

New Brunswick Regional Profile
Northwest
June 2023



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Note: The geographical areas presented in this report are based on 2021 geographical boundaries. Any statistics found in this report do not reflect the recent (early 2023) local governance changes that have occurred in New Brunswick.

Introduction¹

New Brunswick's Northwest region consists of three counties: Carleton, Victoria, and Madawaska. Combined, these three counties encompass a total land area of 12,257 square kilometres.

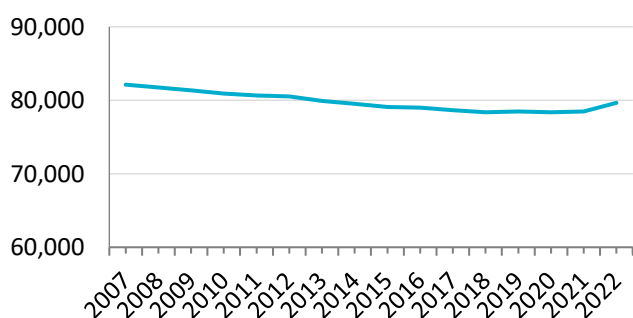
Outside of the city of Edmundston and the towns of Grand Falls and Woodstock, Northwest New Brunswick is a largely rural region. At the time of the 2021 Census, rural areas² accounted for 70.1% of the region's population.

Demographics

Population Trends³

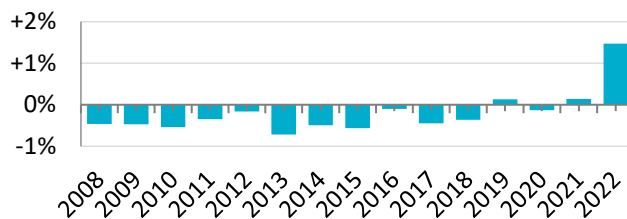
As of July 1, 2022, the population of New Brunswick's Northwest region was estimated to be 79,633 (approximately 9.8% of the province's total population). This total was down significantly from where it was in the past. Between 2007 and 2022, the region's population shrank by 3.0% (from 82,128 to 79,633).

Population by Year – Northwest N.B.



This represented the seventh largest decline among Canada's seventy-six economic regions during this time. This decline has been largely concentrated in rural parts of the region, particular in Victoria County.

Population Growth by Year – Northwest N.B.



Population Change by Region – N.B. – 2007 to 2022

Region	2007 to 2012	2012 to 2017	2017 to 2022	2007 to 2022
Northeast	-3.0%	-1.4%	+0.2%	-4.3%
Southeast	+5.4%	+4.0%	+12.2%	+22.9%
Southwest	+1.4%	-0.6%	+4.3%	+5.1%
Central	+5.1%	+3.8%	+7.2%	+16.9%
Northwest	-2.0%	-2.3%	+1.2%	-3.0%

While the region's population has declined significantly in the long-term, in more recent years, it has begun to stabilize. There has recently been strong growth in Woodstock and a number of smaller communities making up for continued losses in other parts of the region. A breakdown of the region's population can be found below, while a more detailed breakdown can be found in Appendix A.

Population by Community – Northwest N.B.

Community	2007	2012	2017	2022
Edmundston	16,833	16,229	16,826	17,026
Woodstock	5,218	5,285	5,336	5,849
Grand Falls	5,809	5,624	5,350	5,313
Florenceville-Bristol	1,588	1,646	1,629	1,677
Other	52,680	51,724	49,515	49,768

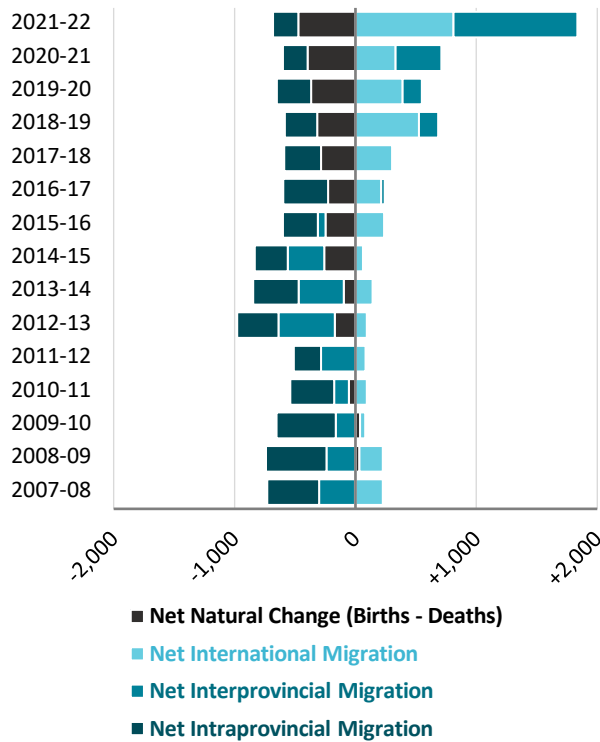
¹ Source(s): Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Population (Tables 98-10-0002 and 98-10-0011).

² A population centre has a population of at least 1,000 and a population density of 400 persons or more per square kilometre. All areas outside population centres are classified as rural areas. Taken together, population centres and rural areas cover all of Canada.

³ Source(s): Statistics Canada, Annual Demographic Estimates (Tables 17-10-0137, 17-10-0138 and 17-10-0142).

Long-term population losses in the region have been driven in large part by consistently high rates of out-migration among youth. As a result, the number of births in the region has remained relatively low, which has further accelerated population decline and population aging in the region. Furthermore, due to its relatively old population, the region sees a significant number of deaths each year.

Components of Population Change – Northwest N.B.



Components of Population Change – Northwest N.B.

	Jul 2021 to Jul 2022	Previous 10 Years (Avg.)
Natural Change	-474	-236
Births	578	641
Deaths	1,052	877
Net International Migration	812	238
Immigration	590	222
Other (Net)	222	+16
Net Interprovincial Migration	1,024	-77
Net Intraprovincial Migration⁴	-208	-293

⁴ 'Intraprovincial migrants': persons who moved to a different city, town, village or community, but stayed within the same province or territory.

While the number of individuals moving to the Northwest has increased in recent years, the region continues to see a significant number of young individuals leave to other parts of the province.

Migration by Age Group – Northwest N.B.

	Jul 2021 to Jul 2022	Previous 10 Years (Avg.)
International (Net)		
0 to 17 years	+201	+70
18 to 24 years	+219	+37
25 to 54 years	+389	+128
55 to 64 years	-5	+2
65 years and over	+8	+1
Interprovincial (Net)		
0 to 17 years	+251	+12
18 to 24 years	+136	-94
25 to 54 years	+364	-42
55 to 64 years	+144	+24
65 years and over	+129	+23
Intraprovincial (Net)		
0 to 17 years	+13	-21
18 to 24 years	-91	-132
25 to 54 years	-83	-116
55 to 64 years	-12	-13
65 years and over	-35	-13

As of July 2022, the Northwest's population had the tenth highest median age (48.8 years) among Canada's seventy-six economic regions. This median was slightly higher among the region's female population (49.9 years) compared to its male population (47.7 years).

Median Age by Region – N.B. – 2022



Language⁵

At the time of the 2021 Census, 50.4% of the Northwest New Brunswick population's first official language⁶ was English, while 49.0% of individuals' first official language was French.

First Official Language – Northwest N.B. – May 2021

	Total	%
English	38,080	50.4%
French	37,015	49.0%
English and French	385	0.5%
Neither English nor French	95	0.1%

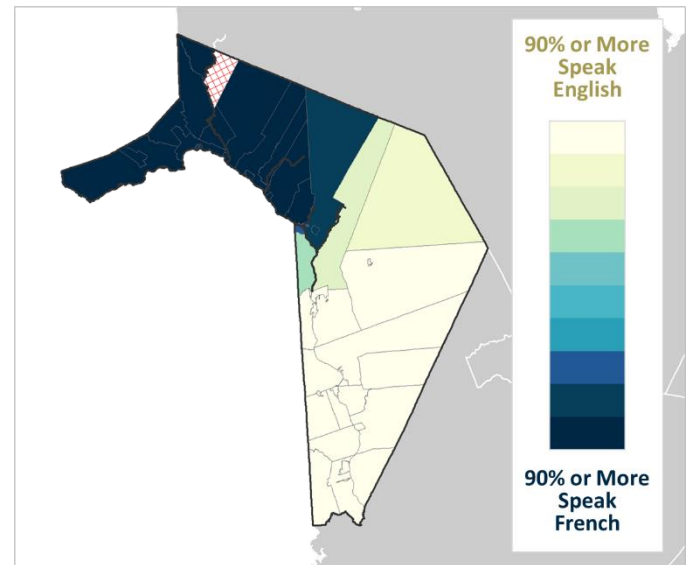
A significant number of individuals in the region were able to speak in both official languages (38.8% of the population).

Knowledge of Official Languages – Northwest N.B. – May 2021

	Total	%
English Only	33,410	44.2%
French Only	12,710	16.8%
Both English and French	29,340	38.8%
Neither English nor French	110	0.1%

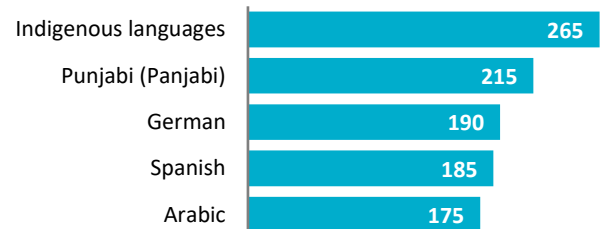
Language capabilities and preferences varied significantly across the region, with the majority of residents in the most southern parts of the region speaking primarily English, and the majority of residents in more northern parts of the region speaking primarily French. These northern communities were also where the majority of the region's bilingual population was found.

First Official Language by Community – Northwest N.B. – May 2021



Beyond the two official languages, some of the most common languages spoken in the Northwest were Indigenous languages along with Punjabi, German, Spanish and Arabic.

Most Common Mother Tongues⁷ (Excluding English and French) – Northwest N.B. – May 2021



⁵ Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Population (Tables 98-10-0170 and 98-10-0180).

⁶ First official language: The official language (English or French) in which a person is generally more proficient.

⁷ Mother tongue refers to the first language learned at home in childhood and still understood by the person at the time the data was collected.

Education⁸

At the time of the 2021 Census, only 53.4% of the region's population aged 25 to 64 had completed some form of post-secondary education; this percentage ranked fifty-ninth among Canada's seventy-six economic regions and was well below the province-wide average of 60.3%.

Compared to the province as a whole, individuals in the Northwest that had completed a post-secondary education were more likely to have an apprenticeship or trades certificates and less likely to have college or university credentials.

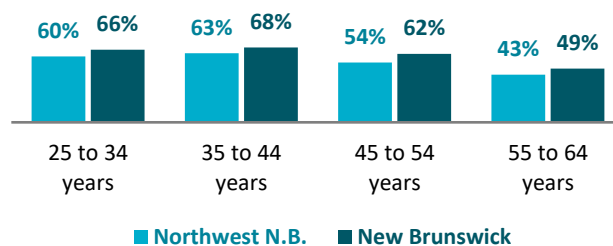
Highest Level of Education Among the Population Aged 25 to 64 Years – May 2021

	Northwest N.B.	New Brunswick
Less than High School	13.3%	11.0%
High School or Equivalent	33.3%	28.7%
Post-Secondary	53.4%	60.3%
Apprenticeship/Trades	10.3%	7.8%
Other Certificate/Diploma	26.7%	29.0%
Degree	16.3%	23.5%

Both in the Northwest region and across the province, individuals with the following traits were generally more likely to have post-secondary credentials:

- Living in an urban (/non-rural) community
- Younger (aged 25 to 44 years)
- Female

Percentage of Population with Post-Secondary Credentials by Age Group – May 2021



Percentage of Population with Post-Secondary Credentials by Sex and Age Group – May 2021

	25 to 44 years		45 to 64 years	
	Northwest N.B.	N.B.	Northwest N.B.	N.B.
Men	55%	61%	45%	52%
Women	68%	73%	52%	58%
Total	61%	67%	48%	55%

Percentage of Population with Post-Secondary Credentials by Community and Age Group – Northwest N.B. – May 2021

	25 to 44 Years	45 to 64 Years	25 to 64 Years
Edmundston	72%	59%	72%
Woodstock	65%	54%	65%
Grand Falls	62%	45%	62%
Florenceville-Bristol	69%	68%	69%
Other	57%	44%	57%

⁸ Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Population (Table 98-10-0387).

Labour Force

Overview⁹

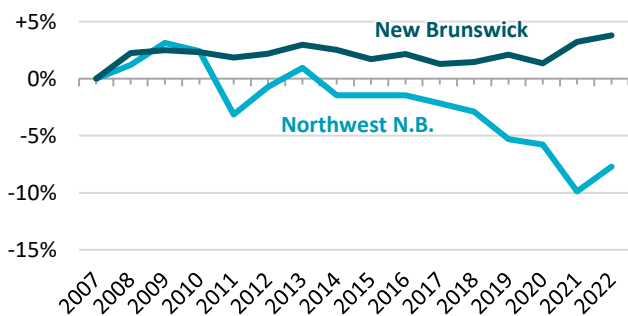
Labour Force Characteristics – 2022

	Northwest N.B.	New Brunswick
Population Aged 15+	65,200	664,100
Not in Labour Force	27,000	261,600
Labour Force	38,300	402,500
Employment	36,100	373,500
Unemployment	2,100	29,000
Participation Rate	58.7%	60.6%
Employment Rate	55.4%	56.2%
Unemployment Rate	5.5%	7.2%

Throughout 2022, there were an average of 65,200 individuals participating in the labour force (i.e., employed or actively looking for work) in the region. In the long-term, the region has seen its labour force shrink significantly.

Despite these long-term trends however, the region saw both labour force (+2.4%) and employment (+3.4%) growth in 2022. This growth was driven primarily by an influx of international and interprovincial migrants.

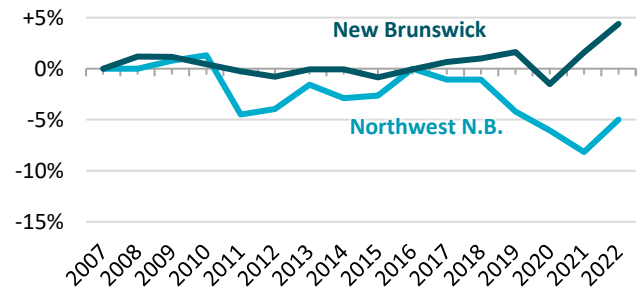
Labour Force Growth Relative to 2007



In 2022, only 58.7% of the region's population aged 15 years and over were participating in the labour force, compared to 60.6% at a provincial level, and 65.4% nationally. This seemingly low labour force participation rate was in large part a reflection of the region's

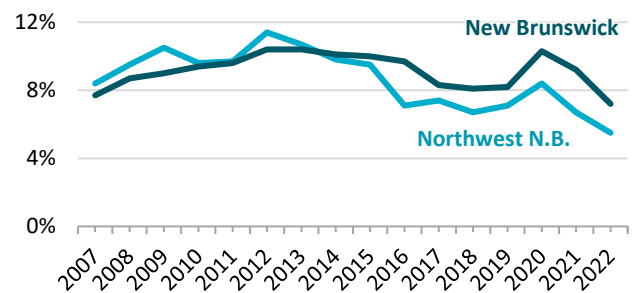
relatively old population (since older individuals are less likely to participate in the labour force). When age is accounted for, the Northwest is much closer to being on par with other parts of country – among the population aged 25 to 54 years, 87.3% of individuals in the region were participating in the labour force, compared to 87.5% at a provincial level, and 88.6% nationally.

Employment Growth Relative to 2007



Population aging has had a significant effect on the unemployment rate. The growing number of retirements over the past few decades has resulted in increased job opportunities for many of those who remain in the labour force, leading to reduced unemployment levels. Between 2012 and 2022, the Northwest region saw its unemployment rate fall from 11.4% to 5.5%.

Unemployment Rate



⁹ Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey (Table 14-10-0393).

Industry¹⁰

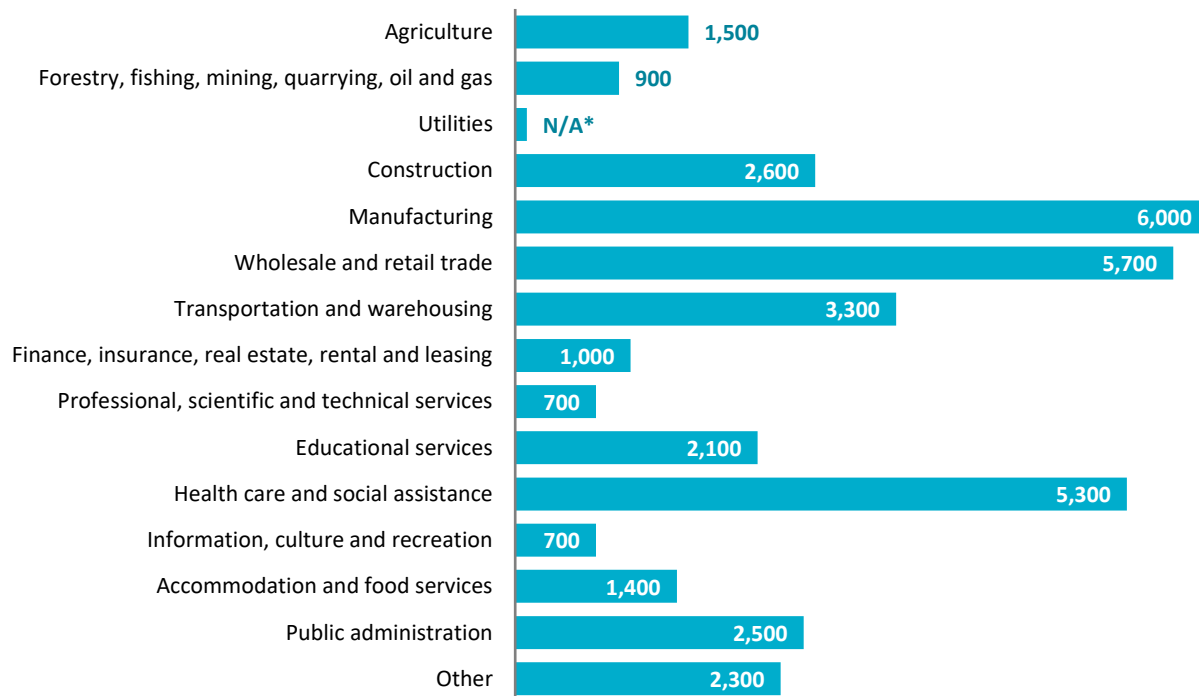
Some of the industries that accounted for a significantly larger share of overall employment in the region compared to the country as a whole included:

- Agriculture
- Forestry and logging
- Manufacturing (e.g. food products, wood products, etc.)
- Truck transportation

On the other hand, some of the industries that accounted for a relatively smaller share of overall employment in the region compared to the country as a whole included:

- Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction
- Professional, scientific and technical services (e.g. legal services, IT companies, etc.)
- Finance, insurance, real estate, rental and leasing
- Utilities

Employment by Sector - Northwest New Brunswick - 2022



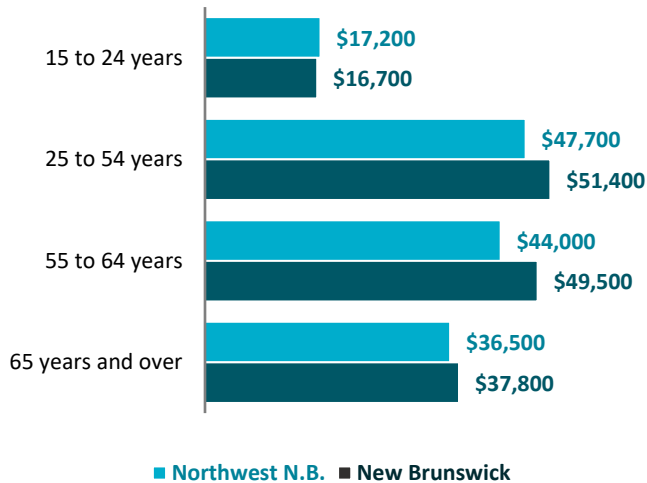
*Suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the Statistics Act

¹⁰ Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey (Table 14-10-0392).

Income¹¹

In 2019, individuals aged 15 years and over in Northwest New Brunswick had an average income level of \$40,800, well below both the province-wide (\$44,000) and national (\$52,300) averages.

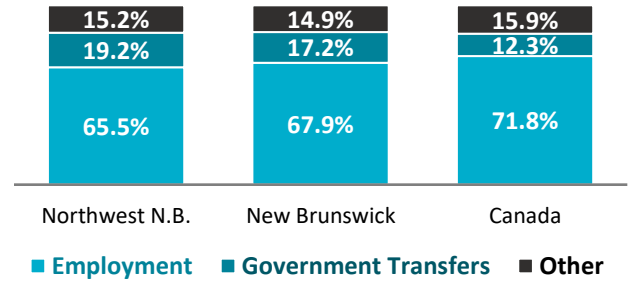
Average Total Income by Age Group – 2019



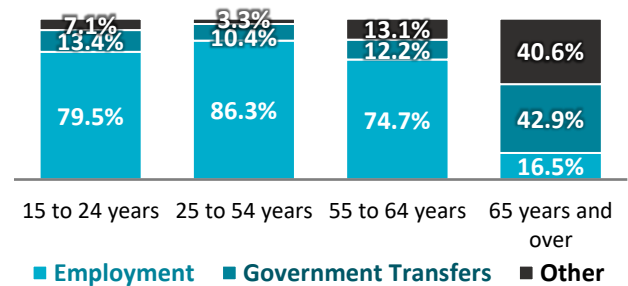
Furthermore, individuals in the Northwest had a relatively high dependence on government transfers. In 2019, government transfers accounted for 19.2% of total aggregate income in the region, compared to 17.2% province-wide, and 12.3% nationally. This gap was driven primarily by two main factors:

- A significant number of Old Age Security (OAS), Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) and Canadian Pension Plan (CPP) recipients in the region due its relatively older population.
- A significant number of Employment Insurance (EI) beneficiaries.

Sources of Income – 2019

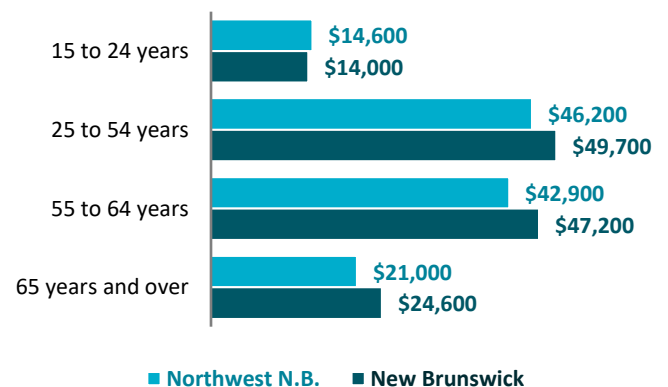


Sources of Income by Age Group – Northwest N.B. – 2019



Among Northwest New Brunswickers with employment income, the average amount earned was \$38,400. This was well below both the province-wide (\$42,200) and national (\$50,600) averages. Among the core working-age population (aged 25 to 54 years), these averages were \$46,200, \$49,700 and \$58,400, respectively.

Average Employment Income by Age Group – 2019



¹¹ Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Population (Table 98-10-0073).

Appendix: Population by Community¹²

Population by Community – Northwest New Brunswick

	Population					% Change		
	2007	2012	2017	2021	2022	1-Year	5-Year	15-Year
Edmundston	16,833	16,229	16,826	16,863	17,026	+1.0%	+1.2%	+1.1%
Grand Falls / Grand-Sault	5,809	5,624	5,350	5,302	5,313	+0.2%	-0.7%	-8.5%
Woodstock	5,218	5,285	5,336	5,651	5,849	+3.5%	+9.6%	+12.1%
Florenceville-Bristol	1,588	1,646	1,629	1,651	1,677	+1.6%	+2.9%	+5.6%
Perth-Andover	1,811	1,728	1,570	1,568	1,632	+4.1%	+3.9%	-9.9%
Saint-Léonard	1,348	1,352	1,313	1,314	1,335	+1.6%	+1.7%	-1.0%
Plaster Rock	1,155	1,120	1,030	1,012	1,029	+1.7%	-0.1%	-10.9%
Neqotkuk (First Nations)	922	1,062	980	966	981	+1.6%	+0.1%	+6.4%
Sainte-Anne-de-Madawaska	1,071	999	974	967	980	+1.3%	+0.6%	-8.5%
Hartland	975	963	1,003	974	954	-2.1%	-4.9%	-2.2%
Clair	886	843	793	787	798	+1.4%	+0.6%	-9.9%
Saint-André	874	831	782	783	798	+1.9%	+2.0%	-8.7%
Drummond	835	775	743	733	744	+1.5%	+0.1%	-10.9%
Rivière-Verte	786	751	752	753	735	-2.4%	-2.3%	-6.5%
Lac Baker	727	711	688	660	693	+5.0%	+0.7%	-4.7%
Baker-Brook	546	610	561	569	592	+4.0%	+5.5%	+8.4%
Centreville	535	543	568	531	528	-0.6%	-7.0%	-1.3%
Saint-François de Madawaska	572	504	478	438	427	-2.5%	-10.7%	-25.3%
Bath	545	521	512	423	442	+4.5%	-13.7%	-18.9%
Woodstock (First Nations)	361	346	326	360	339	-5.8%	+4.0%	-6.1%
Aroostook	367	360	308	305	310	+1.6%	+0.6%	-15.5%
St. Hilaire	254	294	271	275	283	+2.9%	+4.4%	+11.4%
St. Basile (First Nations)	178	208	218	217	220	+1.4%	+0.9%	+23.6%
Other ¹³	37,932	37,203	35,645	35,377	35,948	+1.6%	+0.9%	-5.2%

¹² Source(s): Statistics Canada, Annual Demographic Estimates (Table 17-10-0142).

¹³ "Other" includes communities that were unincorporated as of 2016, along with communities with a population of less than 200.