

July 2025

REGIONAL PROFILE

Southwest New Brunswick



An analysis of Southwest 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: Southwest 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 Southwest region consists of three counties: Saint John, Kings and Charlotte. Combined, these three counties encompass a total land area of 8,362 square kilometres.

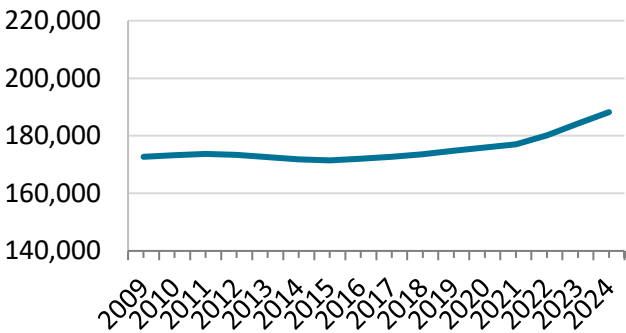
The majority of the Southwest region’s population live in the Greater Saint John Area (which consists of the City of Saint John, the towns of Quispamsis and Rothesay, and a number of smaller communities). Outside of the Greater Saint John Area, some of the notable communities in the region include Sussex, and Saint Andrews. At the time of the 2021 Census, rural areas² accounted for 40.4% of the region’s population.

Demographics

Population Trends³

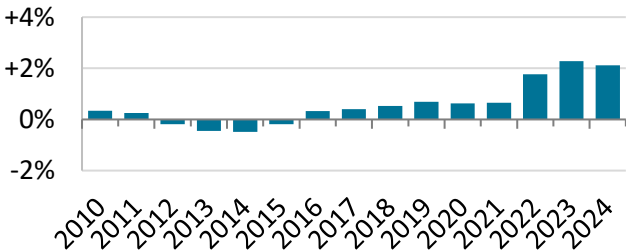
As of July 1, 2024, the population of New Brunswick’s Southwest region was estimated to be 188,216, up 2.1% (+3,907) year-over-year. This represented the seventh consecutive year in which the region’s population has grown by at least 0.5%, and the third consecutive year in which it has grown by at least 1.5%.

Population by Year – Southwest N.B.



Southwest New Brunswick ranked thirty-first among Canada’s seventy-six economic regions in terms of five-year population growth. While a significant portion of this growth was concentrated in the region’s larger communities (Saint John, Quispamsis, Sussex, etc.), most communities in the region saw some level of growth during this time.

Population Growth by Year – Southwest 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.

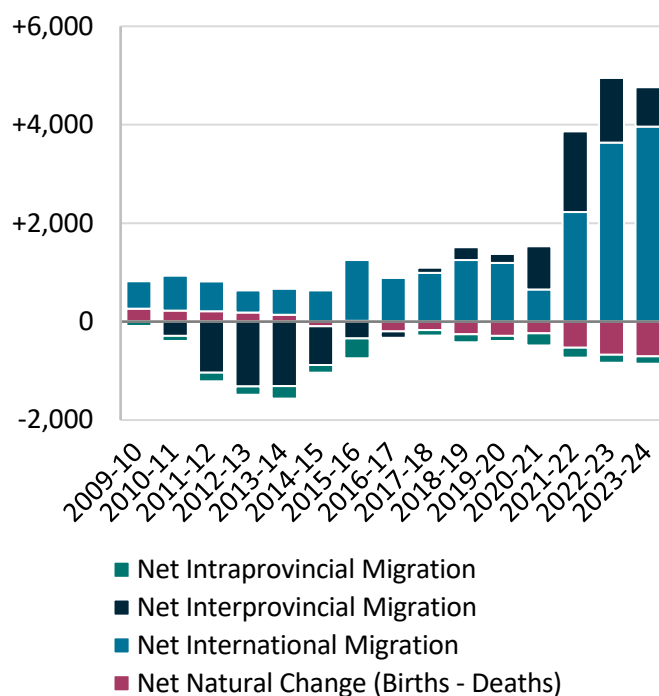
³ Source(s): Statistics Canada, Annual Demographic Estimates (Tables 17-10-0150, 17-10-0151 and 17-10-0155).

Population by Community – Southwest N.B.

	2009	2014	2019	2024
Saint John	70,295	68,907	70,670	78,165
Quispamsis	17,218	18,546	18,942	20,028
Rothsay	11,916	11,726	11,989	12,350
Grand Bay-Westfield	5,142	5,189	5,039	5,086
Other	68,130	67,419	68,185	72,587

Recent population gains in the region have been primarily driven by significant increases to the number of immigrants and temporary residents moving to the region, and to a lesser degree, an influx of in-migrants from Ontario. Historically, natural population change has also contributed to growth in the region; however, in recent years, the number of deaths in the region has exceeded the number of births (with this trend likely to continue going forward). Due to the federal government's plans to significantly reduce international migration levels going forward, growth in the region is expected to slow over the next few years, although will likely remain positive.

Components of Population Change – Southwest N.B.



Components of Population Change – Southwest N.B.

	Jul 2023 to Jul 2024	Previous 10 Years (Average)
Natural Change	-703	-229
Births	1,484	1,567
Deaths	2,187	1,796
International (Net)	3,961	1,323
Immigration	2,729	1,059
Temporary Residents (Net)	1,427	327
Emigration (Net)	-195	-63
Interprovincial (Net)	804	181
Intraprovincial (Net)⁴	-155	-181

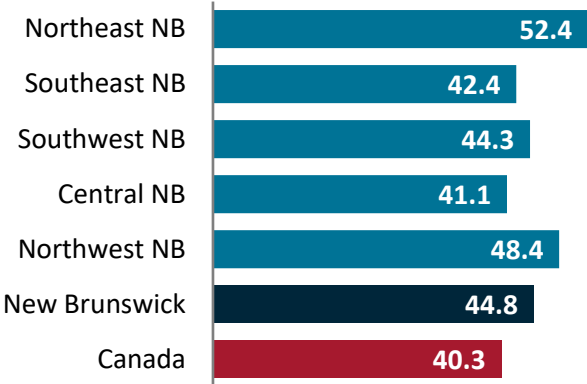
⁴ 'Intraprovincial migrants': persons who moved to a different city, town, village or community, but stayed within the same province or territory.

Migration by Age Group – Southwest N.B.

	Jul 2023 to Jul 2024	Previous 10 Years (Average)
International (Net)		
0 to 17 years	+1,298	+461
18 to 24 years	+430	+166
25 to 54 years	+2,194	+680
55 to 64 years	+36	+13
65 years and over	+3	+3
Interprovincial (Net)		
0 to 17 years	+192	+110
18 to 24 years	-32	-150
25 to 54 years	+326	+38
55 to 64 years	+217	+112
65 years and over	+101	+71
Intraprovincial (Net)		
0 to 17 years	-18	-20
18 to 24 years	-61	-62
25 to 54 years	-87	-86
55 to 64 years	-16	-24
65 years and over	+27	+11

As of July 2024, the Southwest’s population had the twenty-fourth highest median age (44.3 years) among Canada’s seventy-six economic regions. This median was slightly higher among the region’s female population (45.4 years) compared to its male population (43.1 years).

Median Age by Region – 2024



Language⁵

At the time of the 2021 Census, 96.5% of the Southwest New Brunswick population's first official language⁶ was English, while 2.9% of individuals' first official language was French.

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

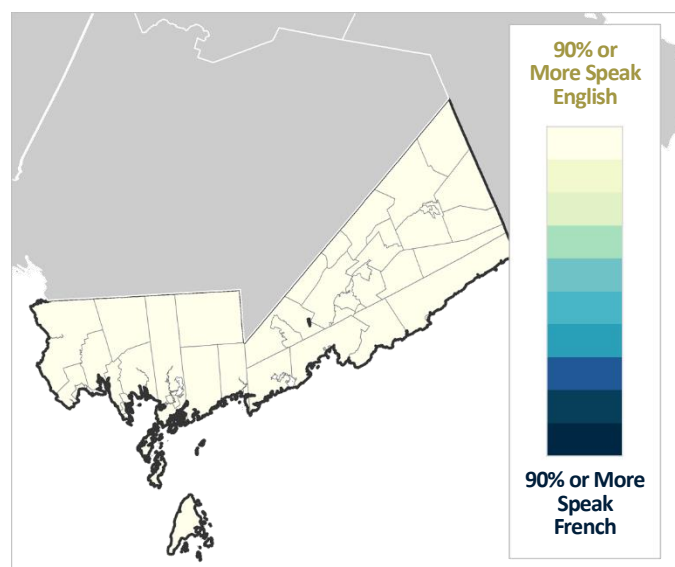
	Total	%
English	165,930	96.5%
French	5,020	2.9%
English and French	465	0.3%
Neither English nor French	495	0.3%

Approximately one-in-seven (14.4%) individuals in the region were able to speak in both official languages. This represented the lowest proportion among New Brunswick's five economic regions. Language capabilities and preferences were fairly uniform across the region.

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

	Total	%
English Only	146,515	85.2%
French Only	180	0.1%
Both English and French	24,675	14.4%
Neither English nor French	545	0.3%

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



Beyond the two official languages, some of the most common languages spoken in the Southwest were Arabic, Mandarin, Tagalog, Spanish and Korean.

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

Arabic	1,280
Mandarin	875
Tagalog (Filipino)	775
Spanish	460
Korean	445

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, 60.8% of the region's population aged 25 to 64 had completed some form of post-secondary education; this percentage ranked forty-first among Canada's seventy-six economic regions and was slightly above the province-wide average of 60.3%.

The Southwest was more or less on par with the province in terms of the types of credentials individuals chose to pursue (apprenticeship vs. college vs. university); however, the region did have a noticeably lower proportion of its population that had not graduated high school (8.2% within the region compared to 11.0% province-wide).

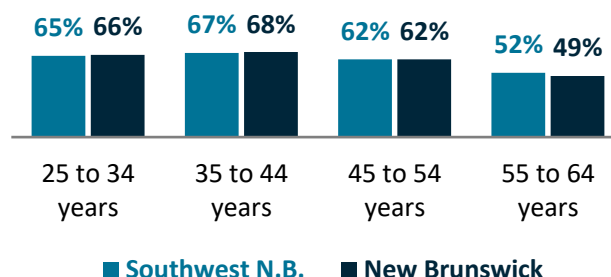
Highest Level of Education Among the Population Aged 25 to 64 Years – May 2021

	Southwest N.B.	New Brunswick
Less than High School	8.2%	11.0%
High School or Equivalent	31.0%	28.7%
Post-Secondary	60.8%	60.3%
Apprenticeship/Trades	7.9%	7.8%
Other Certificate/Diploma	28.9%	29.0%
Degree	23.9%	23.5%

Both in the Southwest 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	
	Southwest N.B.	N.B.	Southwest N.B.	N.B.
Men	62%	61%	56%	52%
Women	71%	73%	57%	58%
Total	66%	67%	56%	55%

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

	25 to 44 Years	45 to 64 Years	25 to 64 Years
Saint John	63%	53%	58%
Quispamsis	82%	76%	79%
Rothsay	80%	73%	76%
St. Stephen	59%	51%	54%
Other	63%	52%	57%

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

Labour Force

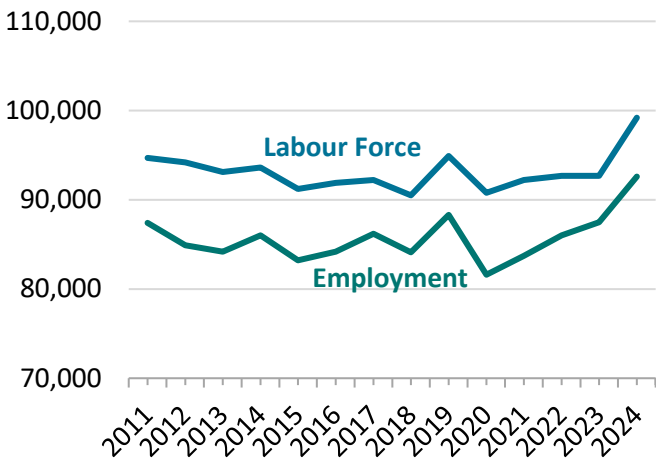
Overview⁹

Labour Force Characteristics – 2024

	Southwest N.B.	New Brunswick
Population Aged 15+		
Population	157,800	710,200
Not in Labour Force	58,600	279,900
Labour Force	99,200	430,300
Employment	92,600	400,000
Unemployment	6,600	30,300
Participation Rate	62.9%	60.6%
Employment Rate	58.7%	56.3%
Unemployment Rate	6.7%	7.0%
Population Aged 25 to 54		
Population	71,400	309,800
Not in Labour Force	8,600	37,900
Labour Force	62,800	271,900
Employment	59,000	255,600
Unemployment	3,700	16,300
Participation Rate	88.0%	87.8%
Employment Rate	82.6%	82.5%
Unemployment Rate	5.9%	6.0%

Throughout 2024, an average of 99,200 residents of Southwest New Brunswick were participating in the labour force (i.e., employed or actively looking for work). This total has seen moderate growth over the past several years due to relatively strong population growth in the region.

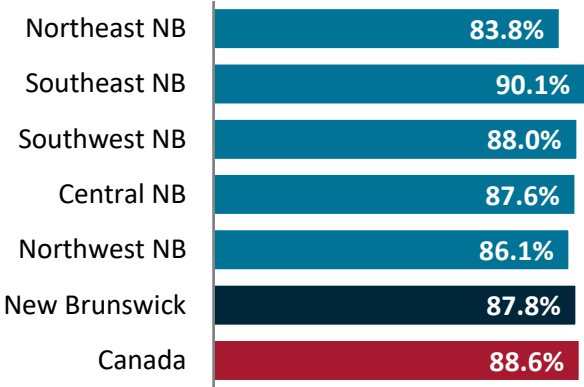
Labour Force and Employment – Southwest N.B.



In 2024, 62.9% 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. The gap between the Southwest region’s participation and the national rate was primarily due to the region having a slightly older population (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 Southwest region’s participation rate was roughly on par with the national rate. In 2024, among the population aged 25 to 54 years, 88.0% of individuals in the region were participating in the labour force, compared to 87.8% at a provincial level, and 88.6% nationally.

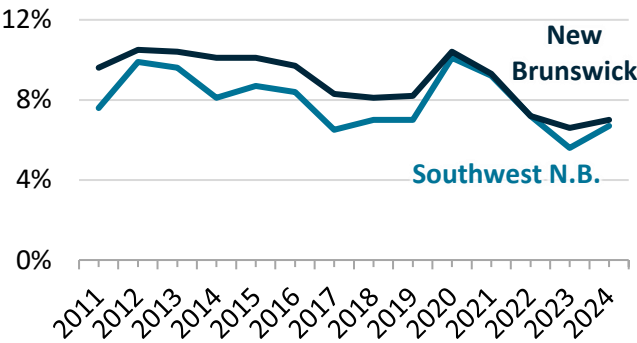
⁹ Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey (Table 14-10-0393).

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



As of 2024, the Southwest region’s unemployment rate (6.7%) was the second highest 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:

- Fishing, aquaculture, and seafood product preparation and packaging
- Utilities
- Wood and paper product manufacturing
- Petroleum product manufacturing
- Business support services (e.g. call centres)

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:

- Finance
- Information, culture and recreation
- Professional, scientific and technical services (e.g. specialized design services, scientific research. etc.)

Employment by Sector – Southwest New Brunswick – May 2021

Sector	Employment	Location Quotient ¹¹
Agriculture	1,580	1.04
Forestry and logging	345	1.80
Fishing, hunting and trapping	815	6.47
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	490	0.49
Utilities	1,625	2.49
Construction	5,545	0.92
Manufacturing	6,370	0.97
Wholesale trade	2,360	0.90
Retail trade	9,820	1.11
Transportation and warehousing	3,645	0.89
Finance, insurance, real estate and leasing	3,680	0.73
Professional, scientific and technical services	4,575	0.68
Business, building and other support services	4,145	1.22
Educational services	5,715	0.94
Health care and social assistance	12,645	1.18
Information, culture and recreation	2,540	0.88
Accommodation and food services	4,610	1.18
Public administration	4,740	0.90
Other services (not elsewhere classified)	3,500	1.10
Total	78,765	N/A

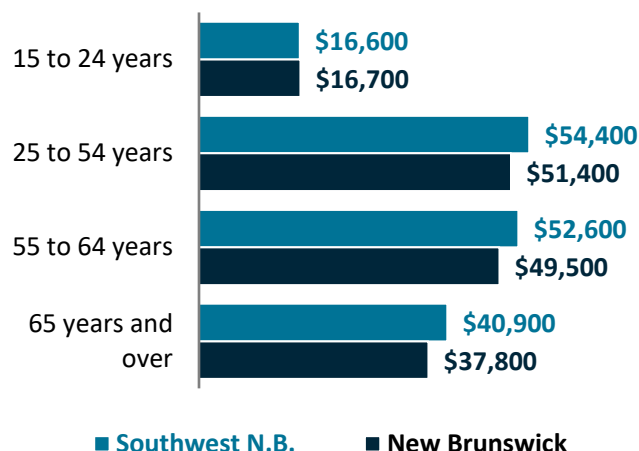
¹⁰ Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Population (Table 98-10-0592).

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 2.01% of total employment in Southwest New Brunswick, and 1.92% of total employment Canada-wide, the location quotient would be $2.01/1.92 = 1.04$.

Income¹²

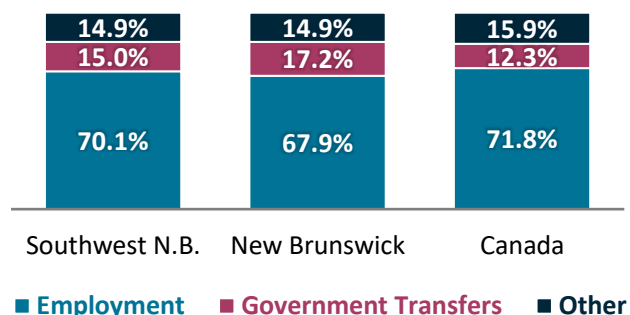
In 2019, individuals aged 15 years and over in Southwest New Brunswick had an average income level of \$47,000. This was above the province-wide average of \$44,000, but below the national average of \$52,300.

Average Total Income by Age Group – 2019

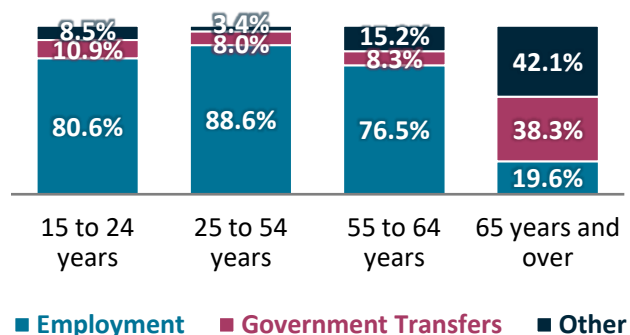


In 2019, government transfers accounted for 15.0% of total aggregate income in the region, compared to 17.2% province-wide, and 12.3% nationally. Differences across regions in terms of the percentage of total income that government transfers accounted for were primarily driven by the various regions' age profiles (older populations relied more on transfers such as Old Age Security, Guaranteed Income Supplement and the Canadian Pension Plan), along with how dependent each region's labour market was on seasonal industries (regions in which seasonal employment is more common typically have a greater number of Employment Insurance beneficiaries).

Sources of Income – 2019



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

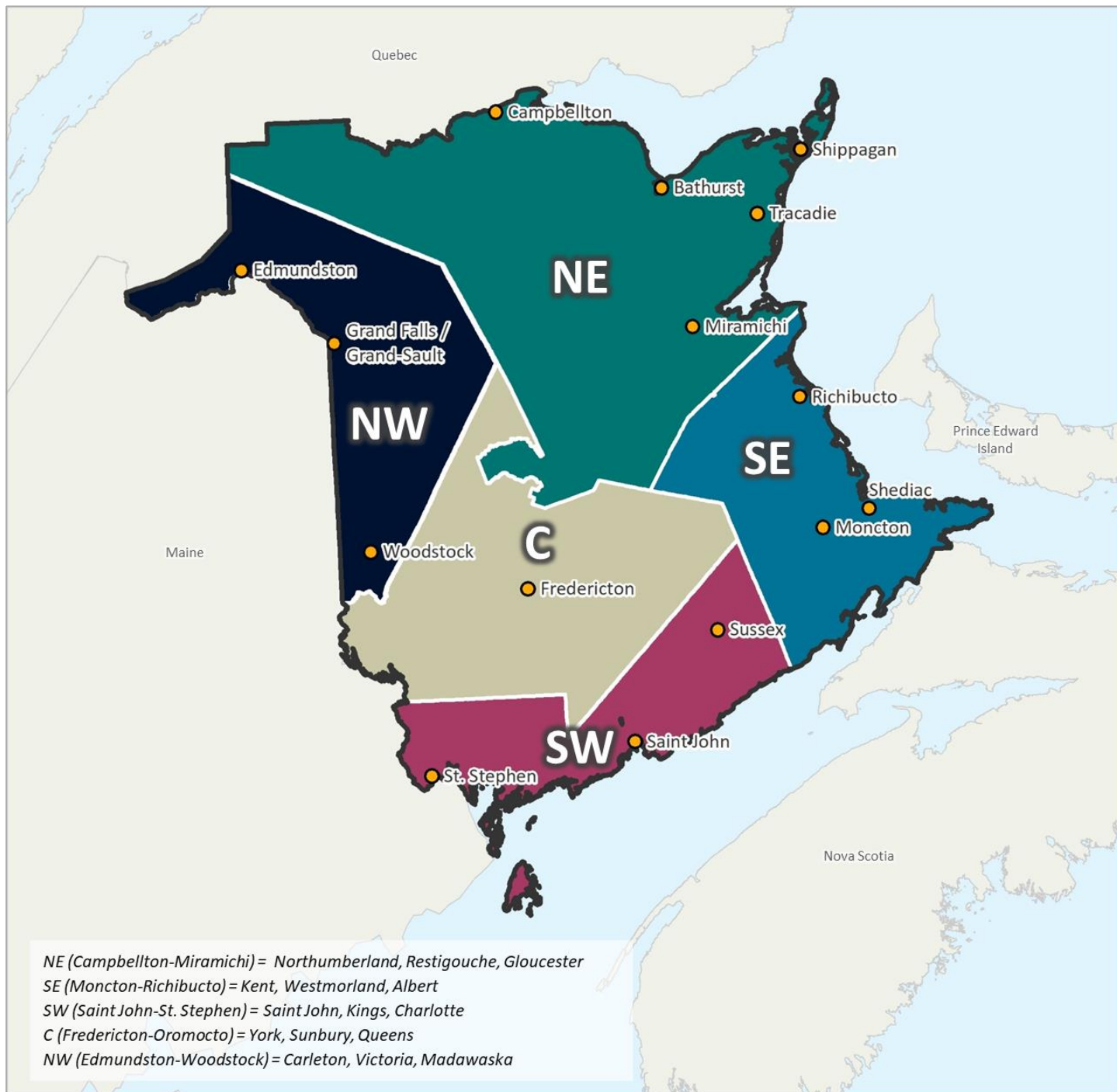


Among Southwest New Brunswickers with employment income, the average amount earned was \$46,200. This was above the province-wide average of \$42,200, but below the national average of \$50,600. Among the core working-age population (aged 25 to 54 years), these averages were \$53,800, \$49,700 and \$58,400, 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
Saint John	70,295	68,907	70,670	75,263	78,165	+3.9%	+10.6%	+11.2%
Quispamsis	17,218	18,546	18,942	19,746	20,028	+1.4%	+5.7%	+16.3%
Rothsay	11,916	11,726	11,989	12,317	12,350	+0.3%	+3.0%	+3.6%
Grand Bay-Westfield	5,142	5,189	5,039	5,117	5,086	-0.6%	+0.9%	-1.1%
Sussex	4,308	4,363	4,387	4,696	4,921	+4.8%	+12.2%	+14.2%
St. Stephen	4,785	4,570	4,615	4,805	4,878	+1.5%	+5.7%	+1.9%
Hampton	4,261	4,357	4,390	4,682	4,611	-1.5%	+5.0%	+8.2%
Grand Manan	2,417	2,418	2,510	2,699	2,719	+0.7%	+8.3%	+12.5%
Saint Andrews	1,874	1,801	1,925	2,144	2,159	+0.7%	+12.2%	+15.2%
St. George	1,518	1,484	1,583	1,669	1,725	+3.4%	+9.0%	+13.6%
Sussex Corner	1,444	1,502	1,475	1,476	1,474	-0.1%	-0.1%	+2.1%
Norton	1,314	1,363	1,419	1,414	1,436	+1.6%	+1.2%	+9.3%
Blacks Harbour	970	970	918	939	942	+0.3%	+2.6%	-2.9%
Campobello Island	994	891	928	952	923	-3.0%	-0.5%	-7.1%
St. Martins	348	289	310	344	356	+3.5%	+14.8%	+2.3%
Other ¹⁴	43,897	43,411	43,725	46,046	46,443	+0.9%	+6.2%	+5.8%

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.