

July 2025

REGIONAL PROFILE

Northwest New Brunswick



An analysis of Northwest New Brunswick, covering topics such as demographics, language capabilities, education levels, income, and labour force trends.

Data Sources:

- Statistics Canada – Annual Demographic Estimates
- Statistics Canada – 2021 Census of Population
- Statistics Canada – Labour Force Survey

Regional Profile: Northwest New Brunswick

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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.

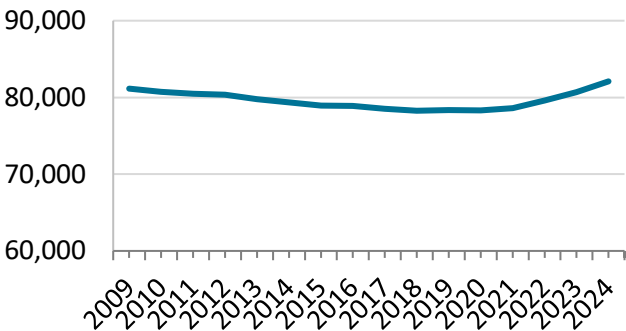
Outside of the city of Edmundston and the towns of Grand Falls and Woodstock, Northwest New Brunswick is a largely rural region. At the time of the 2021 Census, rural areas² accounted for 70.1% of the region’s population.

Demographics

Population Trends³

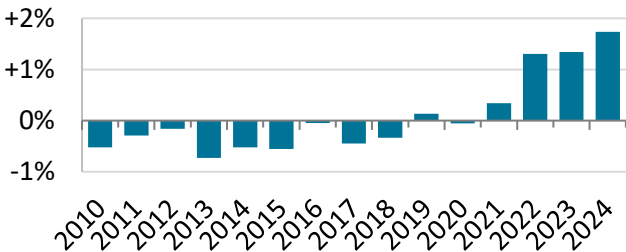
As of July 1, 2024, the population of New Brunswick’s Northwest region was estimated to be 82,092, up 1.7% (+1,403) year-over-year. This represented the fourth consecutive year of growth for the region – a significant improvement after having seen declines in twenty-two of the previous twenty-three years.

Population by Year – Northwest N.B.



Despite the positive trends, the region continues to lag behind the rest of the country in terms of growth, ranking fifty-second among Canada’s seventy-six economic regions in terms of five-year population growth.

Population Growth by Year – Northwest N.B.



Population Change by Region – N.B. – 2009 to 2024

	2009 to 2014	2014 to 2019	2019 to 2024	2009 to 2024
Northeast	-2.1%	-0.9%	+3.3%	+0.2%
Southeast	+4.8%	+5.7%	+17.8%	+30.3%
Southwest	-0.5%	+1.8%	+7.7%	+9.0%
Central	+4.0%	+4.4%	+10.4%	+19.8%
Northwest	-2.2%	-1.2%	+4.7%	+1.2%

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 17-10-0150, 17-10-0151 and 17-10-0155).

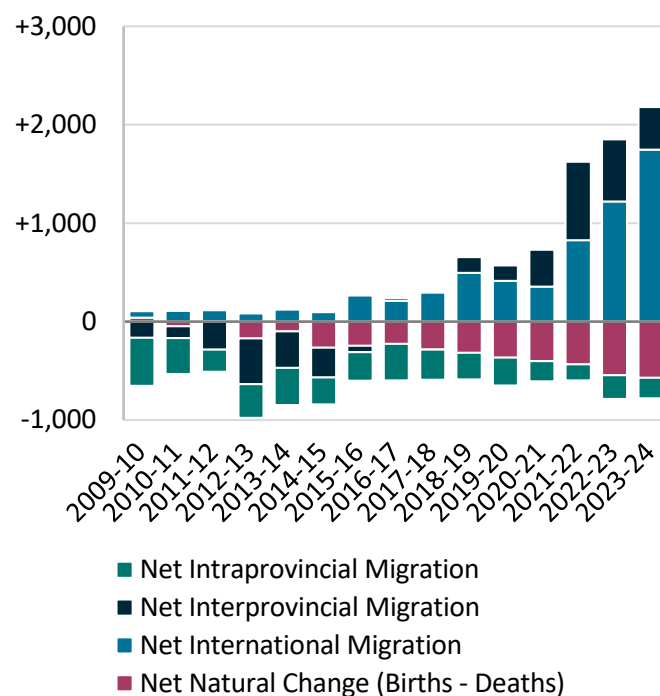
Population by Community – Northwest N.B.

	2009	2014	2019	2024
Edmundston	16,441	16,536	16,744	17,866
Woodstock	5,254	5,242	5,441	6,168
Grand Falls	5,767	5,456	5,250	5,364
Haut-Madawaska	4,004	3,823	3,819	4,032
Other	49,692	48,305	47,118	48,662

The region's struggles to grow its population 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.

Furthermore, due to its relatively old population, the region sees a significant number of deaths each year. While increased immigration levels and an influx of in-migrants from Ontario have helped to mitigate these challenges, growth is expected to remain a challenge going forward – particularly due to the federal government's plans to lower immigration levels.

Components of Population Change – Northwest N.B.



Components of Population Change – Northwest N.B.

	Jul 2023 to Jul 2024	Previous 10 Years (Average)
Natural Change	-570	-319
Births	610	621
Deaths	1,180	940
International (Net)	1,747	430
Immigration	1,061	328
Temporary Residents (Net)	704	135
Emigration (Net)	-18	-33
Interprovincial (Net)	434	140
Intraprovincial (Net)⁴	-208	-277

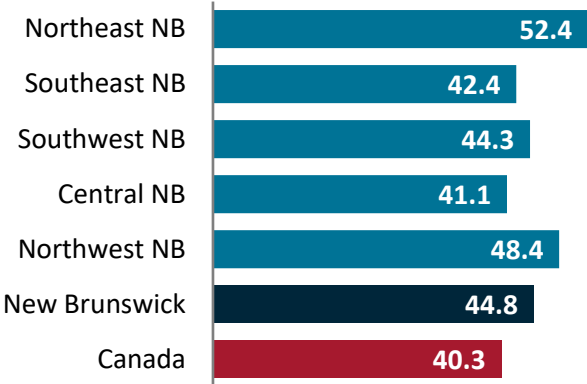
⁴ 'Intraprovincial migrants': persons who moved to a different city, town, village or community, but stayed within the same province or territory.

Migration by Age Group – Northwest N.B.

	Jul 2023 to Jul 2024	Previous 10 Years (Average)
International (Net)		
0 to 17 years	+403	+118
18 to 24 years	+418	+93
25 to 54 years	+889	+215
55 to 64 years	+32	+3
65 years and over	+5	+3
Interprovincial (Net)		
0 to 17 years	+168	+66
18 to 24 years	-10	-60
25 to 54 years	+121	+36
55 to 64 years	+132	+61
65 years and over	+23	+38
Intraprovincial (Net)		
0 to 17 years	+32	-16
18 to 24 years	-116	-122
25 to 54 years	-93	-112
55 to 64 years	-10	-12
65 years and over	-21	-15

As of July 2024, the Northwest region’s population had the tenth highest median age (48.4 years) among Canada’s seventy-six economic regions. This median was slightly higher among the region’s female population (49.3 years) compared to its male population (47.4 years).

Median Age by Region – 2024



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%

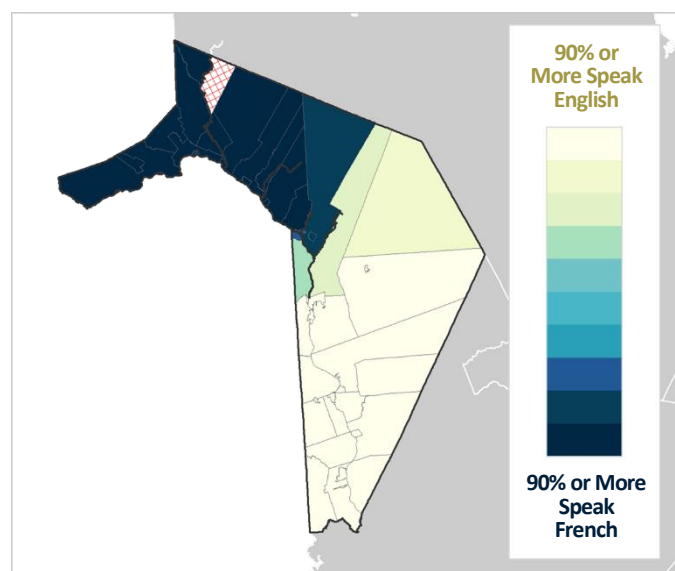
A significant number of individuals in the region were able to speak in both official languages (38.8% of the population).

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

Indigenous languages	265
Punjabi (Panjabi)	215
German	190
Spanish	185
Arabic	175

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.

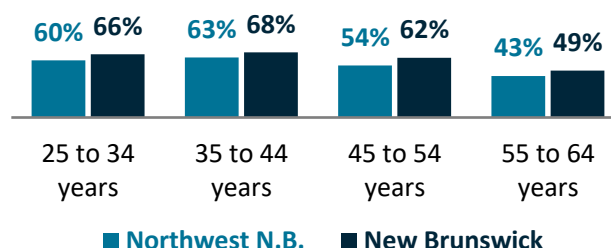
Highest Level of Education Among the Population Aged 25 to 64 Years – May 2021

	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 (or 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

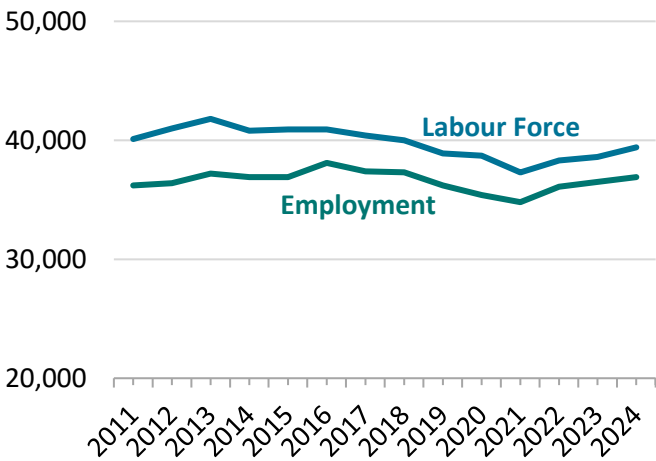
Overview⁹

Labour Force Characteristics – 2024

	Northwest N.B.	New Brunswick
Population Aged 15+		
Population	67,400	710,200
Not in Labour Force	27,900	279,900
Labour Force	39,400	430,300
Employment	36,900	400,000
Unemployment	2,500	30,300
Participation Rate	58.5%	60.6%
Employment Rate	54.7%	56.3%
Unemployment Rate	6.3%	7.0%
Population Aged 25 to 54		
Population	26,700	309,800
Not in Labour Force	3,700	37,900
Labour Force	23,000	271,900
Employment	21,700	255,600
Unemployment	1,300	16,300
Participation Rate	86.1%	87.8%
Employment Rate	81.3%	82.5%
Unemployment Rate	5.7%	6.0%

Throughout 2024, an average of 39,400 residents of Northwest New Brunswick were participating in the labour force (i.e., employed or actively looking for work). Following a prolonged period of declines, this total has seen a small amount of growth over the past few years due to increased population growth.

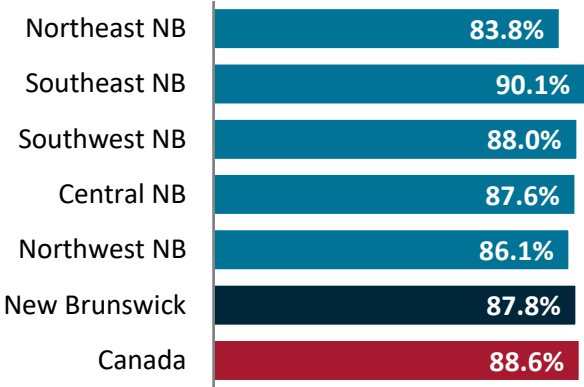
Labour Force and Employment – Northwest N.B.



Northwest New Brunswick’s labour force represented a relatively small percentage of its overall adult population. In 2024, only 58.5% of individuals aged 15 years and over in the region were participating in the labour force, compared to 60.6% at the provincial level, and 65.5% nationally. This gap was in part a reflection of the high concentration of older individuals in the region (since older individuals are less likely to participate in the labour force). When the population is narrowed to only include individuals aged 25 to 54 years, the region’s participation rate is noticeably closer to being on par with the rest of the country. In 2024, among the population aged 25 to 54 years, 86.1% of individuals in the region were participating in the labour force, compared to 87.8% at a provincial level, and 88.6% nationally.

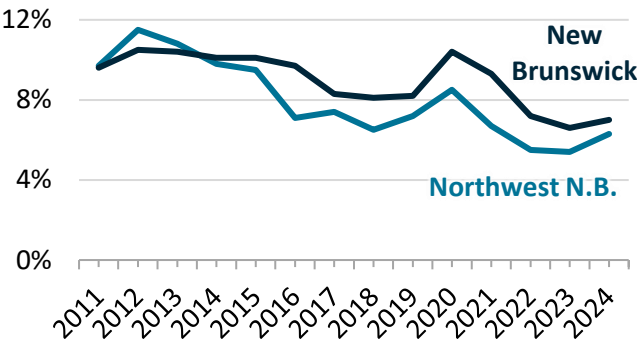
⁹ Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey (Table 14-10-0393).

Participation Rate Among the Population Aged 25 to 54 by Region – 2024



As of 2024, the Northwest region’s unemployment rate (6.3%) was tied for second lowest among New Brunswick’s five economic regions. This rate has trended downward over the past several years due an increasing number of job opportunities, driven by a combination of economic growth and a growing number of retirements.

Unemployment Rate



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
- 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 – May 2021

Sector	Employment	Location Quotient ¹¹
Agriculture	1,625	2.50
Forestry	505	6.14
Fishing, hunting and trapping	25	0.46
Mining and quarrying	95	0.22
Utilities	155	0.55
Construction	2,065	0.79
Manufacturing	4,840	1.72
Wholesale trade	810	0.72
Retail trade	4,050	1.07
Transportation and warehousing	2,505	1.43
Finance, insurance, real estate and leasing	1,020	0.47
Professional, scientific and technical services	895	0.31
Business, building and other support services	955	0.66
Educational services	2,255	0.87
Health care and social assistance	5,635	1.23
Information, culture and recreation	805	0.65
Accommodation and food services	1,820	1.08
Public administration	2,180	0.97
Other services (not elsewhere classified)	1,580	1.16
Total	33,815	N/A

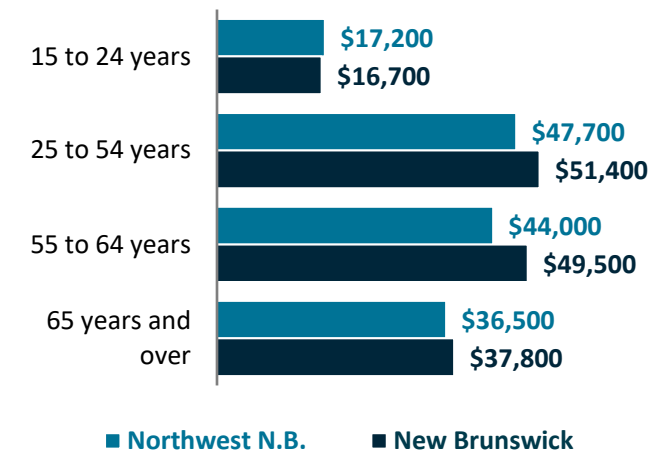
¹⁰ Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Population (Table 98-10-0592).

¹¹ The location quotient is a measure of the concentration of employment in a given sector in a region relative to the level of employment in that sector at the national level. For example, if the agriculture sector accounted for 4.81% of total employment in Northwest New Brunswick, and 1.92% of total employment Canada-wide, the location quotient would be $4.81/1.92 = 2.50$.

Income¹²

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.

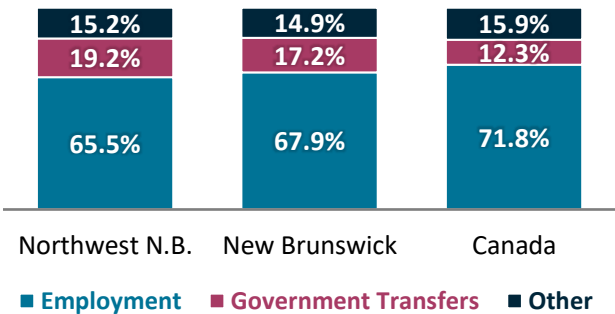
Average Total Income by Age Group – 2019



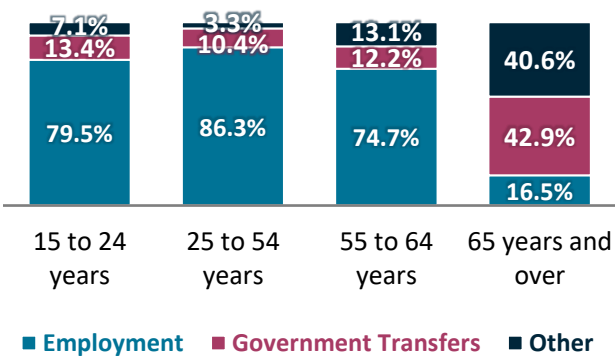
Furthermore, individuals in the Northwest had a relatively high dependence on government transfers. In 2019, government transfers accounted for 19.2% of total aggregate income in the region, compared to 17.2% province-wide, and 12.3% nationally. This gap was driven primarily by two main factors:

- 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 – Central N.B. – 2019

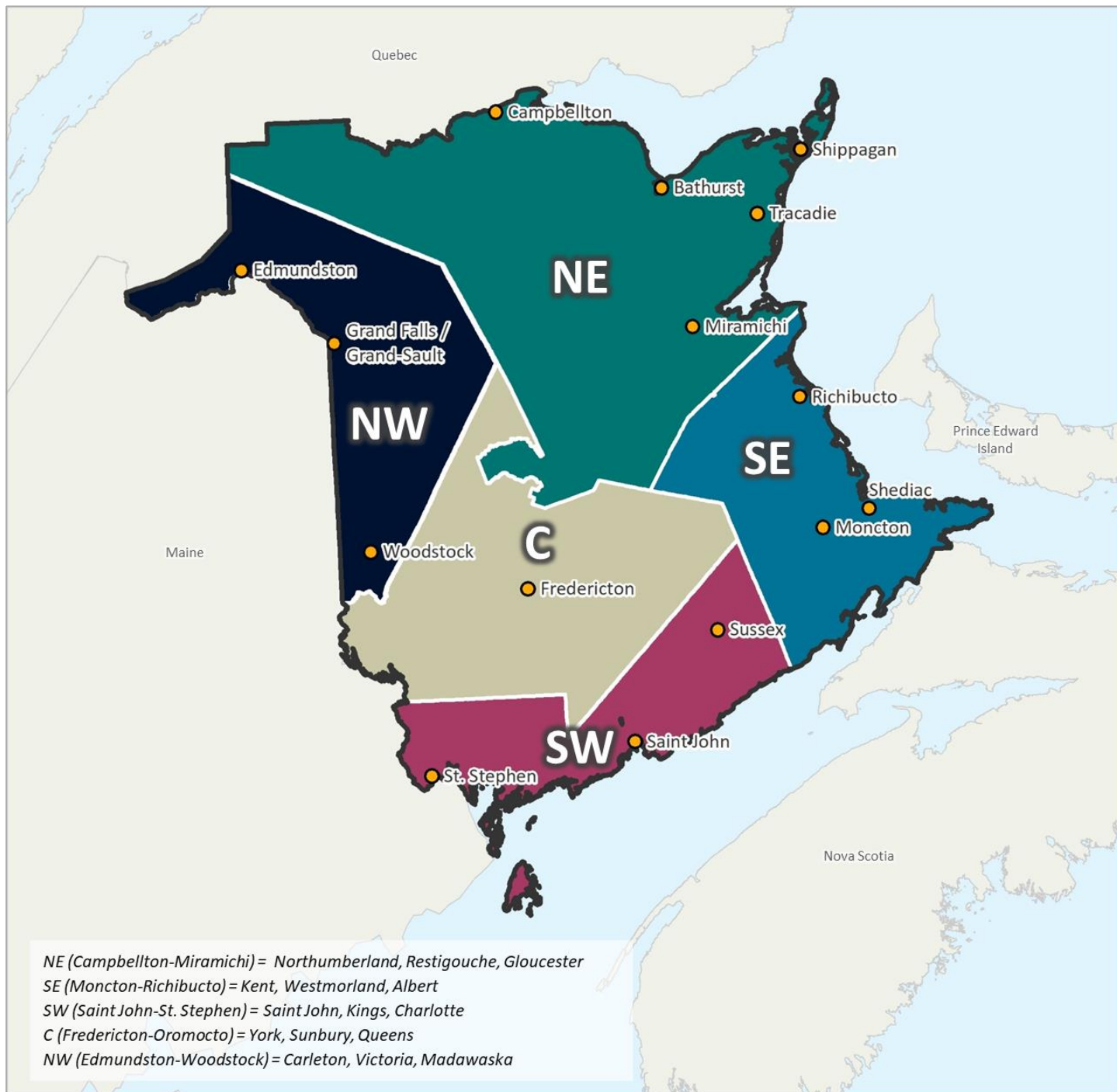


Among Northwest New Brunswickers with employment income, the average amount earned was \$38,400. This was well below both the province-wide (\$42,200) and national (\$50,600) averages. Among the core working-age population (aged 25 to 54 years), these averages were \$46,200, \$49,700 and \$58,400, respectively.

¹² Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Population (Table 98-10-0073).

Appendices

Appendix A: Reference Map of Economic Regions



Appendix B: Population by Community¹³

	Population					% Change		
	2009	2014	2019	2023	2024	1-Year	5-Year	15-Year
Edmundston	16,441	16,536	16,744	17,272	17,866	+3.4%	+6.7%	+8.7%
Woodstock	5,254	5,242	5,441	6,045	6,168	+2.0%	+13.4%	+17.4%
Grand Falls / Grand-Sault	5,767	5,456	5,250	5,365	5,364	-0.0%	+2.2%	-7.0%
Haut-Madawaska	4,004	3,823	3,819	3,902	4,032	+3.3%	+5.6%	+0.7%
Saint-André	1,965	1,933	1,821	1,876	1,934	+3.1%	+6.2%	-1.6%
Perth-Andover	1,785	1,650	1,599	1,617	1,665	+3.0%	+4.1%	-6.7%
Florenceville-Bristol	1,618	1,633	1,607	1,591	1,570	-1.3%	-2.3%	-3.0%
Saint-Léonard	1,328	1,358	1,359	1,350	1,386	+2.7%	+2.0%	+4.4%
Tobique 20 (First Nations)	973	1,008	1,050	1,047	1,051	+0.4%	+0.1%	+8.0%
Plaster Rock	1,137	1,071	1,016	1,051	1,043	-0.8%	+2.7%	-8.3%
Hartland	949	971	962	966	1,023	+5.9%	+6.3%	+7.8%
Sainte-Anne-de-Madawaska	1,028	986	929	877	885	+0.9%	-4.7%	-13.9%
Lac Baker	712	703	702	777	789	+1.5%	+12.4%	+10.8%
Rivière-Verte	746	744	763	757	785	+3.7%	+2.9%	+5.2%
Drummond	796	756	737	759	754	-0.7%	+2.3%	-5.3%
Centreville	539	553	544	533	540	+1.3%	-0.7%	+0.2%
Bath	544	485	495	458	462	+0.9%	-6.7%	-15.1%
Woodstock 23 (First Nations)	362	341	409	453	457	+0.9%	+11.7%	+26.2%
St. Basile 10 (First Nations)	193	212	316	388	400	+3.1%	+26.6%	+107.3%
Aroostook	336	344	312	341	329	-3.5%	+5.4%	-2.1%
Other ¹⁴	34,681	33,557	32,497	33,264	33,589	+1.0%	+3.4%	-3.1%

¹³ Source(s): Statistics Canada, Annual Demographic Estimates (Table 17-10-0155).

¹⁴ "Other" includes communities that were unincorporated as of 2021, along with communities with a population of less than 200.