

April 2026

NEW BRUNSWICK Labour Force Trends



An analysis of the province's labour force, covering topics such as employment, unemployment, industry trends, education levels, and wages.

Data Sources:

- Statistics Canada – Labour Force Survey
- Statistics Canada – Job Vacancy and Wage Survey

New Brunswick Labour Force Trends

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Note: This report provides an overview of labour force related trends in New Brunswick up to 2025. For more up to date, but less detailed, analysis and data, visit the “Labour Force Statistics” tile on the “Labour Market Information” section of NBjobs.ca.

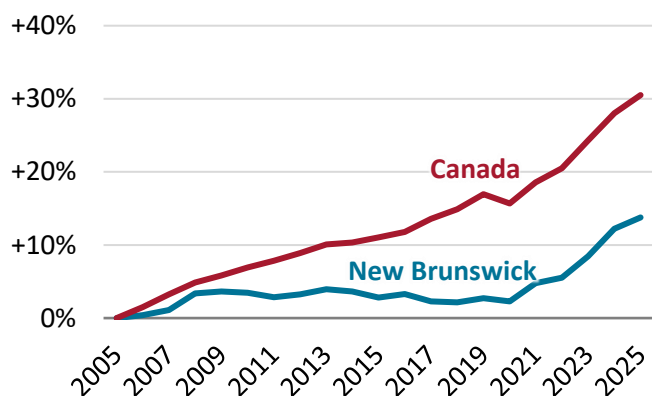
Overview¹

Labour Force Characteristics – New Brunswick (12-Month Averages)

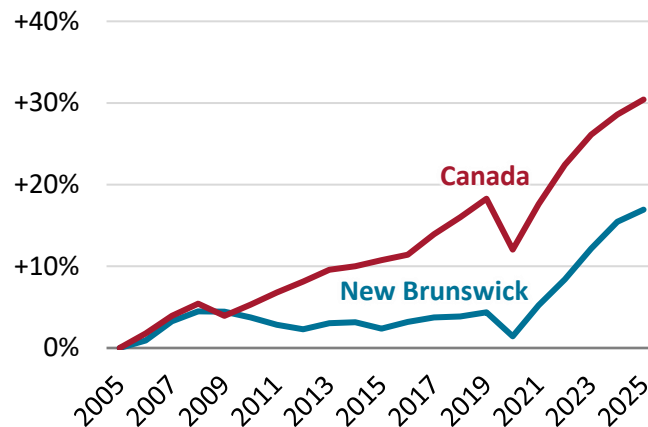
Characteristic	2025	2024	2019
Population Aged 15+	720,800	710,200	641,800
Not in Labour Force	284,500	279,900	247,900
Labour Force	436,300	430,300	393,900
Employment	405,200	400,000	361,700
Full-Time	345,000	338,100	306,600
Part-Time	60,100	61,800	55,200
Unemployment	31,100	30,300	32,200
Participation Rate	60.5%	60.6%	61.4%
Employment Rate	56.2%	56.3%	56.4%
Unemployment Rate	7.1%	7.0%	8.2%

After years of stagnant or declining labour force and employment levels, labour market conditions in New Brunswick have shown significant signs of improvement over the past several years – marked by record high labour force and employment levels, and a significant drop in unemployment.

Cumulative Labour Force Growth Since 2005

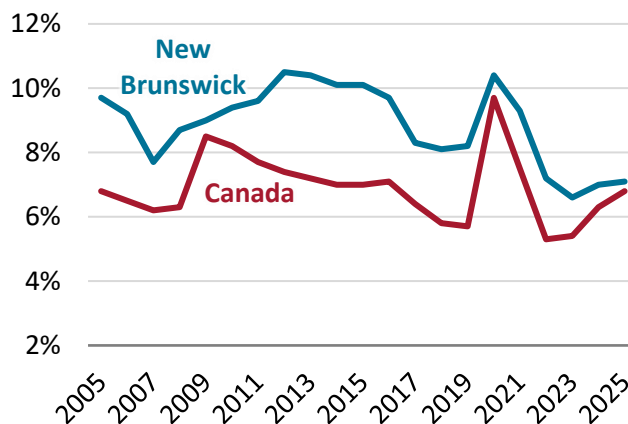


Cumulative Employment Growth Since 2005



These trends have been driven in large part by a combination of record-breaking immigration levels and a large influx of interprovincial migrants from Ontario (and the increased demand for goods and services that accompanied this population growth).

Unemployment Rate



While economic conditions in the province remain relatively strong, growth in the province slowed significantly in 2025, and is expected to remain relatively subdued over the next few years as well.

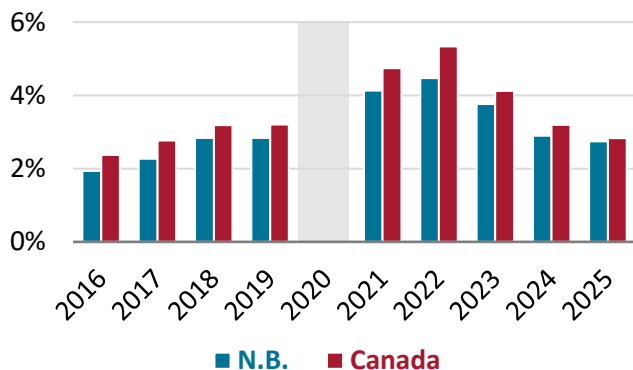
¹ Source(s): Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey (Tables 14-10-0327 and 14-10-0287).

This shift has been due to a number of factors, including:

- Impacts related to the tariffs imposed by the United States (both direct and indirect)
- The federal government’s cutbacks to immigration and temporary resident levels.

As a result of the current economic conditions in the province, individuals in some parts of the province may experience greater difficulty in finding work than they have in recent years. In 2025, an estimated 2.7% of all payroll positions in the province were vacant – down from 2.9% in 2024, 3.8% in 2023, and 4.5% in 2022. However, despite the overall job vacancy rate falling, certain businesses and organizations continue to report difficulties finding suitable labour, particularly in the healthcare, construction, and education sectors (with difficulties often most pronounced in rural areas).

Job Vacancy Rate



Furthermore, with retirement levels expected to remain high for the foreseeable future, coupled with the cutbacks to international migration, it is likely that labour shortages will begin to re-emerge in certain sectors over the next few years.

Labour Force Participation²

Trends in Participation

New Brunswick consistently has one of the lowest rates of labour force participation in Canada. Throughout 2025, an average of 436,300 New Brunswickers were participating in the labour force (405,200 employed and 31,100 unemployed), representing 60.5% of its population aged 15 years and over, compared to 65.3% nationally.

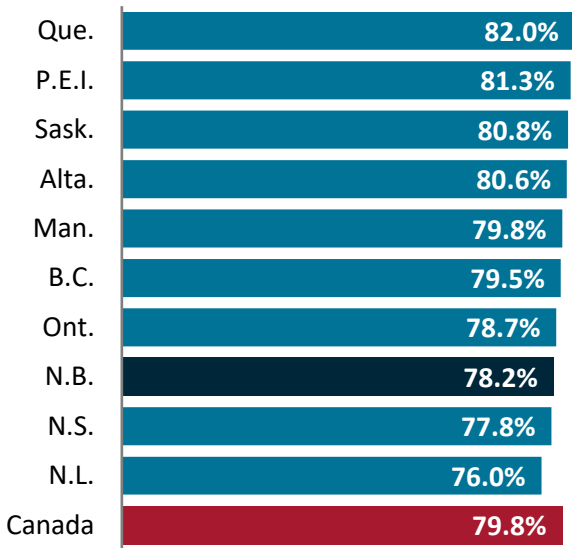
The main factor contributing to the gap in participation between New Brunswick and the rest of Canada was the province’s relatively older population (since older individuals are less likely to be participating in the labour force). When age is accounted for, New Brunswick is much closer to being on par with the other provinces. In 2025, 78.2% of New Brunswickers aged 15 to 64 years were participating in the labour force, compared to 79.8% of individuals in this age group Canada-wide. Furthermore, examining trends in participation among this age group over time reveals that the gap between New Brunswick’s rate and the national rate has closed significantly over time.

Beyond age, other factors that may be contributing to New Brunswick’s relatively low participation rate include:

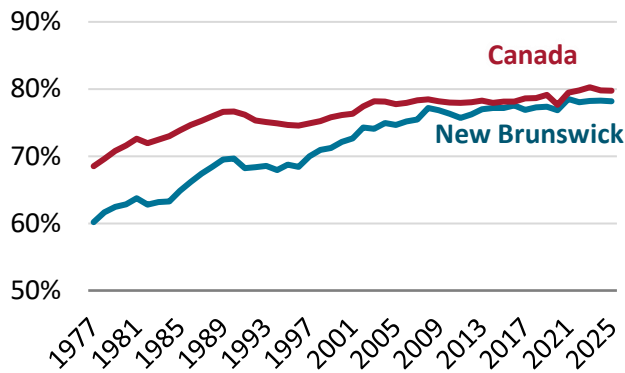
- The seasonal nature of many of the province’s prominent industries
- Low educational attainment levels (particularly among older individuals)
- High prevalence of disabilities
- Lower wages than in most other Canadian jurisdictions (across most industries and occupations)

² Source(s): Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey (Tables 14-10-0118 and 14-10-0327).

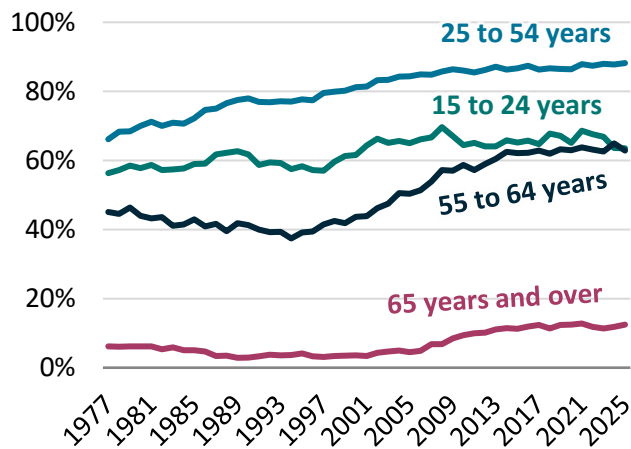
Participation Rate Among the Population Aged 15 to 64 Years – 2025



Participation Rate Among the Population Aged 15 to 64 Years



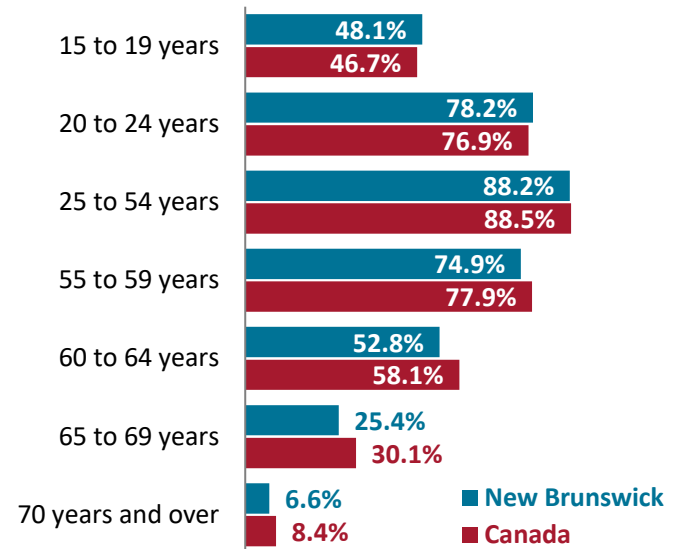
Participation Rate by Age Group – New Brunswick



Compared to the rest of Canada, participation rates in New Brunswick were particularly low for the following groups:

- Individuals aged 55+ (both men and women)
- Students during the school year

Participation Rate by Age Group – 2025



Participation Rate by Age Group and Gender – New Brunswick – 2025

	New Brunswick	Canada
Men		
15 to 24 years	62.8%	63.2%
25 to 54 years	90.4%	91.9%
55 to 64 years	67.9%	73.3%
65 years and over	16.4%	19.3%
Women		
15 to 24 years	64.3%	62.8%
25 to 54 years	86.0%	85.0%
55 to 64 years	58.2%	61.9%
65 years and over	8.9%	11.6%

Participation Rate by Age Group and Highest Level of Education – 2025

	New Brunswick	Canada
No Post-Secondary Credentials		
15 to 24 years	57.2%	56.0%
25 to 54 years	77.0%	79.1%
55 to 64 years	58.5%	61.4%
65 years and over	10.4%	12.1%
Post-Secondary Graduate		
15 to 24 years	83.2%	83.1%
25 to 54 years	92.0%	91.4%
55 to 64 years	66.3%	70.7%
65 years and over	14.6%	17.9%

Participation Rate Among Population Aged 15 to 24 Years by School Status – 2025

	New Brunswick	Canada
During School Months (Jan-Apr, Sep-Jan)		
Students	39.4%	44.5%
Non-Students	85.6%	86.8%
During Summer Months (May-Aug)		
Students	64.9%	59.7%
Non-Students	88.2%	86.6%

Non-Participants

Between January and December of 2025, there were an average of 284,500 New Brunswickers aged 15 years and over who were not in the labour force. Of these individuals:

- 33,900 were aged 15 to 24
- 81,100 were aged 25 to 64
- 169,500 were aged 65 years and over

Since the majority of individuals aged 15 to 24 years are students, the number of them who were not in the labour force varied significantly throughout the year, from a low of 21,600 in July, to a high of 42,400 in March.

At the other extreme, the vast majority of those aged 65 years and over who were not in the labour force were retired. Of the 169,500 individuals aged 65 years and over who were not in the labour force in 2025, only 7,400 had worked in the past year. These 7,400 individuals were primarily a mix of seasonal workers and recent retirees.

Population Aged 65 Years and Over Not in the Labour Force by Duration of Joblessness – New Brunswick – 2025

Duration	Total
1 to 12 Months	7,400
13 to 36 Months	10,700
37+ Months	139,300
Never Worked	12,200
Total	169,500

Beyond those aged 65 years and over, a significant portion of those aged 25 to 64 years who were not in the labour force could also be classified as likely being retired. Among the 81,100 individuals aged 25 to 64 years who were not in the labour force in 2025, more than half (43,700) were aged 55 to 64 years, with the vast majority of these individuals having not working in the past year (36,500 of 43,700). Among those aged 25 to 54, reasons for not being in the labour force were quite varied, with this group consisting of students, parents, seasonal workers, persons with disabilities and more.

Population Aged 25 to 64 Years Not in the Labour Force by Duration of Joblessness – N.B. – 2025

Category	Total	Duration of Joblessness			
		1 to 12 Months	13 to 36 Months	37+ Months	Never Worked
Aged 25 to 54 Years	37,400	9,400	5,400	15,900	6,700
Parent of Child Aged 0 to 12	11,600	3,000	1,900	4,700	1,900
Other	25,900	6,400	3,600	11,200	4,700
Aged 55 to 64 Years	43,700	7,100	7,300	24,900	4,400
Total	81,100	16,500	12,700	40,800	11,100

Industry Trends³

Employment in the following sectors is much more common in New Brunswick compared to the country as a whole:

- Forestry, fishing and hunting
- Public administration
- Health care and social assistance

On the other hand, employment in the following industries was much less common in New Brunswick compared to the country as a whole:

- Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction
- Professional, scientific and technical services
- Information, culture and recreation

Between 2019 and 2025, some of the industries that saw the greatest employment growth included:

- Public administration
- Professional, scientific and technical services
- Construction

Meanwhile, during this same time, some of the industries that saw the greatest declines in employment levels included:

- Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction
- Forestry, fishing and hunting
- Business, building and other support services

Employment Statistics by Sector – New Brunswick – 2025

Sector	Employment (2025)	6-Year Change	Location Quotient ⁴
Agriculture	5,900	-3.3%	1.34
Forestry, fishing and hunting	4,800	-21.3%	4.18
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	2,900	-32.6%	0.54
Construction	32,100	+23.5%	1.02
Manufacturing	33,400	+6.0%	0.94
Retail trade	46,600	+6.9%	1.06
Transportation and warehousing	19,300	+2.7%	0.93
Business, building and other support services	13,100	-18.6%	0.99
Finance, insurance, real estate and leasing	20,100	+13.6%	0.70
Professional, scientific and technical services	22,900	+30.1%	0.59
Educational services	32,300	+18.8%	1.05
Health care and social assistance	68,200	+16.0%	1.22
Information, culture and recreation	11,200	-15.2%	0.68
Accommodation and food services	21,400	-8.2%	0.94
Public administration	38,400	+54.2%	1.60
Other	32,600	+22.6%	1.02
Total	405,200	+12.0%	N/A

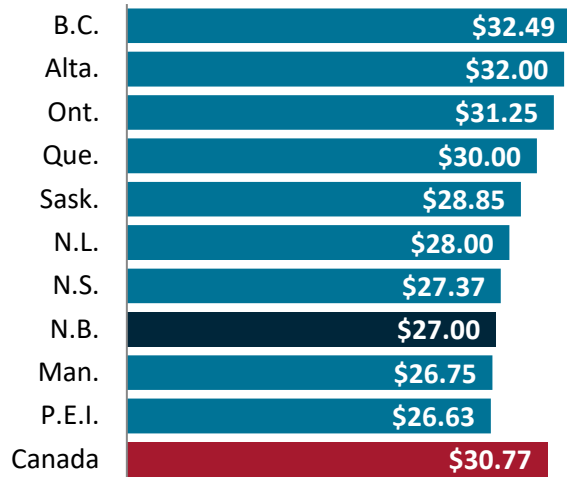
³ Source(s): Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey (Table 14-10-0023).

⁴ 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 1.46% of total employment in New Brunswick, and 1.09% of total employment Canada-wide, the location quotient would be $1.46/1.09 = 1.34$.

Wages⁵

In 2025, the median hourly wage rate among employees in New Brunswick was \$27.00. This represented the third lowest median among the provinces and was well below the national median of \$30.77.

Median Hourly Wage Rate – 2025



While wages in New Brunswick continue to trail those seen in most other provinces, they have seen significant growth in recent years. Between 2019 and 2025, the median hourly wage rate in New Brunswick grew by an average of 5.1% annually. This represented the second greatest growth rate among the provinces and was well above the average annual rate of inflation of 3.1% during this time.

Median Hourly Wage Rate Among Employees by Highest Level of Education – 2025

	N.B.	Canada
No Post-Secondary Credentials	\$21.00	\$23.02
Post-Secondary Certificate or Diploma	\$28.00	\$30.45
University Degree	\$37.44	\$40.87

Both within the province and nationally, men earn noticeably more than women. In 2025, the median hourly wage rate among New Brunswick men was \$27.90, compared to \$26.50 among women. At a national level this gap was even larger, with these rates sitting at \$33.00 and \$28.85 respectively.

Median Hourly Wage Rate Among Employees by Gender and Highest Level of Education – New Brunswick – 2025

	Men	Women
No Post-Secondary Credentials	\$22.55	\$20.00
Post-Secondary Certificate or Diploma	\$30.00	\$26.50
University Degree	\$36.06	\$37.98

⁵ Source(s): Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey (Public Use Microdata File and Tables 14-10-0301 and 14-10-0340).

Sub-Provincial⁶

Labour market conditions in New Brunswick vary significantly by geographic location. While the Greater Moncton and Greater Fredericton areas both have relatively low unemployment rates and relatively high participation rates, other parts of the province, especially in the Northeast, generally have low rates of labour force participation and high rates of unemployment. This is in large part a reflection of the fact that employment opportunities in New Brunswick are largely concentrated in or around its urban areas.

Between 2015 and 2025, the Greater Moncton and Greater Fredericton areas saw employment growth of 30.7% and 21.2% respectively. On the other hand, the rest of the province saw employment increase by 6.9% during this time.

While there has been limited growth outside of these two centres, retirements resulting from population aging have resulted in a significant number of job opportunities throughout most regions of the province. This trend is reflected by the decreasing unemployment rates seen across the province. Over the last 10 years, all regions of the province have seen significant drops in their unemployment rates.

Labour Force Statistics – Selected Regions

	2015	2024	2025
Greater Moncton			
Employment	77,200	97,500	100,900
Participation rate	68.1%	65.8%	66.3%
Unemployment rate	6.9%	5.4%	6.1%
Greater Saint John			
Employment	64,500	71,100	68,000
Participation rate	66.0%	63.9%	60.8%
Unemployment rate	8.4%	6.3%	7.1%
Greater Fredericton			
Employment	53,200	63,000	64,500
Participation rate	67.0%	65.7%	66.2%
Unemployment rate	7.2%	5.8%	6.3%
Other Southern N.B.⁷			
Employment	60,000	69,500	68,400
Participation rate	59.4%	58.3%	57.1%
Unemployment rate	12.3%	6.8%	7.1%
Northeast N.B.			
Employment	62,800	61,900	67,100
Participation rate	55.8%	51.0%	54.3%
Unemployment rate	15.6%	12.0%	10.4%
Northwest N.B.			
Employment	36,900	36,900	36,200
Participation rate	62.9%	58.5%	56.5%
Unemployment rate	9.5%	6.3%	5.2%

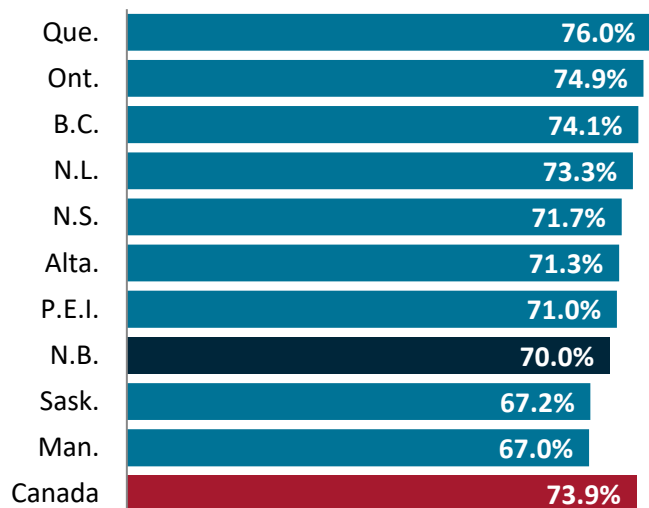
⁶ Source(s): Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey (Tables 14-10-0461 and 14-10-0464).

⁷ For the purposes of this document, “Other Southern N.B.” refers to New Brunswick’s Southeast, Southwest and Central Economic Regions excluding the cities and surrounding areas of Moncton, Saint John and Fredericton.

Education⁸

The educational attainment of New Brunswick's population is in part a reflection of the skills demanded by the province's employers, or more broadly, its labour market. In general, compared to the country as a whole, there is somewhat less demand for workers with post-secondary credentials in New Brunswick. This is likely a contributing factor for New Brunswick's educational attainment levels being among the lowest in the country.

Percentage of the Population Aged 25 to 64 Years with Post-Secondary Credentials – 2025



As of 2025, 70.0% of New Brunswickers between the ages of 25 and 64 had some form of post-secondary credential, compared to 73.9% at a national level.

Compared to the general Canadian population, New Brunswickers were much less likely to have a university degree, but somewhat more likely to have a post-secondary certificate or diploma.

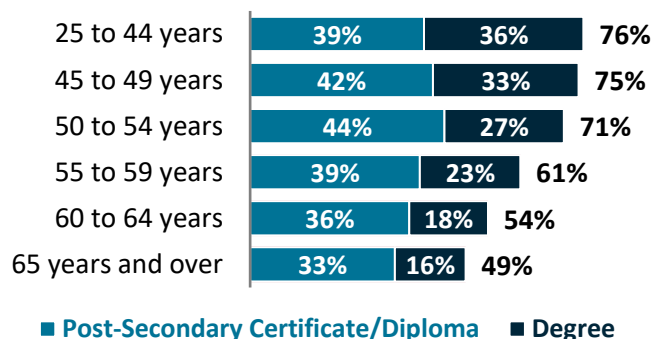
Educational Attainment Among the Population Aged 25 to 64 Years by Gender – 2025

	Men	Women	Total
New Brunswick			
No Post-Secondary Credentials	34%	26%	30%
Postsecondary Certificate or Diploma	40%	40%	40%
University Degree	26%	35%	30%
Canada			
No Post-Secondary Credentials	30%	23%	26%
Postsecondary Certificate or Diploma	35%	34%	35%
University Degree	35%	43%	39%

Post-secondary educational attainment levels in New Brunswick varied significantly by a number of factors, including:

- **Gender:** Only 65.5% of New Brunswick men aged 25 to 64 years had completed some form of post-secondary education, compared to 74.4% of women in this age range.
- **Age:** Only 54.0% of New Brunswickers aged 60 to 64 years had completed some form of post-secondary education, compared to 75.6% of individuals aged 25 to 44 years.

Percentage of the Population with Post-Secondary Credentials by Age Group – New Brunswick – 2025



⁸ Source(s): Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey (Public Use Microdata File).

Appendix: Glossary

Labour Force: refers to the working age population (15+) that is employed or unemployed.

Employment: refers to people who, during the reference week, did any work at all at a job or business; or had a job but were not at work due to factors such as illness, personal, family responsibilities or labour disputes.

Full-Time Employment: refers to people who usually work thirty or more hours per week.

Part-Time Employment: refers to people who usually work less than thirty hours per week.

Unemployment: refers to people who during the reference week were without work but had actively looked for work in the past four weeks and were available for work; or were on temporary layoff during the reference week with an expectation of recall and were available for work.

Unemployment Rate: represents the number of unemployed as a percentage of the labour force.

Participation Rate: represents the labour force as a percentage of the working age population.

Employment Rate: represents the employed as a percentage of the working age population.

Industry/Sector: The North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) is a comprehensive system encompassing all economic activities. Establishments (businesses) are grouped according to similarity in the production processes used to produce goods and services