new placement opportunities or expand existing ones. The accompanying data outlines how this investment would be distributed across the province and identifies the regions and hospitals that would gain the capacity to train the next generation of medical laboratory professionals.

¹ <https://www.cmlto.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/2024-HHR-Report-English-Final-1.pdf>

MLPAO Budget Submission 2026: Breakdown of Preceptor Allocation

52 FTE at \$120,000/FTE over 3 years = \$6,240,000

Year 1 (2026-27)

Investment Year 1 = \$2,640,000 for 22 preceptors

Location	FTE	Number of Students	Details
North Bay Regional Health Centre	2	5	NBRHC will utilize the preceptor funding to hire part-time preceptors across several disciplines. The preceptors will allow NBRHC to host up to 5 students for clinical placement which will greatly assist in recruiting new MLTs to North Bay.
Eastern Ontario Regional Laboratory Association (EORLA) – 18 sites <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Almonte General Hospital • Arnprior Regional Health • Carlton Place & District Memorial Hospital • Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario • Cornwall Community Hospital • Deep River & District Hospital • Glengarry Memorial Hospital in Alexandria • Hawbsbury District General Hospital • Kemptville District Hospital • Montfort Hospital • Pembroke Regional Hospital • Queensway-Carlton Hospital • Renfrew Victoria Hospital • St. Francis Memorial Hospital in Barry's Bay • The Ottawa Hospital • Winchester District Memorial Hospital 	5	21	The 5 FTE positions will allow for one preceptor in each of the 5 lab disciplines and enable EORLA to increase their student capacity to 21. This will benefit both the urban and rural sites that comprise EORLA.

Year 1 (2026-27)

Investment Year 1 = \$2,640,000 for 22 preceptors

Location	FTE	Number of Students	Details
Kenora Rainy River Regional Laboratory Program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lake of the Woods District Hospital (Kenora) • Dryden Regional Health Centre • La Verendrye General Hospital (Fort Frances) • Atikokan General Hospital • Sioux Lookout Meno Ya Win Health Centre • Red Lake Margaret Cochenour Hospital 	6 (3 for KRRRLP and NOSH, 3 for TADH)	19	<p>Michener plans to place 10 students in the North for clinical placements, supported by 5 preceptors across three health networks, based on the current Michener group structure.</p> <p>Within Timmins Cluster, four hospital sites currently accept MLT students for placement. All students complete their histology rotation at TADH. Because no other site in the cluster offers histology, TADH is responsible for training all students in this discipline, creating a bottleneck that limits the number of students the region can accommodate.</p> <p>Discussions with the manager in Kirkland Lake and the charge technologist in Kapuskasing indicated strong interest in having a preceptor at their respective sites. Historically, staffing shortages in those laboratories have made it difficult for them to take students, but dedicated preceptors would allow them to participate more consistently.</p> <p>If the Timmins Cluster were assigned three preceptors, student capacity could increase by approximately 80%. This would enable the cluster to accept up to 4 additional students, in addition to the 5 students already placed at TADH, allowing them to complete their full clinical placement.</p>
Timmins Cluster <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kirkland Lake • Englehart (POC) • Bingham memorial (POC) • Iroquois Anson General • Lady Minto • Smooth Rock Falls (POC) • Kapuskasing Sensenbrenner • Hearst Notre Dame Hospital • Horne Payne Community Hospital (POC) • Timmins and District Hospital • Chapleau 			
North of Superior Healthcare (NOSH) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wilson Memorial General Hospital • McCausland Hospital • Wilkes Terrace Long Term Care 			
Georgian Bay General Hospital	1	6	The laboratory currently accommodates 3 students, one at a time, which represents the maximum capacity of the

Year 1 (2026-27)

Investment Year 1 = \$2,640,000 for 22 preceptors

Location	FTE	Number of Students	Details
			<p>existing space and resources. With the proposed funding, the laboratory anticipates doubling its capacity to support 6 students, 2 at a time.</p> <p>A primary barrier to expansion is the limited availability of instructional resources. If permitted, a portion of the investment would be allocated toward the purchase of a multiheaded microscope. This equipment would enable group-based instruction and strengthen internal mentorship opportunities for new and novice MLTs. Enhancing these mentorship capabilities would increase staff confidence in supervising students and, over time, further expand the laboratory's training capacity.</p>
Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare	1	2-3	<p>The initiative to introduce funding for a dedicated preceptor for MLT student placements would significantly enhance Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare (MAHC) laboratories' ability to provide structured, high-quality clinical training experiences.</p> <p>MAHC laboratories have faced ongoing Health Human Resources challenges over several years, resulting in increased pressure and stress on staff. While the organization recognizes that supporting MLT student placements is a critical long-term investment in the laboratory workforce, limited resources have made it difficult to sustain clinical placements. Staff have expressed concerns about their capacity to deliver a high-quality learning experience while managing the</p>

Year 1 (2026-27)

Investment Year 1 = \$2,640,000 for 22 preceptors

Location	FTE	Number of Students	Details
			<p>competing demands of daily laboratory operations.</p> <p>MAHC would welcome the opportunity to engage a dedicated preceptor to support two or three MLT students during their clinical rotations, thereby strengthening the organization's ability to contribute to the development of future laboratory professionals.</p>
Brightshores Health System (South Bruce) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bruce Peninsula Site (Wiarton)• Markdale Site• Meaford Site• Owen Sound Site• Southampton Site	2	5	The preceptor funding will significantly enhance capacity to support student training and contribute to workforce development. Two preceptors across the 5 sites will allow them to increase their student complement from 2 to 5 students, significantly helping to alleviate the ongoing staffing crisis.
Sault Area Hospital	1.5	4	The laboratory typically accommodates up to 4 students each year and provides support to Elliot Lake students specifically for their histology rotation. The organization has indicated strong support for the proposed funding model of 1.5 FTE dedicated to preceptor coverage.
Elliot Lake – St. Joseph's General Hospital	.5	2	SJGH would be able to accommodate 2 students with the addition of 0.5 preceptors.
Health Sciences North	3	13	The laboratory integrates students directly with MLTs at the bench to support hands-on clinical training. The majority of students are placed through Cambrian College. The laboratory currently accommodates a total of 9 students each year, with 6 students completing placements in the fall and three in the summer.

Year 1 (2026-27)

Investment Year 1 = \$2,640,000 for 22 preceptors

Location	FTE	Number of Students	Details
Year 1 (2026-27) TOTAL	22	~78	Investment Total: \$2,640,000

Year 2 (2027-28)

Year 2 Investment = \$1,560,000 for 13 preceptors

Location	FTE	Number of Students	Details
Hamilton Regional Laboratory Medicine Program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hamilton General Hospital • Juravinski Hospital • McMaster Children's Hospital • West Lincoln Memorial Hospital • St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton 	4	25	<p>The laboratory expressed strong support for the proposal to introduce dedicated preceptors to facilitate student training. With 4 preceptors in place, the laboratory estimates it could accommodate between 20 and 25 students. This increase in capacity would substantially reduce the pressure on existing staff, who continue to train students despite increased weekend work, additional shifts, and overtime resulting from ongoing MLT shortages.</p> <p>Although the laboratory is encouraged by the expansion of MLT programs across the province, limited staffing continues to make student placements challenging. From a microbiology perspective, the laboratory is frequently asked to accept students for this rotation because some training sites do not offer microbiology services. Due to resource constraints and a high volume of requests, the laboratory was required to decline some students this year. The addition of a dedicated microbiology preceptor would enable the laboratory</p>

Year 2 (2027-28)
Year 2 Investment = \$1,560,000 for 13 preceptors

Location	FTE	Number of Students	Details
			<p>to accept more students and expand its overall placement capacity.</p>
Quinte Healthcare <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belleville Hospital • North Hastings Hospital (POC only) • Prince Edward County Memorial Hospital (POC only) • Trenton Memorial Hospital (POC only) 	1	3	<p>A dedicated preceptor provides structured and consistent instruction, supports competency development, and ensures adherence to regulatory, accreditation, and organizational standards. Currently, preceptorship duties are carried out by existing staff in addition to their regular workload. This approach creates challenges, including variability in training, increased risk of error, staff fatigue, and reduced operational efficiency. Establishing a formally funded preceptor role would provide protected time for education, mentorship, competency assessment, and ongoing support for new hires and learners.</p> <p>Investment in a preceptor role contributes to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved onboarding efficiency and staff preparedness • Enhanced patient safety and strengthened quality assurance • Increased staff retention and job satisfaction • Ongoing compliance with accreditation and professional practice requirements <p>Given the persistent recruitment needs and the complexity of laboratory operations, funding a dedicated</p>

Year 2 (2027-28)
Year 2 Investment = \$1,560,000 for 13 preceptors

Location	FTE	Number of Students	Details
			preceptor position represents a proactive and strategic investment in workforce stability and excellence in patient care
Guelph General Hospital	1	2	The hospital anticipates significant benefit from this opportunity, as increasing student placements directly supports ongoing recruitment efforts. The organization has found that hosting students contributes meaningfully to attracting future staff. To enhance its capacity, the hospital could effectively utilize at least 1 full-time preceptor (1.0 FTE) to support training across the five laboratory disciplines it operates.
Mackenzie Health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mackenzie Richmond Hill Hospital • Cortellucci Vaughan Hospital 	2	8-12	Mackenzie Health plans to utilize 1 preceptor at each of its two sites, enabling the organization to accommodate approximately 8 to 12 MLT students across both locations. The proposed funding would support the hiring of retired MLTs with relevant experience to serve as preceptors, or alternatively, allow current staff interested in the preceptor role to assume student training responsibilities while their regular shifts are backfilled with casual or part-time staff. This approach would ensure dedicated teaching time and strengthen the overall quality of clinical education.
InterHospital Laboratory Partnership (ILHP) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Huron Perth Healthcare Alliance (Clinton, Seaforth, St. Marys and Stratford) • Huron Health System (Goderich and Exeter) 	2	5	The multiple sites within HPHA will benefit from the utilization of 2 preceptors to train 5 MLT students.

Year 2 (2027-28)
Year 2 Investment = \$1,560,000 for 13 preceptors

Location	FTE	Number of Students	Details
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listowel Wingham Hospitals Alliance (Listowel and Wingham) • Hanover & District Hospital • South Bruce Grey Health Centre (Durham, Chesley, Kincardine, Walkerton) • Wellington Healthcare Alliance (Palmerston, Fergus, Mount Forest) 			
Royal Victoria Hospital	3	28	The organization is proposing the following minimum student placement commitments: 8 CORE placements encompassing all clinical modalities, along with an additional 10 targeted placements in Histology and 10 targeted placements in Microbiology. The facility is unique within the region, as it is the only site that offers both Histology and Microbiology training opportunities.
Year 2 (2027-28) TOTAL	13	~75	Investment Total: \$1,560,000

Year 3 (2028-29)

Year 3 Investment = \$2,040,000 for 17 preceptors

Location	FTE	Number of Students	Details
Niagara Health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marotta Family Hospital (St. Catharines) • Niagara Falls Hospital • Welland Hospital 	2	5	<p>Based on current operations, the organization can accommodate 2-3 students. With dedicated preceptors in place, the estimated capacity would increase to approximately 2 to 3 students per preceptor at each site. Preceptor support would substantially enhance the organization's ability to accept additional students without negatively affecting routine laboratory operations or increasing staff workload, acknowledging the well-documented impact that added training responsibilities can have on staff wellbeing and burnout risk. The flexibility built into the preceptor funding model will be essential to ensuring long-term sustainability while maintaining both service delivery and high-quality clinical education.</p>
Waterloo Regional Health Network <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Midtown Hospital • Queen's Boulevard Hospital 	2	11	<p>WRHN currently offers student clinical placements at two sites—Midtown (formerly Grand River Hospital) and Queen's Boulevard (formerly St. Mary's General Hospital).</p> <p>Supporting students not only helps build a pipeline of future employees but also benefits our current staff by allowing preceptors to continuously develop and strengthen their professional skills.</p> <p>In recent years, increased student cohort sizes and the emergence of new training programs have placed additional pressure on existing placement sites. WRHN has also been asked to accept more students in specialized areas such as Histology and Microbiology, as fewer hospitals now process specimens in these disciplines.</p>

Year 3 (2028-29)

Year 3 Investment = \$2,040,000 for 17 preceptors

Location	FTE	Number of Students	Details
			<p>While we recognize the importance of supporting this need, our current staffing and workload constraints limit our capacity to accept additional students.</p> <p>Targeted government funding for 3 FTE would allow WRHN to dedicate protected preceptor time, enabling us to expand student placement opportunities—particularly in Microbiology and Histology—while maintaining the high quality of education and patient care we are committed to providing. With this support, WRHN would be well positioned to serve as a preferred clinical training site and contribute meaningfully to strengthening Ontario's laboratory workforce.</p>
Chatham Kent Health Alliance	1	4	One preceptor at the CKHA will help to support the training of 4 students in this hospital alliance.
Norfolk General Hospital and West Haldimand General Hospital	1	2	The organization formally expresses its support for the MLT Preceptorship Program and its efforts to create and sustain clinical placement opportunities. It respectfully requests that Norfolk General Hospital and West Haldimand General Hospital be considered and included as co-participants in the program.
Brantford Community Health Centre	1	6	If supported with 1 full-time preceptor (1.0 FTE), the BCHS laboratory estimates it could provide clinical placements for 6 MLT students per calendar year. In addition, because the facility operates a microbiology laboratory, it may be able to accommodate additional students who require a microbiology placement site.
Lakeridge Health • Oshawa	2	5	The organization expresses full support for the implementation of preceptors and

Year 3 (2028-29)

Year 3 Investment = \$2,040,000 for 17 preceptors

Location	FTE	Number of Students	Details
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Port Perry • Bowmanville • Whitby • Ajax Pickering 			<p>indicates that it would be able to effectively utilize two preceptors. This model would enable students to gain clinical experience across all four sites operated by the organization.</p>
London Health Sciences Centre <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University Hospital • Victoria Hospital and Children's Hospital 	3	15-20	<p>LHSC is seeking 3 full-time preceptor (FTE) positions to ensure effective supervision and training for students across its programs. The proposed structure includes:</p> <p>1 FTE dedicated to managing all student placements across LHSC, serving as the primary point of contact for universities and colleges, and acting as the liaison for regional laboratory support related to student training.</p> <p>1 FTE focused exclusively on microbiology placements within LHSC and from the broader region, recognizing that LHSC Microbiology functions as the primary training laboratory for southwestern Ontario.</p> <p>1 FTE allocated across the remaining laboratory disciplines at LHSC, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pathology • Transfusion Medicine • Biochemistry • Hematology • Cytopathology • Molecular Genetics and Cytogenetics <p>Collectively, these preceptors would support approximately 15 to 20 students during their clinical placements.</p>

Year 3 (2028-29)

Year 3 Investment = \$2,040,000 for 17 preceptors

Location	FTE	Number of Students	Details
Windsor Regional Hospital	2	8	Two large acute care sites are requesting 2 preceptor positions. These preceptor roles would enable the sites to facilitate clinical placements for approximately 8 (MLT) students. In addition, the positions could support the increasing number of requests received from northern and rural facilities seeking placement opportunities in Microbiology and/or Pathology.
Stevenson Memorial Hospital	.5	2	In partnership with Headwaters Health Care Centre, the hospital could accommodate 4 MLT students for clinical placement with the support of a 0.5 FTE preceptor.
Headwaters Health Care Centre	.5	4	<p>Headwaters expresses strong support for participating in the training of MLT students and has consistently received positive feedback from past learners. However, ongoing long-term staffing shortages mean that accepting students places additional pressure on existing staff. Delivering instructional support while operating short-staffed increases the workload and stress experienced by both MLTs and Senior Technologists.</p> <p>The organization would fully welcome the opportunity to share a ministry-funded preceptor with Stevenson Memorial Hospital. Headwaters currently partners with the Michener Institute, Anderson College, and Georgian College. The addition of a designated 0.5 FTE preceptor would enable the site to facilitate clinical placements for four students annually in Hematology, Transfusion Medicine, and Biochemistry.</p>

Year 3 (2028-29)

Year 3 Investment = \$2,040,000 for 17 preceptors

Location	FTE	Number of Students	Details
Bluewater Health	2	6	The two full-time preceptor (FTE) positions would be allocated across all five laboratory disciplines, enabling Bluewater Health to increase its student intake to 6 (MLT) learners.
Year 3 (2028-29) TOTAL	17	~ 73	Investment Total: \$2,040,000

For more information, please contact:

Michelle Hoad, Chief Executive Officer
mhoad@mlpao.org | 416-485-6768 x 225